

AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY ON

JOHN

BOB WINTON



**GOSPEL
BROADCASTING
NETWORK**

This material is the intellectual property of The Gospel Broadcasting Network. It is not to be altered, posted online, or printed without written permission. Questions about use can be sent to info@gbntv.org.
Copyright © 2022

Preface and Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven members of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these are well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn, Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The material was put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over many decades. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we hardly cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. A good many of these non-paying costumers were gospel preachers. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad! "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28).

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound or wire-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years— and her many surgeries and broken bones and heartaches.

Feel free to copy quotations from this material. It is designed to bring glory to God and information to souls! The same goes for the articles printed in my monthly publication: *Studies in the Old Paths*. This paper is free via e-mail.

Contents of Gospel of John

Introduction	Page 5
Chapter 1	Page 14
Chapter 2	Page 63
Chapter 3	Page 74
Chapter 4	Page 111
Chapter 5	Page 135
Chapter 6	Page 178
Chapter 7	Page 192
Chapter 8	Page 225
Chapter 9	Page 258
Chapter 10	Page 372
Chapter 11	Page 323
Chapter 12	Page 310
Chapter 13	Page 340
Chapter 14	Page 356
Chapter 15	Page 380
Chapter 16	Page 404
My God, My God	Page 420
Chapter 17	Page 422
Chapter 18	Page 441
Chapter 19	Page 468
Who is Responsible For Jesus' Death	Page 489
Seven Statements for the Cross	Page 489
Chapter 20	Page 493
Great Commission Chart	Page 504
Chapter 21	Page 507
Bibliography	Page 515

Introduction to the Gospel of John

- A. Matthew, Mark, and Luke Are Called the Synoptic Gospels Because They Have a Lot in Common.
1. Synoptic: “Bible sharing views of Jesus Christ’s life: used to describe the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke that tell the story of Jesus Christ’s life and ministry from a similar point of view and are similar in structure” (*Encarta Dictionary*).
 2. The focus on their material is the work our Lord did in the province of Galilee, which was located in the northern part of Palestine, with the Lake of Galilee being an important part of the story.
 3. “But we have only to read the Fourth Gospel in the most cursory way to see that it is quite different from the other three. It omits so many things that they include. The Fourth Gospel has no account of the Birth of Jesus, of his baptism, of his temptations; it tells us nothing of the Last Supper, nothing of Gethsemane, and nothing of the Ascension. It has no word of the healing of any people possessed by devils and evil spirits. And, perhaps most surprising of all, it has none of the parable stories Jesus told which are so priceless a part of the other three gospels. In these other three gospels Jesus speaks either in these wonderful stories or in short, epigrammatic, vivid sentences which stick in the memory. But in the Fourth Gospel the speeches of Jesus are often a whole chapter long; and are often involved, argumentative pronouncements quite unlike the pithy, unforgettable sayings of the other three” (Barclay, Introduction to John: Electronic Version).
 4. The Gospel of John is different from the Synoptic Gospels because it focuses on Jesus’ work in Judea.
 - a. “John has a different account of the scene of Jesus' ministry. In the other three gospels the main scene of the ministry is Galilee and Jesus does not reach Jerusalem until the last week of his life. In John the main scene of the ministry is Jerusalem and Judaea, with only occasional withdrawals to Galilee (Jn. 2:1-13; Jn. 4:35-5:1; Jn. 6:1-7:14). In John, Jesus is in Jerusalem for a Passover which occurred at the same time as the cleansing of the Temple, as John tells the story (Jn. 2:13); he is in Jerusalem at the time of an unnamed feast (Jn. 5:1); he is there for the Feast of Tabernacles (Jn. 7:2,10); he is there at the Feast of Dedication in the winter-time (Jn. 10:22). In fact according to the Fourth Gospel Jesus never left Jerusalem after that feast; after Jn. 10 he is in Jerusalem all the time, which would mean a stay of months, from the winter-time of the Feast of the Dedication to the spring-time of the Passover at which he was crucified” (Barclay, *ibid.*)
 - b. Each Gospel account has its own theme, and each account was written to a specific group as noted below:
 - 1) Matthew was written to the Jews, and it shows Jesus’ Messianic work as a king over His everlasting spiritual kingdom, which is His church.
 - 2) Mark was written to the Romans, and it shows that Jesus is the one with power and strength through His miraculous works.
 - 3) Luke was written mainly to the Greeks, and it shows the human side of Jesus and portrays Him as being a perfect man.
 - 4) John was written to all Christians, and its primary focus is Jesus being Deity, and that He is the Son of God (John 20:30-31).
- B. The Author of this Book Which Carries the Name of John.
1. “The Fourth Gospel has in all ages been ascribed by the church to John, the Born of Zebedee, an apostle of Jesus Christ. Within less than an hundred years of the date of his death Christian writers living in different portions of the world, whose writings are still extant, indicate to us that this was the universal belief of the church. The testimony to the authorship is stronger than can be furnished in behalf of almost any uninspired writings of antiquity, and it would hardly be worth while to allude to the question had not a class of modern critics arisen who decide the question of the authorship of a portion of Scripture by the agreement or non agreement of its teachings with their own views. Since
-

the Fourth Gospel is more emphatic in affirming the pre-existence and divine majesty of Jesus Christ than the other three, a school of recent rationalistic critics have held that it is not the work of an apostle. I will very briefly show the reasons why its authorship must be conceded to John” (B.W. Johnson). [The Following Information about the Apostle John is Taken From My Commentary on John’s Epistles].

2. The author of this epistle was John the Apostle.
 - a. That John is the author is attested by many ancient authorities, who were in a position to know who wrote this book. The following writers attribute the authorship to John:
 - 1) Polycarp and Papias—they were pupils of John.
 - 2) Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, Origen, and Cyprian identify John as the author.
 - 3) The Muratorian Fragment, the Peshito, and Itala Versions list John as the author.
 - b. “It is certain that it was written by a Jew. The familiarity which is constantly shown with Jewish locations proves that the author must have been a resident of Palestine. Places are named that are not spoken of elsewhere in the Old or New Testament, and of the existence of which we would have had no knowledge were it not for the fact that they are mentioned in this Gospel.
 - 1) “Some of these, whose sites were unknown for ages, have been brought to light by recent exploration. ‘Aenon near to Salim’ is an example. Not only does the author exhibit the most intimate knowledge of places, but of Jewish rites, customs, prejudices and feelings. This is so constantly exhibited as to demonstrate that the Gospel could not be the work of a Gentile.
 - 2) “Every ancient writer, not of the Jewish race, who attempts to describe the Jewish people falls into the greatest errors, and the exact acquaintance with Jewish life portrayed in almost every chapter leaves no doubt that the Fourth Gospel is the product of a man born and reared under Jewish influences” (B.W. Johnson, Electronic Version). [Note: The Holy Spirit would have been able to reveal this information miraculously to any inspired person—Bob Winton].
 - c. Many close similarities between 1 John and the Gospel of John show that they were written by the same author.
 - 1) There are likenesses in content, in vocabulary, in style, and in form.
 - 2) Of about 295 different words in 1 John, only 69 are not in the Gospel of John (Woods).
3. He was perfect in teaching, although he was not perfect in life: “And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God” (Rev. 22:8-9).
4. Further Information about John the Apostle.
 - a. John was prosperous and influential in business.
 - 1) He had hired servants and business partners:
 - a) Mark 1:20: “And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.”
 - b) Luke 5:10-11: “And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.”
 - 2) He owned property: “Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home” (John 19:27).
 - 3) He was acquainted with the high priest: “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” (John 18:15).

- b. John was a man of great faith.
 - 1) He left all to follow Lord:
 - a) Luke 5:11: “And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.”
 - b) Matthew 4:21-22: “And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.”
 - c) John 1:34-37: “And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. 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.”
 - 2) No less faith is required today:
 - a) Matthew 6:33: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
 - b) Luke 14:25-33: “And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”
 - c. John was a leader among leaders.
 - 1) As an apostle, he had enormous responsibilities for all subsequent time!
 - 2) He was part of the inner circle of the band of apostles; he was given special opportunities which only those three received (Peter, James and John).
 - a) Matthew 17:1-5: “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”
 - b) Luke 8:51-56: “And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.”
 - c) Matthew 26:37-39: “And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on
-

his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

- d. John had boldness, and was sometimes rash, in the early days.
 - 1) He forbade a good work:
 - a) Luke 9:49-50: “And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.” [This was being done in the Lord’s name].
 - b) Luke 9:38-40: “And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.”
 - 2) He wanted to call down fire on certain enemies:
 - a) Luke 9:51-56: “And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.”
 - b) Romans 12:17-19: “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”
- e. In old age, John was a kind man—a mature Christian.
 - 1) His writings were done mostly in his later years. The word “love” appears more than fifty times in his three epistles. His was not mushy sentimentalism, but genuine love.
 - 2) Tradition claims that he was carried to meetings where he, while leaning on a cane and with quavering voice, would say, “Little children, love one another!” (Woods). Tradition also claims his knees were calloused from kneeling so much in prayer.
 - 3) In old age, generally we are physically weak, but stronger than ever spiritually!
- f. John was a man of energy and ambition.
 - 1) His secular work shows his industry—a business requires patience, skill and determination; he likely faced disappointments and challenges in his fishing enterprise.
 - 2) He requested prominence in Christ’s kingdom, the nature of which neither he nor the other apostles comprehended at the time.
 - a) Matthew 20:20-24: “Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.”

- b) Acts 1:6: “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”
 - c) Compare: “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).
- g. John was a man who had special experiences.
- 1) He was honored by Christ for what he was (not who). Compare: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34).
 - 2) John saw Janus’ daughter raised and was a witness to the Lord’s transfiguration:
 - a) Mark 5:37-43: “And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.”
 - b) Matthew 17:1-5: “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”
 - 3) John heard the Lord foretell Jerusalem’s destruction: “And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately” (Mark 13:3, notice also the verses which follow).
 - 4) John was privy to Christ’s agony in Gethsemane: “And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words” (Mark 14:33-39).
 - 5) John was present at the Lord’s trial and was quick to reach his tomb on the resurrection morning.
 - a) John 18:15: “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.”
 - b) John 20:4-6: “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.”
-

- h. John out-lived the other apostles, was exiled on Patmos, and saw the visions of Revelation.
- 1) John 21:18-24: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst 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. 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? This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.”
 - 2) Revelation 1:1-9: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”
 - 3) Secular records report that John died at an advanced age, and that the other apostles preceded him in death.
- i. John was a man who had a pleasant personality.
- 1) Some people are hard to love, but he was the disciple Jesus loved (a statement that is given five times):
 - a) John 13:23: “Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.”
 - b) John 19:26: “When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!”
 - c) John 20:2: “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.”
 - d) John 21:7: “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.”
 - e) John 21:20: “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?”
 - 2) We are also told that Jesus loved Lazarus:
 - a) John 11:3: “Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest
-

is sick.”

b) John 11:36: “Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!”

3) The gospel helps us to develop a lovable disposition:

a) Ephesians 4:32: “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

b) 1 John 3:18: “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”

c) Matthew 7:12: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

d) 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.”

e) 1 Corinthians 13:1-7: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

j. John was a dependable man.

1) Our Lord committed his mother Mary to Johns: “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” (John 19:25-27).

2) John was chosen for this responsibility above her other children. Salome (John’s mother) was sister to Mary (Jesus’ mother); some allege they were cousins (Turner).

3) He was a pillar in the church: “And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision” (Gal. 2:9). [This was in reference to the church at Jerusalem].

C. The Date and Place of the Writing of this Gospel Account.

1. There are various dates that have been given for this Gospel ranging from A.D. 40 – 100. According Irenaeus, who was the pupil of Polycarp (friend and pupil of John), John wrote this book from Ephesus 60 years after Jesus ascension, which puts it around A.D. 90.

2. “The gap that remains between 'his disappearance from Jerusalem and his reappearance at Patmos can only be partly filled from the testimony of the early church. There can be no doubt but, that he passed many years in Asia Minor with his headquarters at Ephesus, but it is almost certain that he did not remove there until after the death of Paul, placed by the best authorities in A. D. 68.

a. “According to Conybeare and Howson Paul wrote to Titus from Ephesus in A. D. 67, and in the same year wrote to Timothy at Ephesus. In neither epistle is the name of John mentioned, which is sufficient proof that he was not yet in that part of the world.

b. “Already the disturbances had begun which culminated three years later in the destruction of Jerusalem, and as after a few years John was at Ephesus, we are justified in concluding that on, or shortly before, the overthrow of the Jewish state, he left Judea, and finally was led by the need of

apostolic influence in the flourishing churches of Asia Minor, after the death of their founder, to locate at Ephesus. This change could hardly have taken place until after the fall of Jerusalem” (Johnson, p.xvi).

3. “Irenaeus, who had such excellent sources of information and who was himself educated in the same region by a disciple of John, declares that the Gospel was written at Ephesus; with him agree Jerome and later writers.
 - a. “Irenaeus also states that it was the latest written of the Gospels, and this agrees with judgment of all commentators. It was therefore written after the departure of the Apostle to this portion of the world, and there can be little doubt that its place of composition was the great metropolis of this portion of the world, and for a long period after the fall of Jerusalem, the chief center of Christianity.
 - b. “After the destruction of Jerusalem Ephesus became the center of Christian life in the East. Even Antioch, the original source of missions to the Gentiles, and the future metropolis of the *Christian patriarch*, appears for a time less conspicuous in the obscurity of early church history than Ephesus, to which Paul inscribed his Epistle, and in which John found a dwelling place and a tomb.
 - c. “This half Greek, half Oriental city, visited by ships from all parts of the Mediterranean, and united by great roads with the markets of the interior, was the common meeting place of various characters and classes of men.’—Conybeare and Howson” (*ibid.*).

D. Purpose of the Book.

1. John states succinctly the purpose of this great book in John 20:30-31: “Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.”
 2. “The Gospel of John proves that Jesus is the Son of God and that He is Deity. The reason some say he wrote this Gospel was to refute Gnosticism. Irenaeus stated that John wrote this Gospel to refute the heresies of the Cerinthus and the Nicolaitans, which were two forms of the Gnostic heresy” (Coffman).
 3. Coffman offers the following: One writer (author unknown) suggested the following false doctrines all have their roots in Gnosticism:
 - a. Original Sin – Born a sinner.
 - b. The Calvinistic doctrine of predestination – The Gnostics taught that some were born with a spirit nature and would be saved while others are born with a fleshly nature and would be lost.
 - c. Many Roman Catholic errors such as celibacy, food requirements, lent, etc.
 - d. Those who take what they have felt or personally experienced as being a sign that they are closer to God or that they are right with God instead of basing their belief on God’s Word only.
 - e. John deals with these types of doctrinal errors in his Gospel by showing that Jesus is Deity. Jesus’ identity is revealed in the following passages (Jn. 5:37; 8:14, 18, 18:37).
 4. John records seven “I Am” statements which Christ declared:
 - a. John 6:33-35: “For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world. They said therefore unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. Jesus said unto them. **I am the bread of life:** he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.
 - b. John 8:12: “Again therefore Jesus spake unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world:** he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life” (cf. 9:5; 12:35-36, 46).
 - c. John 10:1, 7: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the
-

- sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber....Jesus therefore said unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **I am the door of the sheep.**”
- d. John 10:11, 14: “**I am the good shepherd:** the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep....I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, Jesus is the "good Shepherd."
 - e. John 11:25-26: “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?”
 - f. John 14:6: “Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, and the truth, and the life:** no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
 - g. John 15:1-8: “**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.”
5. The inspired John records seven of our Lord’s miracles.
- a. He turned water into wine at a wedding feast: John 2:1-11.
 - b. He healed the son of a nobleman: John 4:46-54.
 - c. He healed a man who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years: John 5:1-18.
 - d. He fed five thousand men with five barley loaves and two small fish: John 6:1-14.
 - e. He walked on the water of the sea: John 6:16-21).
 - f. He provided eyesight to a man who had been born blind: John 9.
 - g. He raised Lazarus from the dead: John 11.
6. John’s account of the gospel has some unique values.
- a. He does not record any parable.
 - b. The beginning of the report is different from the other accounts.
 - c. Matthew begins with Adam.
 - d. Mark begins with the work of John the Immerser.
 - e. Luke begins with Adam.
 - f. John begins with eternity—In the beginning.
-

John Chapter 1

A. John 1:1-3: The Great Creation.

1. Verse 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
 - a. In the beginning...
 - 1) Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
 - 2) Ecclesiastes 3:11: "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end."
 - 3) Matthew 19:3-4: "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female."
 - 4) John 1:2: "The same was in the beginning with God."
 - 5) Ephesians 3:9: "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."
 - 6) Hebrews 1:10: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands."
 - b. In the Hebrew version of *Genesis* is "Bereshith" which means "in the beginning." This name is derived from the first Hebrew word of Genesis 1:1. The name given this book is appropriate, for the book describes the beginning of:
 - 1) Time and seasons.
 - 2) The heavens and the earth (the universe).
 - 3) Every living being, including animals, plants, creeping things, humanity, etc.
 - 4) Sin and the condemnation for sin.
 - 5) The unfolding of the scheme of redemption.
 - 6) Sacrifices.
 - c. The Word who was with God, and was God, existed with God in the beginning. This Hebrew word for God [Gen. 1:1] is plural in number and includes three personalities. The Bible elsewhere reveals that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are the three personalities of the Godhead, and that all had part in the original creation. There are three degrees insofar as authority is concerned. The sender is greater than the one sent; God sent Christ; Christ sent the Spirit.
 - 1) John 4:34: "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."
 - 2) John 16:7: "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."
 - 3) John 1:1-3: "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. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - 4) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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 he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 5) Hebrews 1:1-3: "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; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his

power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

- 6) Genesis 1:2: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."
 - 7) Psalms 104:30: "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth."
 - 8) Acts 17:22-31 affirms God's identity, power, knowledge, wisdom, closeness, goodness, and justice: "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
- d. Our English word "God" translates the Greek word *theos* (in the New Testament). For lack of a better expression, this means "Divine Nature." There is only one divine nature, and only three persons who possess it. This divine nature is also denoted as "Godhead" (or Godhood).
- 1) God the Father manifestly possesses it. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).
 - 2) Christ the Son possesses it: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).
 - 3) The Holy Spirit possesses it: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-4).
- e. The Word [Christ] was in the beginning with God the Father. But that does not mean that the Godhead is comprised of only one person.
- 1) Christ prayed that all who would believe on him should be one (John 17:20-21); the Bible later states that there are many members of the Lord's church (his spiritual body), but there is only one body. God and Christ are one; members of the body of Christ are one; but that does not mean that God and Christ comprise only one person any more than the many members of the Lord's church are only one individual.
 - 2) God decreed that in marriage, husband and wife become one flesh (Gen. 2:23-24; Matt. 19:45; Eph. 5:28-31). The husband and wife are plainly said to be one flesh, but they are separate and distinct individuals; they are one in purpose.
- f. Three distinct and separate personalities are found in the Godhead: God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.
-

- 1) They are listed separately, as distinct individuals, but they are perfectly united in purpose.
 - 2) Each of the divine three was present at the creation.
 - a) Genesis 1:1-2: "In the beginning **God** created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And **the Spirit of God** moved upon the face of the waters."
 - b) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, **the firstborn of every creature**: 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 he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 3) Each of these three was present as separate persons at the Lord's baptism: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 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" (Matt. 3:15-17). Christ was at the river's edge, the Holy Spirit descended upon him, and the voice of the Father was heard speaking from heaven.
2. Verse 2: "The same was in the beginning with God."
- a. This same person was present with God in the beginning. Our Savior, being part of the Godhead, does not change.
 - 1) Hebrews 1:8-12: "But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
 - b. There has never been a time or occasion when Christ (the Word) did not exist.
 - 1) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Beth-lehem 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."
 - 2) Notice the descriptive terms used of Christ in Isaiah 9:6-7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (KJV). The ASV give this rendering: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (ASV).
 - c. He is the Prince of Peace. He is the most wonderful Person of all time and human history.
 - 1) The root of the word translated "wonderful" occurs in Psalm 78:12 and shows the meaning of the word: "Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt...." "The
-

basic meaning of the verb is 'to be wonderful' and in the Hiphil 'to cause a wonderful thing to happen Preponderantly both the verb and substantive refer to the acts of God, designating either cosmic wonders or historical achievements on behalf of Israel. That is, in the Bible the root *pl'* refers to things that are unusual, beyond human capabilities" (*Theological Word Book*, p.723). The word describes the miracles which God did there, including the dividing of the sea.

- 2) Christ is said to be "full of wonder"—he demonstrated awesome miracle-working abilities.
 - a) Matthew 15:30-31: "And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them: Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel."
 - b) John 5:28-29: "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."
 - c) John 11:43: "And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth."
 - d) John 11:47: "Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles."
 - e) Colossians 1:16-17: "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 he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - f) Hebrews 1:1-2: "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."
 - g) He is full of wonder in his nature, his glory, his work, his birth, his ministry, his love, his obedience, his temptations, his death, his victory over death, hades and the devil, his resurrection, his ascension, and in his mediatorship, saving power, and kingship.
- d. He is the greatest and wisest Counsellor.
 - 1) To sit upon David's throne requires the greatest of wisdom. "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" (Isa. 11:2).
 - 2) "Wisdom and ability to give counsel are necessary for a king, and hence the words 'counsellor' and 'king' are used as synonyms in Micah 4:9. There is a certain uniqueness about the word, for it suggests that this One has no need of being surrounded with counsellors and advisors as is the case with mere human kings; He is Himself Counsellor" (Young's Concordance, p.335).
 - 3) "This also cometh from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" (Isa. 28:29).
- e. He is the Mighty God.
 - 1) 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."
 - 2) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - 3) Hebrews 1:1-4: "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; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on

- high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
- 4) Only the one to whom this appellation pertains could have done what Jesus did on earth: read the hearts of men, see into the future, walk on water, heal the sick, the maimed, the deaf and the blind, raise the dead, and bring himself forth from the grave.
 - 5) His "goings forth" have been from eternity. He had no beginning and will have no end (Mic. 5:2; Rev. 1:11,18; John 1:1-3). Such things can only be said about deity.
 - 6) John 8:58: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."
 - 7) John 10:30: "I and *my* Father are one."
 - 8) Revelation 1:17-18: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (ASV).
- f. He is called Everlasting Father.
- 1) The word "Father" describes the Messiah's relationship to his people.
 - a) Hebrews 2:13: "...Behold I and the children which God hath given me."
 - b) Ephesians 1:22-23: God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - c) Isaiah 63:16: "Thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting."
 - d) Psalm 103:13: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."
 - e) The quality of his fatherhood is described by the word "everlasting." He is an eternal Father; he forever guards and assists his children.
 - f) Hebrews 13:5: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."
 - g) John 10:11: "I am the good shepherd."
 - h) Christ is unendingly a Father to his people!
- g. He is called the Prince of Peace.
- 1) He came to establish peace between men, and between men and God. "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (Eph. 2:16-17).
 - 2) His kingdom is one of peace:
 - a) Isaiah 11:9: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in my holy mountain..."
 - b) Isaiah 2:3-4: "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
 - c) Zechariah 6:12-13: "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
 - 3) His message is the gospel of peace: "...How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things" (Rom. 10:15).
 - a) Although warfare exists between those who reject the gospel of peace and those who accept it (Matt. 10:35-36), yet among all those different races and nationalities in the Lord's
-

church, peace prevails

b) And inside each individual there is peace, a peace that is beyond human understanding (Phil. 4:7).

3. Verse 3: "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
- a. Christ (the Word) was God's agent in the great creation. He made the worlds. Christ (the second person of the Godhead) was with the Father in eternity, and was active in the creation of the universe.
- 1) Genesis 1:26: "And God said, **Let us** make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."
 - 2) Psalms 33:6-9: "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast."
 - 3) 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."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 8:6: "But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him."
 - 5) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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 he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 6) Hebrews 1:10: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands."
- b. Christ himself was not created; he is as eternal as the Father. "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, **the beginning of the creation** of God" (Rev. 3:14).
- 1) Materialists who reject the deity of Christ misinterpret this passage. They assert that Christ was the first thing God created. But the word *arche* is defined to mean "that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause" (Thayer, pp.76f). The term means "the beginner" (and not that which is begun).
 - 2) There has never been a time when Christ did not exist, hence he was not created by the Father.
 - a) 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."
 - b) John 3:1-3: "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."
- c. **The beginning of the creation of God.** The Watchtower Witnesses claim this means Christ was the first thing God created; and that Christ is a "lesser god" (Cf. Isa. 44:4; John 1:1-3); they reject the eternity of Christ. However, see Micah 5:2; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-18.
- 1) The word (*arche*) translated "beginning" refers to the cause (not to the order) of creation. According to Thayer, the word carries this definition:
 - 2) "1. beginning, origin. a. used absolutely, of the beginning of all things: John 1:1f . b. in a

relative sense, of the beginning of the thing spoken of: John 6:64. 2. the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader: Col 1:18. 3. that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause Rev 3:14. 4. the extremity of a thing: of the corners of a sail, Acts 10:11. 5. the first place, principality, rule, magistracy Luke 12:11" [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, © 2000 by BibleSoft].

d. Significant passages:

- 1) 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."
- 2) John 1:1-3: "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. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
- 3) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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 he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."

e. Their assertion about the eternal nature of Christ violates 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."

- 1) Their assertion that he is not God violates John 20:24-28: "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."
- 2) Their assertion that Christ was created by God (and is not eternal) violates the very passage they claim as proof, for the word *arche* means "that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause" (Thayer, p.77); "the beginner, or author" (Vincent, p.695). See Hebrews 12:2 (author, leader). The passage does not say that Christ is the first of God's creations, but that he is the one who did the creating (he was God's agent in bringing the universe into existence.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 8:6: "Yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him" (ASV).
 - b) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (ASV).
 - c) Hebrews 1:5-8: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and

his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom."

B. John 1:4-5: In Christ the Creator Was Life and Light.

1. Verse 4: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."
 - a. Christ was directly involved in the creation of the universe, the world, and all forms of life. He has always had life and he was able to provide life for all the created beings. While human ingenuity may be able to fashion the body that looks like a man or an animal, yet they cannot give life to that physical form. Compare: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7).
 - b. While on earth, on certain occasions, he raised to life some who had died. We cite two of them:
 - 1) John 11:43-44: "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."
 - 2) Matthew 9:18-19, 25-26: "While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land."
 - c. At the end of time, when he shall return to earth, he will raise all the dead, the righteous ones will meet him in the air, and all the others still alive on earth will be instantly changed into spiritual bodies.
 - 1) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:51-54: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."
 - d. Because life is unendingly and infinitely in him, he could give life to all creatures in the creation, and could raise the dead during his earthly mission, and shall raise to life again all humanity who died from the creation to his second coming. In the meantime, working in cooperation with the Father and the Holy Spirit, he is able to sustain our physical lives. But these are not all that he can do.
 - e. Our Lord can give spiritual life to those whose souls are separated from God, thus are dead.
 - 1) First, notice the lifeless condition of a soul which has departed from God's fellowship.
 - a) Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."
 - b) Ephesians 2:1-2: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."
 - 2) Second, our Savior can bring any lost soul back to life again, as the passage above states.
 - a) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto

- the Father, but by me.”
- b) Matthew 11:28-30: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (ASV).
 - c) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (ASV).
 - d) Hebrews 2:13-17: “And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me. Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily not to angels doth he give help, but he giveth help to the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (ASV).
 - e) John 6:63: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” It is the human spirit that gives life to the human body; the words of Christ (the gospel) are spirit and life. The gospel of Christ gives life to our human spirit. The body without the spirit is dead (Jas. 2:26); the spirit apart from the gospel is also dead [i.e., separated from God].
 - f) Ephesians 2:4-5: “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).”
 - g) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - h) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
- f. The life that is in Christ provides light for the benefit of mankind. He presented to the race of men the information that illuminates our understanding. That is one of the great features of the word of God.
- 1) Psalm 119:105: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
 - 2) Psalm 119:130: “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”
 - 4) Suppose all the darkness in the universe was brought into one great location; that great shroud of darkness could not extinguish the light of one little candle. Think of how much more bright is the light of the glorious gospel of Christ!
- g. Consider the following from Campbell regarding Christ as the light of the world:
- 1) To the *sacrifice* of Christ, we always look for the basis of our pardon; to his blood that cleanses from all sin for justification and personal acceptance; and to his Word we look for counsel and
-

instruction in Christian piety and righteousness.

- 2) We are as dependent on his *Word* for light as we are upon his *blood* for pardon. "I am, said he, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the *light of life*." "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." "That was the true light," said John " which, coming into the world enlighteneth every man." "As long as I am in the world," says Jesus, " I am the light of the world."
 - 3) Thus Isaiah spake of him: " I will also give thee as a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth." "I will give thee for a covenant of the people, or light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison; and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house."
 - 4) "His going forth is prepared as the morning?" "The Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing under his *wings*?" "I witness," said Paul, " both to small and great that the Messiah should show light to the people and to the Gentiles."
 - 5) The word of Christ is the light of Christ; and therefore the Christian Scriptures are the light of the world; and he that followeth them shall have the light of life. "If you continue in my doctrines," says the Messiah, " you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "If the Son makes you free you shall be free indeed." [Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System*, pp.34f).
- h. Darkness can be dangerous and terrifying—to the young and to the old. The most fearsome darkness is that of sin and religious error.
- 1) John 8:12: "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."
 - 2) John 12:35-36: "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. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them."
 - 3) Acts 26:18: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."
 - 4) Ephesians 5:8, 11-12: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."
 - 5) Colossians 1:13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."
 - 6) 1 John 1:5-7: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - 7) 1 John 2:11: "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."
2. Verse 5: "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."
- a. John 3:19-21: "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 reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."
 - b. Light and darkness are frequently used to contrast truth and error, righteousness and godliness, and
-

purity and moral depravity.

- 1) John 12:35: "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."
 - 2) 1 John 2:8: "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."
 - 3) Matthew 4:15-16: "The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."
 - 4) John 12:46: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."
 - 5) Ephesians 5:8, 11: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."
- c. In any society where sin and religious error have become entrenched in the minds and lives of the people, the truth of the gospel has great difficulty finding an honest mind in which to find lodgement. Hard, disinterested hearts repel the truth without a serious thought. This is to their shame and loss.
- 1) Suppose that in such a community we were to present the gospel to one hundred different people, one at a time, what might be the result?
 - a) There would be some who would scoff at it.
 - b) Some would simply ignore what we have to say.
 - c) Some might postpone thinking about it, while perhaps acknowledging its correctness.
 - d) Some might half-heartedly accept it but are unwilling to make any commitment to it.
 - e) There might be some who would believe and obey the gospel sincerely .
 - 2) What makes the difference in the various attitudes? The condition of the heart of each person. What caused the condition of the heart? The factors involved would include these:
 - a) Prejudice caused by religious error which he has already accepted.
 - b) Selfishness is a major cause.
 - c) Love of sin.
 - d) Worldliness.
 - 3) The individual is personally responsible for the kind of heart he develops.
 - a) Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."
 - b) Matthew 12:33-37: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
 - 4) "One fundamental principle with respect to the heart is that a person must know his heart before he can keep it; and a second fundamental principle is that a person can only know his heart by constantly examining it, reflecting on his attitudes, decisions, desires and emotional reactions" (ALC, 1978, pp.119f).
 - 5) "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own
-

selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13:5).

C. John 1:6-8: We Are Introduced to John, the Forerunner of Jesus.

1. Verse 6: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John."
 - a. This individual did not initiate his own work, but it was God who selected and prepared this man for the tremendous work he was about to commence.
 - b. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Matt. 3:1-4). The immediate preceding context does not identify the time factor denoted as "in those days."
 - 1) "In those days" is a strange way to begin this chapter which discusses events which occurred almost 30 years after the events of the preceding verse. However, the strangeness has a logical explanation.
 - 2) "And in the days of **these** kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom..." (Dan. 2:44). The context and secular history show that the kings meant were the Roman kings. The first kingdom of Daniel 2 was the Babylonian Empire; the second was the Medo-Persian; the third was the Grecian Empire; and the fourth was the Empire of Rome. God had determined to set up his eternal kingdom during the days when the Roman Empire was in power.
 - 3) Luke 3:1-3 gives the names of the current rulers when God's final plans for the establishment the kingdom were set in motion: "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.".
 - 4) Beginning at this point, Matthew calls attention to God's promise in Daniel 2:44. In the next verse he reports John the Immerser's message to be, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Luke gives a parallel account, but provides the names of the various rulers of the Roman system at the time. Why did he name these rulers if there is no connection with his subject and Daniel 2:44?
 - c. John is called "the Baptist." Some say this verse is a reference to the Baptist church, but that church did not come into existence until the late 1600 A.D. in England; it was formed from apostate members of the Church of Christ. [See *Traces of the Kingdom*].
 - d. Our John is called "the Baptist" because that was what he did: he baptized people. It is used the same way as Alexander is called "the coppersmith" (2 Tim. 4:14) and Zenas is called "the lawyer" (Tit. 3:13). Thayer defines the words as, "A baptizer; one who administers the rite of baptism" (p.95). Josephus, the Jewish historian, spoke of John (*Ant.* 18,5,2, p.382).
2. Verse 7: "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."
 - a. John came to be a witness; a witness is one who is qualified to testify about certain facts and truths. A qualified witness is one whose testimony may be trusted. But John was an inspired prophet who spoke God's infallible message. Since God sent this man to perform an important mission, it is certain that he provided him with all the tools to do his work.
 - b. The testimony John bore was "of the Light." We have already been prepared to perceive that Christ is the Light who has come into the world, illuminating a dark and dismal world, overwhelmed by sin.
 - c. Malachi, as he closed out the Old Testament Scriptures, foretold the coming of John the Immerser:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Mal. 4:5-6).

- 1) A great and terrible day of judgment was in the works, but before this tremendous event occurred, God would send Elijah the prophet to Israel. Some have supposed that Elijah the Tishbite, in person, would be sent; that since he did not actually die, God has held him in readiness through the centuries to be sent back to earth.
 - 2) But, as noted under Malachi 3:1, the New Testament shows that John the Baptizer is the person meant, that John came *in the spirit and power of Elijah*.
 - a) Luke 1:13: "But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John."
 - b) Luke 1:17: "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."
 - c) Matthew 11:7-14: "And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come."
 - 3) The work of John the Baptizer is described here. In the work that great man of God did, men and women and boys and girls were turned in the right direction. "The mission of this Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah, was to turn the affections of the people back to God and his divine law. He was to restore a right relation between parents and children and to turn the hearts of the children to the ancestral religion of their fathers. In this condition of heart they would be ready to receive the Messiah, for they would see in him the fulfillment of all God's wondrous promises and the glorious hope of their fathers" (Hailey, p.425: Commentary on Malachi).
 - 4) If the work of John had not been successfully accomplished, it would have been necessary for God to smite the earth with a curse. It is interesting and no doubt highly significant that the Old Testament closes with the word *curse*. This was the final statement to issue from heaven until the arrival of John; four hundred dreary, trouble-filled years lay ahead of Israel before the coming of the Messiah's forerunner.
 - 5) "All of God's prophets had done their work, but the people had rejected them all. There was no further word that God could send. The hardened and rebellious nation would continue to exist (according to God's holy purpose); but the precious fellowship of other days was gone for ever. A hint of all this may be found in these final six verses In the meanwhile, let the true followers of God keep the sacred Law and await the unfolding of the purpose of the Almighty" (Coffman, pp.305f: Commentary on Malachi).
 - d. While John was doing his work, baptizing many who came to hear his message, he stated plainly that he was not the Messiah. It seems that many in his audiences thought he was that long-anticipated Personage. Indeed, he stated in this context (verse 15) that the one for whom they were looking would come after him, and that he "is preferred before me: for he was before me."
-

- 1) Matthew 3:11-12: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."
 - 2) Mark 1:1-8: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost."
- e. Some of the earliest disciples of Christ were, for a time, followers of John (cf. John 1:35-51).
- 1) John 3:25-31: "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. 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. 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."
 - 2) Commenting on the passage above, Guy Woods wrote about John:
 - a) "He had never claimed to be anything other than what he was and he had fulfilled his mission as determined for him in heaven. Thus, instead of resenting the popularity of Jesus, he rejoiced in it; just as the friend of the bridegroom finds pleasure in the bridegroom's coming, so John's joy was complete as men turned to Jesus and accorded him the honor which was his.
 - b) "The magnificent dedication of John the Baptist is vividly shown here. He gladly and happily saw his work drawing to a close as that of Jesus began to flourish. He knew that this was the divine will and in it he fully acquiesced. Only the truly great in spirit are willing to be eclipsed as was John" (p.72: Commentary on John).
3. Verse 8: "He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light."
- a. The author tells us that John the Immerser was not *that* light. His mission was to identify and introduce the true Light to the world.
 - b. John 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."
 - c. John's work was important beyond measure. He taught and baptized a very large number of penitent Jews, who were prepared to listen to and learn from the Lord, believing that Jesus is the Messiah. He paved the way for the Lord, and made his work easier. His work was akin to building
-

a smooth road for him who would follow.

- d. Isaiah 40:3-8: “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. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”
- e. Christ spoke of John’s work as a shining light: “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” (John 5:35-36).
- f. Regarding John 1:8: “It is well to keep in mind that the term here translated light is different [from the word used in 5:35—Bob Winton]. It is a word that means original, self-shining light, like the sun; in 5:35 it is one that means a reflected light, like the moon. Christ shines by his own light; John shone by Christ’s light” (Johnson, p.29).
- g. “It is true, of course, that Jesus himself said of John, ‘He was the lamp that burneth and shineth; and ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light’ (John 5:35); but the apostle John here made a distinction between the light of John the Baptist, which was a dim and borrowed light, and that true light which lighteth every man coming into the world. In no sense could John the Baptist be that light. As the true light, Christ was self-revealed, independent, pre-existent, and eternal. He was the perfect light, in that the source was in himself as identified with the Father” (Coffman).

D. John 1:9-14: Christ Came Into the World.

1. Verse 9: “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” “There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world” (ASV).
 - a. Matthew Henry: “Christ was the true Light (v. 9); not as if John Baptist were a false light, but, in comparison with Christ, he was a very small light. Christ is the great light that deserves to be called so. Other lights are but figuratively and equivocally called so: Christ is the true light.”
 - b. Our Lord entered into our world to bring true light to every accountable person—but they receive this benefit only if they open their minds to receive the true gospel. One who allows another to deceive him, or who deceives himself, will not be aided by the gospel. “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:3-4). A man’s mind is blinded only if he allows such to happen to him.
 - c. Grammatically, the *coming* could refer to the light or every man (cf. Johnson). The subject of the sentence is light, so the coming of light into the world is the point of the verse. This light is able to bring enlightenment to every individual.
 - d. We are enlightened when we learn, believe and follow the gospel of Christ.
 - 1) Matthew 28:19: “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.”
 - 3) Luke 24:46-47: “And he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

- 4) Acts 26:18: “To open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me.”
2. Verse 10: “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.”
 - a. Christ left heaven and entered into life on earth, but the inhabitants did not choose to know him. There were, of course, great multitudes which followed him from place to place; it was difficult for him to even find a place of solitude for rest and meditation. His great entrance into Jerusalem near the end of his ministry was attended by large numbers of people who gave him a warm welcome (Matt. 21:1-11). But some of the same people who welcomed him at this time, later were moved to shout for his crucifixion:
 - 1) Mark 15:11: “But the chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.”
 - 2) Matthew 27:15-23: “Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. But the governor answered and said unto them, Which of the two will ye that I release unto you? And they said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ? They all say, Let him be crucified. And he said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified.”
 - b. Many of his erstwhile followers deserted him when he taught them something they were unwilling to accept (John 6:53-69). The greatest part of the Jewish nation did not accept his teachings. Religious leaders of the time opposed him strenuously. In Acts Two, only about three thousand obeyed the gospel; Josephus says the number of people who attended the Jewish festivals of the Passover and a few weeks later that of Pentecost was very great. Three thousand out of tens of thousands who may have heard the apostles preach is a small number of responders.
 - c. Paul experiences show that many obeyed the gospel, but they were still the minority of the population. This has almost always been true.
 - 1) Noah was in the minority.
 - 2) Abraham belonged to a minority.
 - 3) Lot was in the minority when he lived in Sodom.
 - 4) Joseph was in the minority when at home with his ten older brothers who hated him.
 - 5) Moses belonged to a minority when he lived with the Egyptians.
 - 6) Micaiah and Elijah were in the minority when they did their work.
 - 7) The early Christians were in the minority compared to the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles.
 - 8) Genuine Christians today are certainly in the minority.
 - 9) Matthew 7:13-14: “Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it” (ASV).
 - d. Matthew 13:13-15: “Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”

3. Verses 11-12: "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."
 - a. Woods:
 - 1) He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not—There is a distinction in the Greek text between "his own" (*ta idia*) to which he came and "his own" (*hoi idioi*) who rejected him. The former is neuter plural, rendered in the margin as "his own things," better, perhaps, his own possession, i. e., his own country. There, his own people—the Jews—received him not. The people of Judaea are called "his own," because they had long been God's chosen people to whom the oracles had been committed and who had been for ages the recipients of manifold favors from God's bountiful hand. They "received him not," by their refusal to accept him as their Lord and Saviour: and they were eventually to consummate their rejection of him by causing him to be put to death.
 - 2) Great though the guilt is of all who reject the Lord, greater still is that of the Jews who were so long and so notably favored with his kindly providence and gracious dealings in their behalf. (Matt. 23:37; Rom. 10:21.)
 - 3) They not only refused salvation, they treated with contempt him who was their very own and who came to them for the express purpose of giving them deliverance. See, in this connection, Matt. 23:37 and Rom. 10:21. Like the wicked Husbandman, they slew the heir. (Luke 20:14.)
 - 4) But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name:—Though his own people, as a nation, rejected Jesus, many individuals of Jewish descent, and later great multitudes of Gentiles, did receive him (be it remembered that John penned these words near the end of his life and long after the Great Commission began to be preached in all the world) and these were given the glorious privilege of becoming children of God.
 - 5) Here is clear and convincing evidence that the act of believing does not constitute one a child of God as the advocates of the doctrine of justification by faith only affirm. The verbs received and gave in this verse are aorists and thus are contemporary in time. Those who "received" him, Jesus "gave" the "privilege" of becoming children of God. The word "privilege" is translated from the Greek word *exousian* and means "right" or "privilege." Greek lexicons render it "liberty of action."
 - 6) The believer thus has the privilege to proceed with his obedience which includes repentance, confession and baptism in water for or unto the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:10; 1 Pet. 3:21.) This "liberty of action" which Jesus gives to the believer enables the one believing to continue his obedience and be saved. None but believers has the privilege; quite obviously, one does not have the privilege of becoming what one already is and thus there is clear proof here that the act of believing does not produce salvation.
 - 7) Actually, faith apart from works (of righteousness) is dead. (James 2:26.) The scriptures do not afford a single instance of any person being saved by faith until the faith involved expressed itself in action through obedience to the Lord's commands. (1 John 2:4; 5:3.) Real faith leads to obedience.
 - b. Another view of the identification of "his own" (*ta idia*) to which he came and "his own" (*hoi idioi*) who rejected him, the first "his own" having reference to the Jewish people in general and the second "his own" referring to those who had been prepared for the Messiah by the work John the Immerser. Of course, neither view says that the entirety of the groups indicated totally rejected him.
 - c. This passage, properly understood, destroys the false doctrine that salvation is by faith alone. John here tells us that those who believe in Christ are given the right (privilege, power, authority) to become children of God.
-

- d. Hebrews 11:6: “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”
 - 1) The preceding verse (Heb. 11:5) states that Enoch was pleasing to God; he pleased God because he walked with God; he walked with God because he believed and obeyed the will of God.
 - 2) Since he possessed this great standing with the Almighty, Enoch was hugely blessed by God. Anyone who will ponder the matter will come to see the importance of being pleasing to God.
 - e. Believing in Christ the Son of God is likewise essential—for so says the passage we are presently studying. Believers in Christ have the right to proceed to become children of God. They are not his children at the mere point of their faith; that faith much be expressed in overt obedience to the Gospel.
 - 1) John 8:24: “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.”
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (ASV).
 - 3) Luke 24:47: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (ASV).
 - 4) Acts 2:38: “And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
 - 5) Acts 22:16: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name.”
 - 4. Verse 13: “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”
 - a. Those people being described here by John are those who believe in Christ and become children of God by obeying the gospel. The New Birth is introduced at this point, and is further discussed by the Lord in John 3:1-8.
 - b. It is delineated for us more fully in 1 Peter 1:22-25: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
 - c. From the time God brought them into existence as a special nation, they sustained a unique relationship with the Almighty. Their history started with Abraham; their lineage is traced from Abraham, through Isaac, through Jacob, and thence through the twelve sons of Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel). Their fifteen-hundred-year history is checkered with times of obedience and disobedience. In times of rebellion and general apostasy, there were some (perhaps) many who remained loyal. God told Elijah, that even in the apostate Northern Kingdom of Israel of the time, that there were thousands who remained faithful: “Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him” (1 Kings 19:18).
 - d. The nation of Israel was in general rebellion to God when John the Immerser and Jesus came on the scene. Yet there were many who sought to do right, which is evident by the large numbers who went out to hear John.
 - e. Matthew 3:1-10: “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand Then went out to him Jerusalem, and
-

all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.”

- f. Their claim on God’s special providence was based on their fleshly kinship to Abraham was on the verge of ending. A new arrangement was about to be established. An entirely New Covenant was soon to come into being. Fleshly relationship would be a thing of the past; what will then count would be found in obedience to the Gospel of the Messiah.
- 1) Jeremiah 31:31-34: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”
 - 2) Ephesians 2:11-18: “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”
 - 3) After quoting from Jeremiah 31:31-34, the inspired author of Hebrews tells us: “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:12-13).
- g. Our text reveals to us that our relationship to God under the Gospel System is not based on certain things, which he lists:
- 1) **Not on blood relationships.** Brother Woods informs us that the word for *blood* in the Greek text is plural. Despite the bloodline of our father or mother, we cannot receive adoption as children of God on that basis. Offspring of great earthly kings and queens do not have any special spiritual connection with Heaven. Descendants of Abraham through Jacob did not, under Christ, sustain any bond to God on that account. To become a child of God under the New Covenant, both Jew and Gentile must obey the same gospel.
 - 2) **Not on the will of the flesh or on the will on man.** The power, riches, influence or greatness of our parents, cannot make us a child of God. The New Birth is a spiritual operation; it has nothing to do with fleshly operations.
- h. Woods: The honored privilege of sonship is through God's will and not the result of birth, race or
-

special favor. The word "born" here suggests the idea of begotten and it was the Spirit's intent here to emphasize the fact that the New Birth (John 3:3,5), was not after the pattern of the fleshly birth, nor did it originate in the will of man, but of God. God, alone, can impart spiritual life; because only deity possesses it in its original state Though not of or out of man's will, it is through man's will, since the will must be brought into subjection to the will of God before the new birth can occur. (John 7:37; 1 Pet. 1:22, 23; James 1:18; 1 Cor. 4:15.)

- i. James 1:18: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." Instead of leading men into sin, God has begotten and brought forth many into the new life in Christ. God is the source of life, not of sin and death.
 - 1) Individuals make the decision whether they desire to become a child of God. "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:15).
 - 2) The Bible does not teach that God hand-picks those who are to receive the new birth and be saved. The individuals to be saved make the choice. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). Those who refuse to reject ungodliness and worldly lust, or who refuse to live soberly, righteously and godly, will not be saved by God's grace.
 - a) "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3:3-5).
 - b) Salvation is not gained by works of righteousness which we did ["which we did ourselves"—ASV]. This statement affirms that works of human origin cannot save anyone. "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" (Eph. 2:8-9). If we could be saved by our good works, there would have been no need for the death of Christ.
 - 3) But this does not mean that human activity of every kind is excluded in the process of salvation by grace. It is manifest that God requires our obedience in certain matters which are conditions to salvation. "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).
 - 4) Notice the contrast Paul draws a contrast, in Titus 2:11-12, between "works of righteousness" and "washing of regeneration" in Titus 3:5: we are not saved by the former, but we are saved by the latter. If this washing of regeneration involves some act of obedience on our part, then that action does not clash with the process of being saved by grace. The washing of regeneration is not a work of righteousness which we do. We shall see that the washing of regeneration is baptism, and therefore baptism is not a work of righteousness, contrary to the assertions of sectarians.
 - 5) When Christ approached John at the River Jordan, he requested that John baptize him. John perceived that the Lord had the guilt of no sin, therefore did not need to be baptized. But Christ persuaded him to immerse him, saying: "...Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him" (Matt. 3:15).
 - a) It was the Lord's obligation to obey all the commands of God; he stated that it was incumbent upon him to be baptized; being baptized fulfilled God's righteousness. "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Ps. 119:172).

- b) If he had not submitted to baptism, he would have been disobedient to God, just as some of the Jews had been: "And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:29-30).
5. Verse 14: "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."
- a. Other translations:
- 1) English Study Bible: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we saw his glory. Glory as of the only begotten of the Father; full of grace and truth" (Harold Littrell).
 - 2) New King James: "And the Word became 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."
- b. This One who was with God in the beginning [in eternity before time began] took on a physical body and lived among mankind. This Person [called "the Word"] was directly involved in the original creation.
- 1) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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 he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."
 - 2) Hebrews 1:1-4: "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; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
 - 3) John 1:1-3: "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. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
- c. Christ, the Second Person in the Godhead, has always existed; his life and being did not begin when the Holy Spirit begot his physical body within the womb of Mary. Definitively declared to be "God" at the beginning of this chapter, and since a Divine Being can have neither beginning nor end, this great Personage entered into a human body in order to complete the earthly mission which had been developed before the creation. There has never been an occasion when Christ did not exist; there will never be an occasion when Christ will not exist. His goings forth have been from of old, even from eternity (Cf. Micah 5:2).
- d. His physical body developed within Mary just as do all other babies being carried by their mothers. When the time of development was completed, baby Jesus was born. He had to be cared for just as all infants are; he endured all the pains [such as teething) and struggles (learning to crawl, climb and walk) as other babies. As he grew to adulthood, he would have appeared to just another young man; outwardly he would have looked like any normal Jew of his physical age.
- 1) Mary and Joseph were just as concerned about his physical well-being as other parents are; they were worried about him when he disappeared from the company when they started back to Nazareth after being in Jerusalem for Jewish religious activities (Luke 2). They returned to the great city and searched for twelve-year-old Jesus, who then returned home with them. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).
-

- 2) “Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:5-11, ASV).
- e. He lived in the home of Joseph and Mary as he grew to adulthood and began the work he came to do. When they found him in Jerusalem when he was twelve, he made a remarkable statement to them: “And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:46-52, ASV).
- f. Brother Woods offers these pithy comments:
- 1) Even the most casual of readers must be impressed with the logical and verbal connection between verse 1 and verse 14 of this remarkable chapter. The Word *was* (evermore existed) and *became* flesh (at a specific point in time) and dwelt among men.
 - 2) He who was "with" (*pros*) God became (*egeneto*) flesh and was with men during his sojourn on earth. Thus, he who was of the very nature of God became man in flesh without divesting himself of his divine nature. He simply took on human nature as well. (Phil. 2:5-11.) He entered upon a new mode of being without becoming a new being.
 - 3) The word "dwelt" has the marginal reading, tabernacled, the literal significance of the word in the Greek text. It means to pitch one's tent. A tent or tabernacle, as conceived in this passage, is a very temporary abode and thus the word indicates the brief span involved by our Lord in the flesh. The word is used to describe the earthly house of us all by Paul in 2 Cor. 5:1. [Gospel Advocate Commentaries – A Commentary on the Gospel According to John].
 - 4) “‘Dwelt’ here is not the usual word for living in a place; it is the translation of *eskenose*, third person singular of the aorist indicative of *skenoo*, a tent. The second Person of the godhead thus took up residence in a tent of flesh while on earth. From his royal court in the sky our blessed Saviour condescended to come down into a world of woe and to dwell in a tabernacle (tent) of flesh with us in order that some day we may settle down permanently with him in everlasting habitations in the highest heavens. With Paul we may indeed rejoice to say, ‘For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle (tent) were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.’ (2 Corinthians 5:1.)” [Guy Woods, *Questions and Answers*, Open Forum, p.324].
- g. John and other disciples beheld the glory possessed by the Messiah during his sojourn on earth. As predicted and fulfilled, he was [Deity] God in a human body.
- 1) Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
 - 2) Matthew 1:20-25: “But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son;
-

and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us....”

h. His glory was seen in various specific activities and situations.

1) When he was transfigured:

a) Matthew 17:1-3: “And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: and he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him.”

b) 2 Peter 1:16-18: “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount.”

2) When he performed miracles:

a) Luke 8:22-25: “Now it came to pass on one of those days, that he entered into a boat, himself and his disciples; and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake: and they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. And he awoke, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And being afraid they marvelled, saying one to another, Who then is this, that he commandeth even the winds and the water, and they obey him?”

b) John 11:43-45: “And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Many therefore of the Jews, who came to Mary and beheld that which he did, believed on him.”

3) When he presented the truths concerning the New Covenant:

a) Matthew 7:28-29: “And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes” (ASV).

b) John 14:6: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

c) John 8:24: “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.”

d) Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (ASV).

4) When he predicted future events:

a) Matthew 24:35-42: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only. And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking,

marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man. Then shall two man be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left. Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh.”

b) John 5:28-29: “Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs 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 judgment.”

5) When he was raised from the dead:

a) Matthew 28:5-10: “And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word. And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me.”

b) John 20:26-31: “And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, 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 see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.”

6) When he ascended back to Heaven:

a) Acts 1:9-11: “And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.”

b) Psalm 24:7-10: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors: And the King of glory will come in. Who is the King of glory? Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors: And the King of glory will come in. Who is this King of glory? Jehovah of hosts, He is the King of glory.”

c) Daniel 7:13-14: “I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

i. The only begotten of the Father.

1) This great truth carries too much weight for the modernists and liberals of our time to bear! In every way they can invent, they think they must deny the divine Sonship of Christ.

2) We take the following from Vine [*Only Begotten*]:

- a) With reference to Christ, the phrase "the only begotten from the Father," John 1:14, RV (see also the marg.), indicates that as the Son of God He was the sole representative of the Being and character of the One who sent Him. In the original the definite article is omitted both before "only begotten" and before "Father," and its absence in each case serves to lay stress upon the characteristics referred to in the terms used. The apostle's object is to demonstrate what sort of glory it was that he and his fellow apostles had seen. That he is not merely making a comparison with earthly relationships is indicated by para, "from." The glory was that of a unique relationship and the word "begotten" does not imply a beginning of His Sonship. It suggests relationship indeed, but must be distinguished from generation as applied to man.
- b) We can only rightly understand the term "the only begotten" when used of the Son, in the sense of unoriginated relationship. "The begetting is not an event of time, however remote, but a fact irrespective of time. The Christ did not become, but necessarily and eternally is the Son. He, a Person, possesses every attribute of pure Godhood. This necessitates eternity, absolute being; in this respect He is not 'after' the Father" (Moule). The expression also suggests the thought of the deepest affection, as in the case of the OT word *yachid*, variously rendered, "only one," Gen 22:2,12; "only son," Jer 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zech 12:10; "only beloved," Prov 4:3, and "darling," Ps 22:20; 35:17. [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers; also at page 140 in the printed version].
- 3) Concerning the "only begotten" phrase, hear the wise words of Foy Wallace:
- a) It is now claimed that the only word *only* alone translates the two-syllable word *monogenes* (mono-genes). If so, first of all, the one-hundred-forty-eight did not know it, for the forty-seven of England's Authorized Version and the one-hundred-one of America's Revised Version translated it with two words: *only begotten*: and, in the second place, what word is necessary or would be required to translate *only begotten*, or could convey that full phrase is without meaning and non-existent, in which case *monogenes* imply conception without begetting. The incontrovertible fact is: *the word monogenes—(monogenes)—cannot be fully translated into the English without the two words: mono (only) and genes (only) and genes (begotten), and that simply spells: only begotten*
- b) In an effort to offset "the only begotten Son" it is being said that all Christians are begotten of God. But in the same sense we are all sons of God—so the same sophism used to dispose of "only begotten" would also eliminate "only Son." To dispose of one they eliminate both! The word *monogenes* (only begotten) is used five times in reference to Jesus and once in reference to the miraculous intervention in the birth of Isaac—but never, not once, employed in reference to us being spiritually begotten of God. It should be evident to any one qualified to teach or to preach that the reference to those who are spiritually begotten of God is a metaphor—and the effort to compare it with John 3:16 is a dodge unworthy of honest exegesis....
- c) The words of Professor O.T. Allis, the conservative scholar of Princeton, in his reference to the revised Standard Version, are appropriate here: *The version was prepared by liberals; it is owned by liberals, and they will see to it that no change will be made to make it acceptable.* (Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *The Present Truth*, pp.1019f). [We might also here note that the ESV (English Standard Version) has replaced the RSV in the fancy of the modernists; and that the NIV, the darling of liberals, is mighty close to the ESV, if not worse—Bob Winton].
- j. The great Personage was full of grace and truth.
- 1) He possessed (es) the completeness of Deity: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the
-

Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9; cf. John 1:1-3).

- 2) He possesses also the fullness of grace [loving favor; mercy]. There is no particle of grace that does not pertain to Christ, the second member of the Godhead.
- 3) He possesses the fullness of truth. There is no particle of truth that he does not have. While he was on earth, he did not know the time of his second coming. “But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is” (Mark 23:32-33).
 - a) Was there any other truth which God the Father knew but which Jesus did not know?
 - b) Since Christ has returned to Heaven to sit on the Father’s right hand, holding the full power of the eternal kingdom in his hands, does he now know the time of the second coming? We may presume that he does.
- 4) Possessing perfect knowledge of the Old Testament, when he stated that he did not know when the second coming would be, he said in effect, that the Old Testament does not reveal that truth. Having perfect knowledge of the truth that was to be revealed as the New Testament, he still stated that he did not know when that time would be; this clearly implies that the New Testament does not reveal the time he will return.
 - a) Was there any truth in the Old Testament Christ did not know? If so, what was it?
 - b) Was there any truth of his gospel which was to be placed in the New Testament which he did not know? If so, what was it?
 - c) Our text says that he was full of grace and full of truth. Is there any speck of grace that he does not have or any iota of truth that he does not now know?

E. John 1:15-18: John Introduces the Messiah to the People.

1. Verse 15: “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.” “John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me: for he was before me” (ASV).
 - a. Compare:
 - 1) “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight; John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the country of Judaea, and all they of Jerusalem; And they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I baptized you in water; But he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:1-8).
 - 2) “There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light” (John 1:6-8).
 - b. Vincent:
 - 1) Is preferred before me *emprosthēn* ... Literally, "is become," so the English Revised Version (1885): "or is here (compare John 6:25) before me." Before is used of "time," not of "dignity or rank." The expression is enigmatical in form: "my successor is my predecessor." The idea of the superior dignity of Christ is not a necessary inference from His coming after John, as, on that interpretation, the words would imply. On the contrary, the herald who precedes is inferior in dignity to the Prince whom he announces.

- 2) For ... Or "because." The reason for the preceding statement: the key to the enigma.
 - 3) He was before me ... Literally, "first in regard of me" (English Revised Version (1885), in the margin) A similar expression occurs in John 15:18: the world hated me "before" (it hated) "you" ... The reference is to the pre-existence of Christ. When speaking of Christ's historic manifestation, "is become before me," the Baptist says ... When speaking of Christ's eternal being, "He was before me" ... The meaning is, then, that Christ, in His human manifestation, appeared after John, but, as the Eternal Word, preceded him, because He existed before him. Compare John 8:58. [Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved].
- c. Compare:
- 1) Matthew 3:11: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."
 - 2) John 15:18: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."
 - 3) Mark 1:7: "And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose."
 - 4) John 3:28: "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him."
 - 5) John 8:58: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."
2. Verse 16: "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."
- a. In this passage, the apostle John speaks of Christ. It is not John the Immerser who makes this statement, for he did not receive the full benefits of God's grace: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. 11:11).
 - b. The gospel of John was written near the end of the first century. Looking back, he perceives that "we" received—those who became Christians.
 - 1) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
 - 3) Ephesians 2:11-13: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
 - 4) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 - c. "Grace for grace." Christ is full of grace (John 1:14). The supply of grace is inexhaustible. "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 1:14). But that does not give us the right to plunge deeper into sin in order to receive more grace: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1-2). All of the characteristics of the Godhead abide in Christ (Col. 2:9).
3. Verse 17: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."
- a. The law meant is that which was given to Israel through Moses. God turned the descendants of
-

Jacob into a nation of many people; he provided for them a territory in which to live, and a law by which they were to be governed. The Mosaic Law was superior to any law developed by human philosophy and ingenuity. It demanded that Israel dwell apart and independent of the pagans. To the extent to which they followed this law, to that extent they were what God intended for them to be.

- b. If the law was obeyed perfectly, it would keep them from committing sin; but no human could keep that law flawlessly. No provision was inculcated in the Mosaic Law by which the guilt of sin could be removed.
 - 1) "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39).
 - 2) "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:1-4).
 - c. Each year on the Day of Atonement a scapegoat was released in the wilderness, symbolically to bear away the sins of the people. But the next year, another scapegoat was released, and another sacrifice was offered for sin. "And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall *the priest* make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD" (Lev. 16:29-30).
 - d. Each first day of the week, faithful Christians gather to eat the Lord's Supper, not to call to mind the sins of the past, but to remember the Lord's death, the only sacrifice sufficient to remove our guilt. The Israelites were told to remember their sins; Christians are told to remember Christ. The blessings enjoyed in Christ include the real forgiveness of sins. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:12).
 - e. Those sins done while we were out of Christ are forgiven when we obey the gospel (Acts 22:16), and are never brought up against us again. As a Christian conducts his life, he will stumble on occasion; those sins he commits are taken away by the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7); he is obligated, of course, to repent, confess wrong, and ask for pardon when he perceives his guilt.
 - f. The apostle plainly states the reason why the Old Covenant could not make the worshiper perfect: the weakness lay in the fact that the blood of bullocks and goats could not remove the guilt of sin.
 - 1) The old law had the ability to purify the flesh (ceremonially). "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*" (Heb. 9:12). They received pardon (2 Chron. 7:12-16), but it was given based on the proposition that Christ would make forgiveness possible by his sacrificial death. In other words, they were pardoned "on credit." "And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually" (2 Chron. 7:12-16).
-

- 2) But the new law [the gospel of Christ] can do what the old law could not do:
 - a) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - b) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
 - c) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - g. The Mosaic Law could not justify the offenders, but it was designed to condition the Jews to be ready when the Messiah came.
 - 1) Galatians 3:19: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."
 - 2) Galatians 3:23-29: "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
 - h. Brother Woods contributes this:
 - 1) Law is "a rule of action," and grace is unmerited favor. It involves grievous error to assume, as many today do, that all there was of the Old Testament order was law, and all there is of the New Testament system is grace. Paul's purpose was to show the origin of law and of grace, and not to limit their operations. It was the unmerited favor of God which allowed sinful man to approach him through Jewish modes of worship and it is by means of "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" that we are made free from the law of sin and death in this, the Christian age. (Rom. 8:2.)
 - 2) To those who asked, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:29.) Any view of either grace or faith which minimizes the obligation of the sinner to obey the commandments is a perversion of biblical teaching and pernicious in its tendencies. Peter's words to this point are clear and unequivocal: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34, 35.) To work righteousness is to keep the commandments. (Psalm 119:172.) [Gospel Advocate Commentaries: A Commentary on the Gospel According to John.]
 4. Verse 18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." ["No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12)].
 - a. No man has seen God at any time. Since each of the three members of the Godhead is referred to as "God" [deity], then no man has seen either of them in their divine nature; human eyes cannot see a spirit being. The word "Godhead" literally means "Godhood." The suffix "hood" means "state, quality, condition" (Webster's New World Dictionary). *Motherhood* is a term which describes the state, quality, or condition pertaining to being a mother. *Childhood* is a term describing the state, quality, or condition which pertains to being a child. So with *parenthood*, *priesthood*, and *brotherhood*. "Godhood" describes the quality, state, or condition pertaining to being God, having divinity.
 - b. The Father has this Godhood: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for
-

God hath showed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:19-20).

- 1) Christ has this Godhood: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).
 - 2) The Holy Spirit has this Godhood: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-5). Notice that the Holy Spirit is called "God."
- c. The divine nature cannot be seen with physical eyes.
- 1) John 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - 2) John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."
- d. There is but one divine nature; therefore, there is but one God (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:18). The three divine personalities are of but one essence, one nature; and this one nature is God (*theos*). There are three persons in one Godhead (John 1:1-3; Matt. 3:15-17).
- 1) Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD."
 - 2) Isaiah 45:18: "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else."
 - 3) John 1:1-3: "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. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - 4) Matthew 3:15-17: "... Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 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." [The Three members of the Godhead present at his baptism].
 - 5) Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
 - 6) 2 Corinthians 13:14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."
- e. The apostle John (1 John 4:12) shows that if we love one another, then God dwells in us and his love is made perfect in us. These advantages may not seem to be important to a worldly-minded individual, but to the mature saint they are highly meaningful.
- 1) God dwells in us, but not in a personal or literal way. He indwells us in the same way that Christ dwells in us—by faith: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:17). Faith comes through learning God's word, therefore as we hear, understand, believe, and follow the word of God, the Father and the Son [as well as the Holy Spirit] are said to abide in us.
 - 2) Our faithful obedience establishes a spiritual fellowship with the Godhead. We cannot see God with our human eyesight, but with our knowledge that we are in full compliance with his will, we rightly perceive that God dwells in us. The specific item of compliance identified by John is that we love one another.
-

- f. The apostle [in 1 John 4:12] affirms that God's love is perfected in us—based on our compliance with God's will. Again, the specific item of compliance identified by John is that we love one another. To be perfected means to be brought to a mature status. As we abide by the instructions, commands, and precepts of God's word, we come into closer harmony with his will; specifically, our love for others increases in scope and depth. Love for each other is an indication of our love for God:
- 1) John 4:20-21: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."
 - 2) The point in Matthew 5:43-48 is for Christians to be perfect in their love: that is, love all saints and all sinners; be whole, complete, and perfect in love by loving everyone even as does the Father. We can never have the degree of love possessed by God for saints and sinners, but we can be perfect in love by including all within the limits of our love. "The meaning that Jesus gives...is that his disciples are to let their love be universal, unconfined by partialities, and with respect to its objects as large as God's; not that their love...can be supposed in other respects to be in proportion to the divine love" (Boles, Commentary on Matthew, p.153).
- g. Our source of knowledge of God and his will is Christ, the Son of the Almighty. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18).
- 1) Christ was in "the bosom of the Father." This denotes the closeness of the Father and his Son. When our Lord described the position of Lazarus and Abraham in his report of the experiences of these real people, he said the lost rich man saw Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham. He kept Lazarus in *Abraham's bosom*, which was a place of comfort and happiness.
 - 2) In ancient terminology, the guest of honor at a feast occupied the highest place of honor, which was at the right hand of the host; this was called "the bosom" of the host. Christ used the term figuratively. To be in the "bosom of Abraham" in Jewish thought was to have the greatest honor (for a Jew). Lazarus (a Jew) is described as having the highest possible honor and blessing.
- h. Christ *declared* God to mankind.
- 1) Vincent reports: Hath declared exegeesato. Or, rendering the aorist strictly, "He declared." From ek, "forth," and hegeomai, "to lead the way." Originally, "to lead or govern." Hence, like the Latin praeire verbis, "to go before with words, to prescribe or dictate a form of words." "To draw out in narrative, to recount or rehearse" (see Acts 15:14, and the note at Luke 24:35). To relate "in full; to interpret, or translate." Therefore, exegeesis, "exegesis," is "interpretation or explanation." The word exegeetes was used by the Greeks of an "expounder" of oracles, dreams, omens, or sacred rites. Thus, Croesus, finding the suburbs of Sardis alive with serpents, sent to the soothsayers exegeetas of Telmessus (Herodotus, i., 78). The word thus comes to mean a "spiritual director." Plato calls Apollo the tutelary director patroos exegeetes of religion ("Republic," 427), and says, "Let the priests be interpreters for life" ("Laws," 759). In the Septuagint the word is used of the magicians of Pharaoh's court (Gen 41:8,24), and the kindred verb of "teaching or interpreting" concerning leprosy (Lev 14:57). John's meaning is that the Word "revealed or manifested and interpreted" the Father to men. The word occurs only here in John's writings. Wycliffe renders, "He hath told out." These words conclude the Prologue. [Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved].
 - 2) Vine states: exegeomai (e)chge/omai, NT:1834), lit., "to lead out," signifies "to make known, rehearse, declare," Luke 24:35 (KJV, "told"; RV, rehearsed"); Acts 10:8; 15:12,14; 21:19. In John 1:18, in the sentence "He hath declared Him," the other meaning of the verb is in view, to unfold in teaching, "to declare" by making known [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical
-

Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].

F. John 1:19-28: John Converses With Certain Priests and Levites.

1. Verses 19-20: "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." NKJ: Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."
 - a. The religious leaders of the Jews wanted to know of John's status and identity. Could he be the long-promised Messiah? We are told in verse twenty-four that these Jews had been sent by the Pharisees.
 - 1) The first general promise was recorded in Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
 - 2) More specific promises were later given: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:18; cf. Gal. 3:16).
 - b. John the Immerser went on record that he was not the Messiah. His testimony was very definitely to state that was not the Christ. Their interest in him was due to the great excitement his preaching had incited among the Jews. "And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins" (Mark 1:5). The querists did not directly ask John whether he was the Christ, but that was clearly their intent.
 - c. Woods: John is called "the Baptist" to distinguish him from other Johns mentioned in the New Testament, and also to indicate the nature of his work which was to baptize people in preparing them for the coming of the Lord. (Matt. 3:1-12.)
 - 1) "The Baptist," is, literally, the baptizer. His appearance, his preaching, and his manner of life were all unique in that day.
 - 2) He was austere of life and uncompromising in preaching and he made it crystal clear that the Jews, who regarded themselves as fully acceptable to God because of their ancestry were in need of repentance.
 - 3) His ministry attracted much attention and there went out to hear him "all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem." (Mark 1:5.) The place where these events occurred was on the eastern shore of the Jordan river, nor far from the Sea of Galilee. (p.37).
2. Verses 21-22: "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?" NKJ: And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"
 - a. Their inquiry continued: Are you Elijah? John denied being that great Old Testament prophet. "And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey" (Matt. 3:4). His food and clothing were rough. His clothing was made of camel's hair, and he wore a leather girdle. Elijah wore similar clothing (2 Kings 1:8). His food was locusts and wild honey. Locusts were authorized under the Law (Lev. 11:22). Wild honey was abundant in Palestine (Deut. 32:13; Judg. 14:8; 1 Sam. 14:25-26; Ps. 81:16). His manner of life was austere, which was conducive to the type of work he did. His needs were simple and few.
 - b. They asked whether he was *that prophet*. This seems to refer to the prophet described by Moses and who is identified in the New Testament as Christ. The Jews, in their questions to John, may have distinguished the Messiah from "that prophet" of the present clause.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 18:15-19: "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; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”

- 2) Acts 3:20-23: “And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”
 - 3) John denied being the Christ; he denied being Elijah; he was not *the prophet* of the above two passages. He will give them a more direct answer in verse twenty-three.
 - c. Apparently they could not think of any other great person that John might be, so they demanded that he tell them plainly who he was.
3. Verses 23-25: “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?”
- a. “He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet. And they had been sent from the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet?” (ASV).
 - b. John’s identity was of little importance; it was his work that was paramount. He described himself merely as a voice calling out in the wilderness. Occasionally we hear of an individual wanting to be baptized by some famous, prominent preacher—evidently thinking that the one doing the immersing makes a significant difference in the effect of their baptism.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 3:4-9: “For when one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not men? What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building.”
 - 2) Paul planted the gospel in their hearts when he preached it to them; Apollos watered the planted seed; but it was God who brought forth the fruit. Paul preached the gospel to the Corinthians, speaking the words the Lord gave him to present; Apollos worked with them to encourage their obedience; but it was God who provided the power (the gospel) by which they were saved.
 - 3) Suppose the one doing the baptizing is a rank hypocrite. His spiritual condition would have no effect on the process of baptizing someone into Christ. If he were an outstanding case of spirituality, his personal, exceptional goodness would not be passed on to the one baptized.
 - 4) God used the efforts of John to prepare the way for the greater work of Christ. John did his work well. Compare: “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” (Matt. 11:11). Being citizens of God’s great spiritual kingdom, which came into being following the marvelous work of Christ and his apostles, provides us with greater blessings than those which John the Baptizer possessed during his time on earth.

- c. "By reference to Isaiah's prophecy, he showed that he fulfilled the prediction of one who would come to prepare the way for Messiah. (Isa. 40:3.) The reference to the wilderness is figurative and designed to indicate the barren, fruitless waste that was then Israel. Their deplorable spiritual state necessitated the coming of John to prepare the way for the Christ" (Woods, p.39).
 - d. The instigators of the questions directed to John were the Pharisees, not the most spiritual-minded of the Jewish nation. "The Pharisees was the largest and most powerful sect among the Jews. They lived rigorous lives, affected great piety, frequently fasted and engaged in long prayers. They were wholly dedicated to the traditions of their fathers and made a great show of their religion. Because of this they were highly respected by the people and gained great influence over them. Many of them were hypocritical, as well as inwardly corrupt" (*ibid.*).
 - e. They could not comprehend when John was baptizing, if he were not Elijah, Christ, or *that prophet*. The Jews were well aware of the various washings which pertained to the Law of Moses, but baptism [immersion in water] was clearly new to them.
 - f. "In complete frustration in their effort to induce John to claim identity with Messiah or other eminent personages (which they had undoubtedly expected him to do and which they would have promptly answered with the charge of blasphemy or falsehood), they now sought to convict him of inconsistency. If he were not one of these eminent personalities, why did he baptize? Baptism was the consummating act into a new relationship; why did he assume the privilege of so doing if he were without the authority which only such people would possess? Their design was obvious; they would condemn him on the basis of his admitted practice" (*ibid.*)
4. Verses 26-27: "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."
- a. "The latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose. The words 'standeth' (Joh 1:26) and 'shoe' showed that the person of whom the Baptist spoke had a visible, bodily form. To loose the latchet was a peculiarly servile office. The Talmud says, 'Every office a servant will do for his master, a scholar should perform for his teacher, except loosing his sandal-thong.'
 - 1) The greatest prophet felt unworthy to render Christ this humble service, but unconverted sinners often presume to serve Christ according to their own will, and fully expect to have their service honored and rewarded. Taken as a whole, the answer of John appears indirect and insufficient.
 - 2) What was there in all this to authorize him to baptize? This appears to be his meaning: 'You demand my authority for baptism. It rests in him for whom I prepare the way. It is a small matter to introduce baptism in water for one so worthy. If you accept him, my baptism will need no explanation; and if you reject him, my rite and its authority are both wholly immaterial'" (*Fourfold Gospel, PowerBible*).
 - b. The following is from author's commentary on Matthew 3:11:
 - 1) John baptized the people in water, but one was coming after him who was greater than John, who would baptize certain ones with the Holy Ghost and fire. The apostles were baptized (overwhelmed) in the Holy Spirit in Acts 2; all the wicked will be baptized in the fire of hell. Three baptisms are mentioned in the verse: (1) baptism in water, (2) baptism in the Spirit, and (3) baptism in the lake of fire.
 - 2) Did the baptism of John bring them to repentance? (Cf. "I baptize you with water unto repentance"). The purpose of his baptism was "the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). "The desire to receive the forgiveness of sin would prompt those who had not submitted to John's baptism to repent so that they might be baptized and in so doing receive the remission of sins" (Boles, p.82). Repentance brought them to baptism; baptism did not bring them to repentance. "Promotions in the army are in order to the encouragement of obedience and valor,
-

although these qualities of the good soldier must appear before promotion can take place. In the same way was John's baptism in order to repentance....The general purpose of John's baptism was to bring people to repentance" (McGarvey, p.37).

- 3) *With* water is from the Greek *en* ("in"). John baptized people in Jordan: "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized" (Jn. 3:23).
 - 4) Many think that this verse teaches that baptism of the Holy Spirit and baptism in fire are for all righteous people. To best understand who would be baptized in the Spirit, the fulfillment must be weighed. In John 14-16, Christ gave the promise of Holy Spirit baptism to the apostles only. Acts 1:26—2:47 shows that only the apostles received it. John's statement must be understood as being limited.
 - 5) Baptism with fire is a reference to the final punishment of the wicked. A limited fulfillment of the statement could be to the overthrow of Judaism in A.D. 70. The next verse shows conclusively that no rational person should desire the baptism of fire. The baptism of fire has nothing to do with the "cloven tongues like as of fire" that sat upon the apostles when they received Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 2:3). "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:12).
 - 6) The One coming after John would be mightier than John. John only baptized in water; Christ would baptize in the Spirit and fire.
 - a) Mark 1:7: "And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose."
 - b) Luke 3:16: "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."
 - c) John 3:28-31: "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. 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."
5. Verse 28: "These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing."
- a. Bethany, beyond the Jordan," is called Bethabara in the King James' Version. The American Standard translation has a marginal reading, "Many ancient authorities read, Bethabarah, some Betharabah. Comp. John 3:23, 26; 10:40." The words "beyond the Jordan," distinguish the Bethany here mentioned from that near Jerusalem where Mary, Martha and Lazarus resided. The word "Bethabara" means "the place of a ferry," so named from the fact that this means was used at the place for crossing. Here, John was baptizing, the verb indicating continuous action. The events immediately described occurred on the east bank of the Jordan opposite Samaria and Galilee. [Woods, p.40].
 - b. The apostle was guided to identify the place as being on the eastern side of Jordan. The name given in the King James means "place of a ferry," a place at which travelers could cross the Jordan River. Doubtless there was sufficient water in amount and depth and accessibility for the prophet to immerse many people.
 - c. In John 3:23, we are told that John baptized "...in AEnon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized." The name *Aenon* means "springs, a place near Salim where John baptized [John 3:23]. It was probably near the upper source of the Wady Far'ah, an open valley extending from Mount Ebal to the Jordan. It is full of springs. A place has been
-

found called 'Ainun, four miles north of the springs" (PowerBible).

G. John 1:29-32: The Lamb of God.

1. Verse 29: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
 - a. The next day, after certain priests and Levites had come to inquire about John's identity, the statement of this verse and of those which follow were spoken. John saw Christ approaching and these words were entirely appropriate and timely for the occasion.
 - b. The Passover of the Old Testament was a figure for the true Passover, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.
 - 1) Isaiah 53:7: "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."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 5:7: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."
 - c. The animal sacrifices of the Mosaic Law were unable to remove the guilt of sin from the Israelites. They were forgiven on the basis of the future sacrifice of Christ. Their pardon was "on credit."
 - 1) Hebrews 10:1-4 : "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - 2) Romans 3:25: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."
 - d. The basic truth of the gospel is the ability of the Savior to bear away from us the guilt of our sins.
 - 1) 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."
 - 2) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
 - 4) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 - 5) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
 - e. His earthly mission was limited **to** the Jews, but was done also **for** the Gentiles: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16-17).
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

- 2) 1 John 2:1-2: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."
2. Verse 30: "This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me."
- a. "Every line of the fourth Gospel is directed to establishing the identity of Christ as God incarnated, or God come in the flesh; and this verse can be true only in that context. John the Baptist was older than Christ, having been conceived six months earlier (Luke 1:36), and it could be true that Christ was 'before' John the Baptist only with respect to his eternal existence, a truth John had already recorded in John 1:15" (Coffman).
- b. Although John the Baptizer's work was great, the work of the Messiah was far greater; although John was an outstanding man of God, Christ was the very Son of God. John understood this and accepted it without complaint. John was conceived six months before Jesus, but the life of Jesus did not begin in Mary's womb. He existed from eternity.
- 1) Genesis 1:1-3: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."
- 2) John 1:1-3: "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. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
- 3) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Beth-lehem 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."
- c. Christ is depicted as an eternal being, thus divine. His activities have been going on, Micah says, from "of old, from everlasting." John 1:1-3 authenticates this truth.
- 1) The "Watchtower Witnesses" assert that Christ had a beginning, that he was the first thing God created. They cite Revelation 3:14 as evidence, but the word *beginning* in that passage refers to Christ, the *beginner* of all things; he created everything (Col. 1:15-17; John 1:3).
- 2) Christ possesses all the characteristics of God (Col. 2:9). *Godhead* speaks of the qualities that pertain to being God; Christ has all of these attributes. One of the features of God is the possession of an eternal nature. In other words, since Christ is God (deity), he could not have ever had a beginning; there was never a time when Christ did not exist. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).
- 3) Christ is called "God" in the Bible. John's account shows that Christ was being described in Isaiah's vision.
- a) Hebrews 1:8-12: "But unto the Son he saith, **Thy throne, O God**, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."
- b) John 20:28: "And Thomas answered and said unto him, **My Lord and my God.**"
- c) Isaiah 6:1-5: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of
-

hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” [John 12:41: “These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him”—See material at this place].

3. Verse 31: “And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.”
 - a. John and Jesus were cousins, but Jesus had not been to John as the Messiah who was to come until his baptism: “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 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” (Matt. 3:13-17).
 - b. “The advent of the Spirit, in the form of a dove, and the announcement from heaven enabled John to know Jesus. If to this the objection is raised that surely John knew the son of his kinswoman—his own cousin—it should be obvious that the objection is based on a misapprehension of the words knew him not, which simply signify that John did not know Jesus to be the Messiah, until this time, and because of these manifestations” (Woods).
4. Verses 32-33: “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.”
 - a. John the Immerser bore verbal record of Jesus as the Son of God by his open statement here; and John the Apostle bore the same witness by inscribing the testimony as part of the inspired record. God bore verbal witness of the deity of Jesus at the baptism of his son, the Spirit bore witness by descending upon our Lord in the form of a dove, and Jesus testified to the same eternal truth on uncounted occasions; and here we have the testimony of the two Johns to the same verity.
 - b. John the Baptizer was not given the open and strong proof that his cousin Jesus was the Son of God until the events he witnessed at the baptism of our Lord. John opposed the idea of immersing the Lord. He recognized Christ, and knew that the Holy One did not need baptism. Some argue that the purpose of baptism is not "for the remission of sins," because Jesus had no guilt. But the Lord was baptized in spite of his sinlessness; he was immersed to fulfill righteousness. He came to John to be baptized, which was in keeping with God's will. [Luke 1:36 shows that Mary and Elizabeth (and thus, John and Jesus) were cousins].
 - 1) Hebrews 10:7: "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."
 - 2) Luke 7:29-30: "And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."
 - 3) If Jesus had refused to be baptized, that omission would have been sinful. Compare: “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4:17).
 - c. John described the Messiah as the one who is the administrator of Holy Spirit baptism. A preliminary, general promise was given through John the Baptizer: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize

you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire: Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:9-12).

- 1) This promise was not to everyone who was present, as Pentecostals claim. The pronoun *you* is used as the means of announcing the baptism of the Holy Spirit; it was not intended to mean that everyone present would receive it. The pronoun is used in the epistles in reference to certain ones even though the letter was directed to a whole congregation.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 4:14: "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn *you*."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 6:7-8: "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather *suffer yourselves* to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren."
 - 2) Several ungodly Pharisees and Sadducees were present; the promise was never meant for them. The context shows that some of those present were to receive the baptism of fire, a reference to their eternal punishment for sin. The cloven tongues of Acts 2 are not meant, for there the historian says that these merely had the appearance of fire, and were not of fire at all. Not everyone present would receive the baptism of fire, and not everyone present would receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - 3) This is only a brief, preliminary promise relating to Holy Spirit baptism; we must look to the specific promises and to passages giving their fulfillment in order to learn how broad the promise of Holy Spirit baptism was.
 - d. But some people would receive this baptism of the Spirit. Christ would be the administrator of this baptism and would have the final say as to who would receive it. The emphasis in the passage is that Christ would be the administrator of this baptism and that it would be given to some who are not identified in the statement.
 - 1) John did not specify who would receive it, or how it would be accomplished, or when it would be done. His statement was a general promise which, as we shall see, was limited by information given elsewhere.
 - 2) Christ administered Holy Spirit baptism upon the apostles on the Pentecost Day of Acts Two. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:32-33).
 - e. The promises of Holy Spirit baptism was later limited to the apostles.
 - 1) Luke 24:46-49: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." This was spoken only to the apostles (see 24:33-36; Mark 16:14).
 - 2) They were to be **endued** with power. The word translated "endued" means "to be clothed with" (Vine, p.29). It is used as a figure of speech to describe their reception of the power indicated.
 - f. They would be clothed with **power**. Power means "might, or authority." They would receive this might and authority which would enable and authorize them to do certain prescribed things, including those things of Matthew 18:18 and John 20:23.
 - 1) Matthew 18:18: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
-

- 2) John 20:23: "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained."
- g. This clothing with power would originate **from on high** (heaven). This would be the source of this might and authority; it would not be from some earthly source. They were to **tarry in Jerusalem** until this power was received. They were to remain in the city, awaiting the coming of this heaven-sent power. This detail of the promise shows that it was intended only for those personally addressed, for it was only they who could wait in Jerusalem, not us.
- 1) Being clothed with power from on high and being baptized with the Holy Spirit are different descriptions of the same action. The word baptize means literally to dip, plunge, immerse; and metaphorically, to overwhelm. It is used in this later sense when the baptism of the Holy Spirit is being discussed.
 - 2) "It was not the manner of the Holy Spirit's descent from heaven that constituted the baptism of the Spirit, but their being filled or *overwhelmed*, or *endued*, or *clothed*—it was the result, not the manner of descent, that defines the Holy Spirit baptism, which the apostles only received" (Foy Wallace, *The Gospel For Today*, p.697).
- h. Acts 1:1-8: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto **the apostles** whom he had chosen: **To whom** also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of **them** forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded **them** that **they** should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, **ye** have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but **ye** shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When **they** therefore were come together, **they** asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto **them**, It is not for **you** to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But **ye** shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon **you**: and **ye** shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
- 1) The apostles are the objects of the promise of verses 5 and 8. Notice the pronouns (whom, them, they, ye) from verses 2-8 and see that the promise of Holy Spirit baptism of verse 5 and the clothing with power of verse 8 are given only to the apostles. The baptism of verse 5 and the clothing with power of verse 8 are identical.
 - 2) Further promises of the Holy Spirit's special work are given to the apostles in John 14-16. The promises of Matthew 3:11, Luke 24:49, and Acts 1:5,8 are fulfilled in Acts 1:26-2:1-4: "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven **apostles**. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, **they** were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where **they** were sitting. And there appeared unto **them** cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of **them**. And **they** were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave **them** utterance."
 - 3) By following the pronouns from Acts 1:26 through Acts 2:4, the fact is clearly established that only the apostles received the operation described. A pronoun takes the place of a noun. The subject of the sentence is *apostles*; the pronouns used to identify those receiving the Holy Spirit's power (2:4) carry the reader back to the noun *apostles* in Acts 1:26.
 - 4) The 120 other disciples of Acts 1:15 are not included, as is seen by the use of the pronouns in Acts 1:26-2:4. They are also excluded by virtue of the fact that they were not included in the promises of Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:5, 8. One of the most basic rules in interpreting any message is to identify those to whom the information is addressed. A love letter addressed to *Sally* is not intended for *Jane*.
-

- 5) Acts 1:26-2:4 shows that Matthias received the baptism of the Spirit since he met the requirements of becoming an apostle (Acts 1:20-26), and had been selected to take Judas' place. It is obvious that Paul later received the baptism of the Holy Spirit since he was specially picked by Christ to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:14-18), and was equal to the other apostles in power and authority (2 Cor. 12:5, 11-12). The details of his reception of this are not recorded, only that after he was baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16) he began to preach the gospel with great effectiveness in Damascus (Acts 9:17-22).
 - 6) John chapters 14-16 were spoken only to the apostles at the last supper. Judas had left the room (13:29-30); only the eleven were present. Many details of what the Holy Spirit would do with the apostles are given in these chapters.
5. Verse 34: "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God."
- a. Woods gives us this: There was now no doubt in John's mind who Jesus really was and to him he now bore witness. His testimony rested not on human appraisal but on divine and indisputable evidence which could not be reasonably disputed. John identified Jesus as "the Son of God," having heard him acknowledged in this way following his baptism in the waters of the Jordan. (Matt. 3:13-17.)
 - b. At the time Jesus came out of the waters of Jordan, following his immersion, John heard the audible voice of the Almighty announcing from heaven the Jesus is his son and that he was well-pleased in Jesus. At the same instant, John saw the Holy Spirit descending from heaven and lighting upon Jesus. Since God placed such a high value on baptism, why is it that so many religionists scoff at the importance of this God-given requirement?
 - c. The baptism administered by John the Baptist was a requirement of God; those among the Jews who rejected this ordinance were repudiating the demand of God: "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him" (Luke 7:29-30).
 - d. John's baptism was replaced by the baptism of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). Those who received John's baptism after the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), were told to be baptized into the name of the Lord:
 - 1) Acts 19:1-7: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."
 - a) Because of their answer to his opening question, Paul saw something was wrong. He asked them about their baptism. They had been baptized according to John's baptism. The apostle accepted as a basic premise that they had been baptized, because they had believed. Nothing had been said about baptism till now, but the reference to their belief included baptism. However, the baptism they received was not the baptism of the Great Commission.
 - b) Paul properly appraised John's baptism—it was valid for a time. But when it was being practiced with God's approval, it pointed forward in time to the coming of Christ. New Testament baptism (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-38) points back in time to the fact that Christ has come and has completed his mission.
-

- c) This relatively "small" matter was sufficiently important to make their immersion inadequate. Many today think that believers are to be immersed, but assign to baptism a role that is unscriptural: "One is first saved by faith only, and then he is immersed as an act by which he joins the church; baptism is [they say], an outward demonstration that he has been saved."
 - d) But since it was the case that these disciples had been baptized, being told to believe on Jesus who was to come, and since their immersion was flawed, the immersion of believers for the wrong purpose today nullifies their immersion. For baptism to be correct and beneficial, it must be done by the right people (people who believe and repent—Heb. 11:6; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38), it must be done in the right manner (immersion in water), and it must be done for the right purposes (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3f; 1 Pet. 3:21; Mark 16:16). Anything short of this makes it ineffectual. One cannot be taught wrong and be baptized right!
 - e) John's baptism was for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4); the remission offered was prospective, in that it looked forward to the death of Christ (Heb. 9:22; 10:1-4; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 1:5; Col. 1:13-14; Eph. 1:7). It looked to the coming of Christ and the completion of his mission (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; John 1:15).
 - f) It is clear from the context that these disciples had been taught and baptized by Apollos (18:24-28; 19:1). At the time he worked with these individuals, all he knew was John's baptism. We speak of being "re-baptized," but that is a misnomer. If one has been baptized, he is baptized correctly; if he has received sectarian "baptism," he has not been scripturally baptized; he is no better off than these disciples were. Those who received John's baptism when it was valid, were not subsequently immersed again; but these who received it after it was replaced by the Great Commission, were.
- 2) When these men learned this new and updated information, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. That is, they submitted to the authority of Christ fully, and for the first time received the baptism of the Great Commission. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 29:18-20).
 - 3) After their genuine conversion, Paul laid hands on them; they received the gift of tongues and of prophecy. Notice that the Spirit did not, apart from the apostle's actions, come automatically upon them; it was necessary that Paul lay hands on them.
 - 4) If the gift of the Spirit was a natural indwelling, such as many maintain is taught in Acts 2:38, Paul would have had no need to ask; that would have been assumed. But the apostle had in mind the miraculous gifts which the early saints needed. In those passages where the "gift of the Holy Spirit" is exemplified or discussed in detail, the gift is miraculous (Acts 8:5-24; 10:19-48; 11:1-18).

H. John 1:35-42: Andrew and Simon Peter Meet Christ.

1. Verses 35-36: "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!"
 - a. In this section of John one, we have three days indicated.
 - 1) The first day would be the occasion when the priests and Levites talked with John (John 1:19-28).
 - 2) The second day was when John saw Jesus and pointed him out as the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29). This testimony was a general declaration, not directed to any specific individual. Evidently, there was a gathering of Jews present to hear the statement.
-

- 3) The day of our current passage (the third day) was when John stood with two of his disciples and identified Jesus to them as the Lamb of God” (John 1:35-36).
- b. These two men are not here identified by name, but from verse forty, one of them is shown to be Andrew, brother to Simon Peter: “One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.”
- c. John was not bothered that these disciples left him, and began to follow Jesus (vv. 37-39). He had been sent to prepare people who would turn from John to Christ. “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).
- d. We are told that John looked at Jesus. “Gazed intently. The word is used at Mr 14:67; Lu 22:61; Mr 10:21,27. John looked searchingly at that face, which, so far as any record shows, he was never to see on earth again. The more intently we look upon Jesus, the more powerfully we proclaim him” (*Four fold Gospel*).
- 1) Mark 14:67: “And when she saw Peter warming himself, she **looked** upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.”
 - 2) Luke 22:61: “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.”
 - 3) Mark 10:21: “Then Jesus **beholding him** loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”
 - 4) Mark 10:27: “And Jesus **looking** upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.”
- e. “The lamb, throughout Old Testament times, was commonly used as a sin-offering (Lev. 4: 32), at the morning and evening sacrifice (Ex. 12: 21-27), at the great feasts (Num. 28: 11), and on special occasions (1 Chron. 29: 21).
- 1) “The paschal lamb was offered by every family in Israel at every passover. In pointing out Jesus as the Lamb of God, John declares that he is the great sin-offering of which all the lambs slain on Jewish altars were the types. ‘He taketh away the sins of the world;’ he is the great sin-bearer, not for a single generation, but for all time; not for a single family or race, but for the world.
 - 2) “These words teach a sacrifice and an atonement, but were not understood by John himself, as we learn by turning to Matt. 11: 2-6.
 - 3) ““Under the Old Testament were provided by the sinner, lambs, whose sacrifice took sins away from the individual or the nation, but for the time only, and therefore the sacrifice had to be continually repeated; under the New Testament one Lamb is provided, the Lamb of God, whose sacrifice takes away the sin of the whole world, and therefore needs never to be repeated’ - Abbott”” (Johnson, pp.38f).
- f. From this point until the close of chapter 1, we have a detailed account of the work of Christ in his public ministry and of the testimony of several disciples to his deity. It is an interesting and significant section wherein Jesus exhibited his amazing ability to know the innermost thoughts of men and in which we are to observe the irresistible evidences he supplied to his disciples, thus prompting them to make the remarkable confessions they did. (Verses 41, 45, 49.) There is some forecast here also of the ultimate breaking up of all fleshly distinctions (Matt. 28:18-20), in the fact that the first disciples were of different cultures and background—some with Hebrew names (Simon and Nathanael) and Grecian names (Andrew and Philip), though all were, of course, Jews. The participle looked up suggests an earnest and fixed gaze. Two disciples heard John comment and followed Jesus. These were former disciples of John. [Woods, p.39].
-

2. Verses 37-39: “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.”
 - a. The two disciples began to follow after Jesus. He turned and asked them, “What seek ye?” He did not ask to determine why they followed him, for he could know this by the power of his divine nature. The question was designed to draw them out, to get them to express in words what was in their hearts. Our Lord opened his conversation with the Samaritan woman (John 4:7) by asking for a drink of water.
 - b. They responded to his question by calling him *Rabbi*. “Rabbi. A term of very ancient origin, signifying teacher, or master. Ahasuerus set a *Rob*, or master, over the tables of his feast (Esther 1:8). Among the Jews there are three degrees—Rabban , Rab, and Rabbi—the last being the lowest. It is by the highest that Mary addresses the Lord at the tomb after his resurrection” (Johnson, p.39). “Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.” (John 20:16).
 - c. The two men inquired as to where the Lord was staying, perhaps implying that they would like to accompany him, or to find him later. His reply included an invitation: “Come and see.” The Lord did not find their inquiry impertinent; his reply was a kind and warm response.
 - d. They stayed with him that day. The Jewish system of dividing the day was to begin at six in the morning; if this was the method used, then the tenth hour would be four in the afternoon. [The Romans used the same method we use to divide the day; if this was the time system, the tenth hour would be ten in the morning]. Their staying with him that day suggests a longer time than from four in the afternoon. Did they also spend the night with the Lord at his lodgings? However long the time they spent with Jesus may have been, he certainly made a lasting impression on them. There was no doubt but that Jesus is the Messiah!
 3. Verses 40-42: “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.”
 - a. One of the two is here identified as Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Was that the same day? Was it during the same night? Whenever that might be, he wasted no time in finding Peter. He openly declared, “We have found the Messiah!” We are told also that “the Messiah” has the same meaning as “the Christ.”
 - b. Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. When the Lord beheld Peter, he stated that his name was Simon the son of Jonah, and that his name would become Cephas, which means “A Stone.” Woods: “Simon Peter was henceforth, and by express instruction of the Lord, to be called Cephas, an Aramaic name signifying a stone, and the equivalent of the Greek petros, Peter. Names in ancient times often signified some desired or actual trait of those who bore them and Simon Peter was thus designated because of the rock-like faith he held in Christ, and the disposition as an apostle of the Lord he was eventually to exhibit” [pp.44f).
 - c. For a time, Peter was inclined to be impetuous and somewhat unsteady. He was a courageous man, and one who was prone to take some action that was not properly thought through. In Gethsemane, he cut off the right ear of Malchus—a misguided attempt to defend his Lord.
 - d. Although the second of the two disciples is not named in the text, scholars are convinced that he was the man who later became the apostle John. This apostle who penned the book that bears his name, omits reference to his name in the sacred text he was inspired to write. That fact, in itself, is a strong indication of his identity.
- I. John 1:43-51: Other Men Are Brought to Christ.
-

1. Verses 43-44: “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.”
 - a. “The next day after Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. According to Meyer, the order of this interesting week is as follows; First day, John's conference with the priests and Levites (verses 19-28); second day, John's testimony of Jesus (29-34); third day, the two disciples pointed to Jesus (35-:19); fourth day, Peter brought to Jesus (40-42); fifth day, Nathanael brought to Jesus (43-51); seventh day, (one day intervening,) the marriage at Cana, (chap. 2). Findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me” (Johnson, p.40).
 - b. It was on the following day that Jesus was planning to travel to Galilee. Woods: Nazareth, city of his abode, was in Galilee; there he had many friends and acquaintances; the people were more friendly and susceptible to his teaching and he chose there to begin his work. He found Philip and enlisted his services. Earlier disciples had found Jesus; Jesus here found Philip. The name Philip means "a lover of horses." Philip lived in Bethsaida, a village located on the shore of the sea of Galilee only a few miles from Nazareth. There, too, Andrew and Peter lived. It is certain that Philip was acquainted with Andrew and most likely with Peter also. (John 6:6; 12:21.) Bethsaida means "house of fishing," or, as some think "fishtown." [p.45].
2. Verses 45-46: “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.”
 - a. Nathanael, like Peter and Andrew, James and John, and Philip, was a Galilean, his home being at ‘Cana of Galilee.’ His name only occurs in these two places. He is supposed to have been one of the Twelve, the same one mentioned in the other Gospels as Bartholomew, which is a patronymic, meaning son of Tolmai. The use of the name in John 21: 2 favors this hypothesis. We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write. There was only one to whom this could refer, ‘The prophet like unto Moses,’ the Messiah; and when Philip names Jesus of Nazareth, Nathanael is at once skeptical whether the Messiah could come out of Nazareth ... That although Cana was not far from Nazareth, so quiet had been the life of Jesus, thus far, Nathanael does not seem to have heard of him” (Johnson, p.41).
 - b. Philip sought out Nathanael and declared that they had found the Prophet of whom Moses wrote. The reference he had in mind is recorded in Deuteronomy:
 - 1) Deuteronomy 18:15-19: “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 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him” (Deut. 18:15-19).
 - 2) This prophecy is repeated in Acts 3:22-23: “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”
 - 3) This Prophet is the same as the Messiah—Christ. Compare: “Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:25-27).
 - c. Philip identified the Prophet as being Jesus of Nazareth.
 - 1) Nazareth (the guarded one) the ordinary residence of our Saviour, is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but occurs first in Matt 2:23. It derives its celebrity from its connection with the

history of Christ, and in that respect has a hold on the imagination and feelings of men which it shares only with Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

- a) It is situated among the hills which constitute the south ridges of Lebanon, just before they sink down into the plain of Esdraelon, (Mr. Merrill, in "Galilee in the Time of Christ" (1881), represents Nazareth in Christ's time as a city (so always called in the New Testament) of 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants, of some importance and considerable antiquity, and not so insignificant and mean as has been represented. — ED.)
 - b) Of the identification of the ancient site there can be no doubt. The name of the present village is en-Nazirah the same, therefore, as of old it is formed on a hill or mountain, Luke 4:29, it is within the limits of the province of Galilee, Mark 1:9, it is near Cana, according to the implication in John 2:1,2,11, a precipice exists in the neighborhood. Luke 4:29.
 - c) The modern Nazareth belongs to the better class of eastern villages. It has a population of 3000 or 4000; a few are Mohammadans, the rest Latin and Greek Christians. (Near this town Napoleon once encamped (1799), after the battle of Mount Tabor.)
 - d) The origin of the disrepute in which Nazareth stood, John 1:47, is not certainly known. All the inhabitants of Galilee were looked upon with contempt by the people of Judea because they spoke a ruder dialect, were less cultivated and were more exposed by their position to contact with the heathen.
 - e) But Nazareth labored under a special opprobrium, for it was a Galilean and not a southern Jew who asked the reproachful question whether "any good thing" could come from that source. Above the town are several rocky ledges, over which a person could not be thrown without almost certain destruction.
 - f) There is one very remarkable precipice, almost perpendicular and forty or fifty near the Maronite church, which may well be supposed to be the identical one over which his infuriated fellow townsmen attempted to hurl Jesus. [Smith's Bible Dictionary, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc.].
- 2) During the time of the Grecian control of Palestine, these conquerors had tried with some success to Hellenize [*Greek-i-fy*] the Jewish population. They strongly opposed the practice of the Mosaic law, and labored to force Greek culture and Greek religion on the Jews. Could it be that they had some strong effect on the people of Nazareth and the province of Galilee? Whatever the cause may have been, the Jews had some doubt about the rectitude of the people of this city. Thus, the quick response of Nathaniel, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Of course, Nathaniel was doubtful that Jesus is the Messiah, since he would fall under the odium of this city's repute.
 - 3) "The Jews of Jerusalem despised Galilee and scornfully rejected the Galilean teacher, while the rest of Galilee seems to have despised Nazareth. From the manner in which the mob thrust Jesus out of the synagogue and tried to kill him, its population could not have been of high moral type. The Jews were wont to associate all moral and religious good with Jerusalem, and could hardly conceive that the King would come from elsewhere than the capital of David" (Johnson, p.41).
- d. Philip's reply to this complaint was to invite his friend to "come and see." He was directed to keep an open mind and investigate the claim Philip had announced. We of the churches of Christ invite all others to investigate our beliefs and practices—in the light of the Bible. See whether we are right or wrong. Compare:
 - 1) Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."
 - 2) Acts 17:11: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."
-

- 3) One cannot learn the truth unless he has an open mind and is willing to investigate and examine it objectively.
 3. Verses 47: “Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!”
 - a. Jesus was able quickly to break down the prejudice of Nathaniel, first by describing his true condition. Our Lord stated that this man was a true Israelite in whom resided no guile. His friends could know that he was a true Israelite, but they could not positively know that he was entirely without deception, but Jesus knew this trait absolutely.
 - b. He did not know these inner traits through personal contact with him, but by his divine powers. He was able to perceive the qualities by reading the heart of Nathaniel.
 - c. There were many other occasions when this divine perception was revealed.
 - 1) Mark 2:5-8: “When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?”
 - 2) John 4:16-19: “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.”
 4. Verses 48-49: 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.”
 - a. Nathaniel knew that he had not met or seen Jesus before, he wanted to know how Jesus could know these things.
 - b. Before Philip had invited him, Christ had seen him when this man was under the fig tree. Nathaniel had experienced something while he was under the fig tree which only he and a divine personage could have known. We are not told what this was.
 - c. The knowledge Jesus had of that event was enough to firmly convince Nathaniel of the true identity of “Jesus of Nazareth.” He stated, “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou are the King of Israel.”
 - d. He had an open mind and when evidence was presented, he fully recognized its significance and power. He was now in complete agreement with Philip.
 5. Verse 50: “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.”
 - a. The Lord knowing about the event under the fig tree convinced Nathaniel, but this man was to see other things of greater importance. As he traveled with Jesus, he saw great miracles done by the Lord. Compare: “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).
 - b. And becoming an apostle, he had a part of the great events on the Pentecost Day of Acts Two. Whatever the experience under the fig tree may have been, what Nathaniel would see in the future would be impressive indeed.
 6. Verse 51: “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.”
 - a. From brother Woods:
-

- 1) The statement is obviously figurative and is a reference to the opening of heaven by Christ to men against whom it was closed by sin. Jacob dreamed of it (Gen. 28:10-22), and Jesus gave it reality. What Nathanael earnestly longed for, Jesus accomplished by means of his death upon the cross. Henceforth there would be a way opened into the heaven from which he came. He is called "the Son of man," because of his human nature; "the Son of God," because of his divine nature.
 - 2) There is reason to conclude that Nathanael is to be identified with Bartholomew (Matt. 10:3), and was thus one of the apostles. In each instance, when he is mentioned, it is in connection with men who were, or were to become apostles. Neither Matthew, Mark nor Luke mention Nathanael; John does not mention Bartholomew: the name Bartholomew is a family name, as Bar-Jonah, Bar-Jesus, etc. In the list of apostles by Matthew, Mark and Luke, Bartholomew is coupled with Philip who brought Nathanael to Christ. These and other considerations make it probable that Nathanael and Bartholomew are different names of the same person. [Pages 47f].
 - b. Heaven open—This is a figurative expression, denoting "the conferring of favors." Psa. 78:23-24; "he opened the doors of heaven, and had rained down manna." It also denotes that God was about to work a miracle in attestation of a particular thing. See Mat. 3:16. In the language, here, there is an evident allusion to the ladder that Jacob saw in a dream, and to the angels ascending and descending on it, Gen. 28:12. It is not probable that Jesus referred to any particular instance in which Nathanael should literally see the heavens opened. The baptism of Jesus had taken place, and no other instance occurred in his life in which it is said that the "heavens were" opened. [Barnes].
 - c. Peter is listed first in each passage, but not because he was superior to the others. He did not possess any more authority than the other apostles (2 Cor. 12:12-13; Matt. 16:18; 18:18; Acts 2:1-4). He was simply living up to the name which the Lord had given him—Cephas (John 1:42).
 - d. Matthew and Mark list Thaddeus while Luke in his two lists gives Judas the son of James. Thaddeus, also called Lebbeaus by Matthew, is likely the same as this Judas.
 - e. Matthew and Mark list Simon the Canaanite while in Luke's accounts he is called Simon Zelotes (Simon the Zealot). *Zealot* is a translation from the Greek term of the Aramaic term *Cananaean*. The common view is that this is in reference to the name of a political party among the Jews which stood for the recovery of Jewish freedoms. But Coffman asserts that all that is meant is that he was a man of Canaan, and that he was not a revolutionary (pp.23f). He is not mentioned by name outside these four lists, so very little is known about his background and personal life.
-

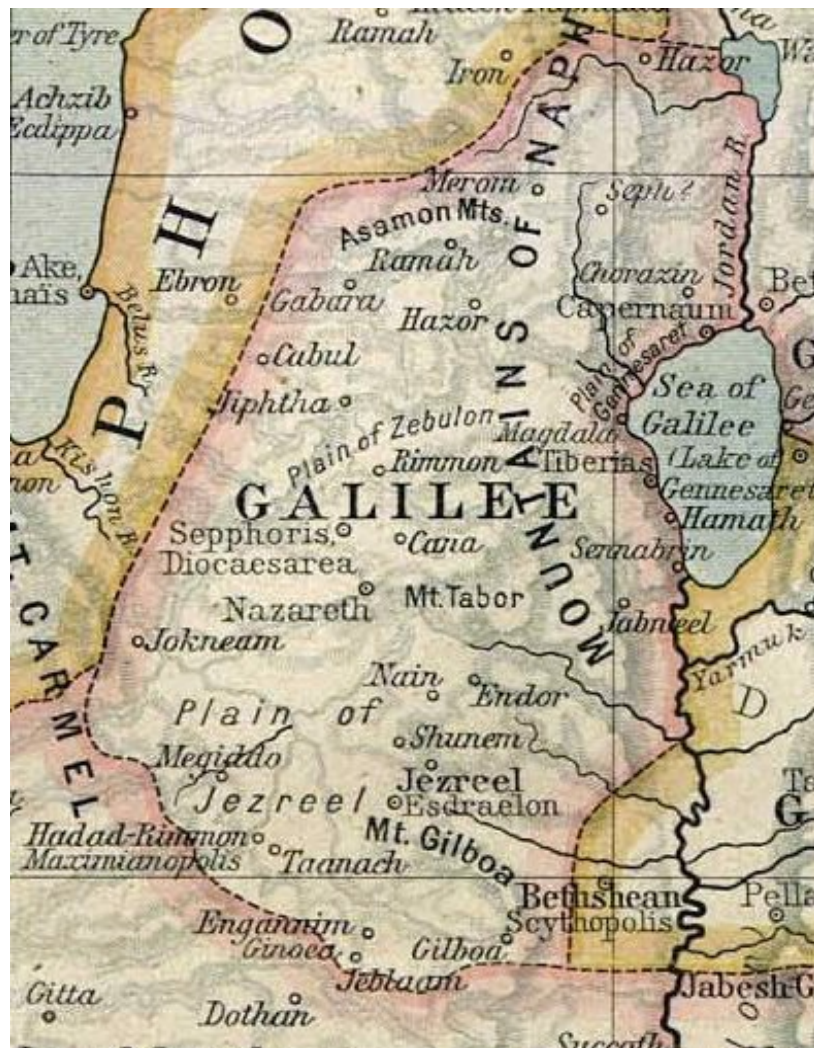
The Lists of the Apostles Given in the New Testament Are as Follows:

Matthew 10:2-4	Mark 3:16-19	Luke 6:14-16	Acts 1:13
Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter
Andrew	James	Andrew	John
James, Son of Zebedee	John	James	James
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James, son of Alphaeus	James	James	James
Lebbeus, Thaddeus	Thaddeus	Simon Zelotes	Simon Zelotes
Simon the Canaanite	Simon	Judas, son of James	Judas, son of James
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot

John Chapter 2

A. John 2:1-12: The Wedding Feast at Cana.

1. Verses 1-2: “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.”
 - a. Three separate days are noted in the context: the first day (1:35); the second day (1:43); and the third day—the day of the present passage.
 - b. On this day there was a wedding in the village of Cana, in Galilee. “This was the scene of Christ's earliest miracle, when, at the marriage feast, He turned water into wine (John 2:1 ff). It was the home of Nathanael (21:2). From Cana, after the marriage, Jesus ‘went down’ to Capernaum (2:12), and returned at the request of the centurion (4:46,51). These are the only notices of Cana in Scripture, and from them we learn merely that it was in Galilee, and in the uplands West of the lake. Other villages of the same name are mentioned by Josephus, but probably this one is intended by the Cana where for a time he dwelt (Vita, 16) which he locates in the plain of Asochis (ib, 41). The Greek kana probably transliterates an old Hebrew qanah, ‘place of reeds.’ This ancient name survives in Khirbet Qana, a ruined site with rockhewn tombs, cisterns and a pool, on the northern edge of Sahl el-Battauf, the plain of Asochis.” [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc.].



- c. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there, either as an invited guest or as a relative of the marriage family. On the previous day, our Lord was planning a trip into Galilee (John 1:43). Jesus and his disciples were in the area of Cana; an invitation was extended to them to attend the wedding feast.
 - d. "A 'marriage' in that day included the feast often continuing for several days. (Gen. 29:22; Judges 14:12.) There was much pomp and ceremony associated with such occasions and great rejoicing" (Woods, p.49).
 - 1) Genesis 29:22: "And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast."
 - 2) Judges 14:12: "And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments."
 - e. The following is from *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, regarding marriage customs:
 - 1) The bridegroom's "friends" (John 3:29) went, usually by night, to fetch the bride and her attendants to the home of the groom (Matt 9:15; John 3:29). The joyousness of it all is witnessed by the proverbial "voice of the bridegroom" and the cry, "Behold the bridegroom cometh!" (Jer 7:34; Rev 18:23). The procession was preferably by night, chiefly, we may infer, that those busy in the day might attend, and that, in accordance with the oriental love of scenic effects, the weird panorama of lights and torches might play an engaging and kindling part.
 - 2) The marriage supper then followed, generally in the home of the groom....It is the bringing home of an already accredited bride to her covenanted husband. She is escorted by a company of attendants of her own sex and by male relatives and friends conveying on mules or by porters articles of furniture and decoration for the new home. As the marriage usually takes place in the evening, the house is given up for the day to the women who are busy robing the bride and making ready for the coming hospitality. The bridegroom is absent at the house of a relative or friend, where men congregate in the evening for the purpose of escorting him home. When he indicates that it is time to go, all rise up, and candles and torches are supplied to those who are to form the procession, and they move off....
 - 3) As at the house where the bridegroom receives his friends before starting some come late, and speeches of congratulation have to be made, and poems have to be recited or sung in praise of the groom, and to the honor of his family, it is often near midnight when the procession begins.
 - 4) Meanwhile, as the night wears on, and the duties of robing the bride and adorning the house are all done, a period of relaxing and drowsy waiting sets in, as when, in the New Testament parable, both the wise and the foolish virgins were overcome with sleep. In their case the distant cry on the street brought the warning to prepare for the reception, and then came the discovery of the exhausted oil.
 - 2. Verses 3-4: "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."
 - a. Other translations:
 - 1) ASV: "And when the wine failed, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come."
 - 2) NKJ: And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."
 - b. Wine was a common feature of those wedding feasts, but in this case, this beverage ran out. The mother of Jesus, whose name is not given by the inspired writer, told her son about this outage. Why did she tell him this? Did she expect a miraculous response to the need? This lack would have been almost a tragedy to ancient hosts; it would certainly bring great shame to the family. Why did they run out of wine? Perhaps there more guests than they anticipated.
 - c. In our modern communications, to address a female as "Woman" might be intended as a cold or harsh reference. Knowing the gentle nature of our Lord and perceiving a genuine love for his mother, we would not attach this statement to any unkind connotation.
-

- d. Notice this important thought from our brother Johnson: “This language, partly a rebuke to Mary, shows very plainly that the Catholic fiction of Mary being immaculate, the ‘Queen of Heaven,’ and ‘the Mother of God,’ is all nonsensical. Mine hour is not yet come. The hour of his full manifestation, as the divine King of Israel. If his mother was rebuked for attempting to direct him in the days of his flesh, how absurd to address her as if she had the right to command him on the throne of glory” (ibid.).
3. Verse 5: “His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”
 - a. The family hosting the wedding feast was not poverty-stricken, since they had servants. Mary told them to follow whatever instruction Jesus would give them. Why should another family’s servants obey Mary? Why would they do what Jesus told them to do? There must have been some close connection, likely there was kinship.
 - b. Mary perhaps did not know what Jesus would do about this problem. Clearly, she knew that he would solve the problem in some way.
4. Verses 6-8: “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.”
 - a. New King James: Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, "Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast." And they took *it*.
 - b. The six water pots made of stone were there for these Jewish people to wash their hands before and after eating; this was a steadfast custom. “And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables” (Mark 7:4).
 - c. The water pots were made of stone. They were hewn from blocks of stone. Since they were hewn out by hand, one pot would hold a different amount of water than another, thus their capacities are reported as holding two or three firkins each. A firkin is taken as equivalent to seven and one half gallons, so the entire amount of water turned into wine would be about one hundred and twenty gallons.
 - d. The servants filled each of the six water pots with water and presented them to the man in charge of the feast. Each of these stone containers would be somewhat weighty—twenty gallons of water plus the weight of the stone pot. Doubtless, there were handles through which carrying poles could be placed, thus perhaps four [or two] servants would carry each pot.
5. Verses 9-10: “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.”
 - a. The ruler of the feast and the governor of the feast are the same individual. The man’s job was to give order to the festive activities, a kind of master of ceremonies. This person knew nothing about the wine having been exhausted, but he was aware that this last he had tasted was better than that at the beginning of the feast. If he were in a drunken state, he could not likely have distinguished the difference. According to the ruler, the bridegroom usually served his best wine at the beginning of the feast, and later, when the guests had fully entered into the festivities, poorer quality wine replaced the best quality.
 - b. Was this a drunken feast? If it was, it was in violation of certain Old Testament declarations and prohibitions.
 - 1) Leviticus 10:9: "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations."

- 2) Proverbs 20:1: "Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
 - 3) Proverbs 23:29-31: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright."
 - 4) Isaiah 28:7: "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment."
- c. The New Testament gives prohibitions against drunkenness.
- 1) Luke 21:34: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and *so* that day come upon you unawares."
 - 2) Romans 13:13: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 5:9-11: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 6:10: "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."
 - 5) Galatians 5:21: "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 - 6) Ephesians 5:18: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." The ASV uses the word "riot instead of "excess." The same Greek word is used in Luke 15:13: "And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." Drunkenness leads to riotous, shameful, reckless living.
- d. To be drunken is to commit sin, for sin is the transgressing of God's law: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). To become guilty of sin and die in that condition means that the individual is separated from God in eternity (Jas. 1:15; Rom. 6:23).
- 1) This condition affects one's body, his mind, and his relations with others. It has its most awful effects on the soul!
 - 2) When is one drunk? At which point:
 - a) When his speech is slurred and his movements unsteady?
 - b) When he sees double?
 - c) When he passes out?
- e. What point is meant in these verses:
- 1) 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (NKJV). *Methusos* is used in 1 Corinthians 6:10; it means "one softened with drink" (Young). The word *soften* means "to weaken the resistance or opposition."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:18: "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit" (NKJV). *Methuskos* is used in Ephesians 5:18 (a different form of the same word); it means "to begin to be softened" (Young).
- f. The difference between social drinking and drunkenness is a difference in degree, not in kind. One is drunk when he *begins* to be softened (according to definition).
-

- 1) 0.005% (1 drop:20,000 drops of blood) causes the will power, the judgment, and self-control to be weakened ("Gospel Advocate," 3/29/73). One-half can of beer or one-half cocktail provides this level of contamination.
 - 2) One drink makes a man one drink drunk; if 10 drinks makes him falling-down drunk, 1 drink makes him one tenth drunk; a difference in degree, not in kind.
 - 3) Someone might object, by saying that gluttony is sinful, and the first bite of food would make the eater partway to being gluttonous. But there is a serious difference between eating food and gluttony. The historian, Will Durant, offers the following about the eating practices of ancient Rome: "Custom allowed the diner to empty his stomach with an emetic after a heavy banquet. Some gluttons performed this operation during the meal and then returned to appease their hunger; *vomunt ut edant, edunt ut vomant*, said Seneca—"they vomit to eat, and eat to vomit." Such behavior was exceptional, and no worse than the braggart drunkenness of American conventioners" (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, p.377).
 - 4) One who eats too much does so to his eventual hurt. The sensible person will soon learn when he should push away from the table. The habitual over-eater may not learn this lesson. The glutton is one who eats, not for the benefit of the food, but to enjoy the food for the sake of that enjoyment; thus he will empty his stomach so he can eat more food! The glutton does not practice self-control; he does not control his appetite, but his love for eating controls him.
- g. Some think that our Lord's making wine for this occasion gave his sanction to drinking intoxicating beverages. "Jesus turned water into alcoholic wine (John 2:1-11). Therefore, it must be all right for us to drink wine, even though it has an intoxicating power." If so, then how do you reconcile that action with those passages which clearly warn against (and forbid) the imbibing of intoxicants?
- 1) Proverbs 20:1: "Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
 - 2) Proverbs 23:29-35: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, *shalt thou say, and* I was not sick; they have beaten me, *and* I felt *it* not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."
 - 3) Habakkuk 2:15: "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to *him*, and maketh *him* drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!"
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 6:10: "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."
- h. Ancient writers said the best wines were unintoxicating; that the ordinary Roman drink was grape juice mixed with spices ("Gospel Advocate," 5/9/74). To preserve grape juice, they boiled it down into a substance like molasses; it was consumed by spreading it on bread; or mixed with water and spices or herbs, and drunk either hot or cold (ibid.).
- 1) The guests could recognize the high quality of the wine Jesus produced even after having "drunk freely" (John 2:10). One who is intoxicated is not apt to recognize a higher quality of taste, while in a drunken state. It is clear, therefore, that these guests were not intoxicated; hence, what they were imbibing must not have been wine with an alcoholic content. There is no proof that Jesus made intoxicating wine; we have good reason to say that he did not.
 - 2) "Oinos, translated wine in the New Testament, does not of itself indicate the content of alcohol. Grape juice was thus designated as was fermented wine. Various kinds were produced in Palestine in that day. Some, fermented for preservation, had only a small content of alcohol and were mixed with water before being consumed. Such wines were incapable of producing
-

intoxication unless imbibed in great amount. These liquids were more of a food than a beverage in that day. (Gen. 14:18; Num. 6:20; Deut. 14:26; Neh. 5:18; Matt. 11:19.) It is significant that intoxicating liquors of whatever nature are positively forbidden in the sacred writings, and there is nothing here or elsewhere in the scriptures to justify their use as a beverage and stimulant. We may be sure that our Lord did not endorse by his action here that which deity forbids through the Bible. (Prov. 20:1; 23:31; Isa. 22:13.) One so good as he did not send a drunken bridegroom to his bride, and no one may properly cite this incident to support the use of that which has been the occasion of so much misery and wretchedness in the world. (Lev. 10:9; Prov. 31:4; 5; Eccles. 10:17; Isa. 28:7)” (Woods, p.52).

- 3) “In Palestine there were three kinds of wine: 1. Fermented wines, which, however, were very unlike our fiery liquors, and contained only a small per cent of alcohol. These were mixed with two or three parts of water. The fermented, at first mild, and then diluted with water, was only intoxicating when used in enormous quantities. 2. The unfermented juice of the grape. 3. An intoxicating drink called ‘new wine’ in Acts 2:13. Whedon says: ‘We see no reason for supposing that the wine of the present occasion was that upon which Scripture places its strongest interdict (Pro. 20:1; Pro. 23:31; Isa. 22:13), rather than that eulogized as a blessing (Psa.104:15; Isa. 55:1).’ Even adopting the view that it was fermented wine, it was totally unlike the fiery and undiluted drinks sold as wines in saloons, used in many families, offered at hotels and wine parties, and even poured out at communion tables. In the use of the usual wine of Palestine there is not the slightest apology for drinking as a beverage the alcoholic drinks which are the curse of our times. With regard to them the only safe rule is ‘to touch not, taste not, handle not’” (Johnson, pp.46f).
 6. Verse 11: “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”
 - a. When our Lord and his disciples came to Jacob’s well in John 4, he sent them into the nearby village to obtain food; he could have supernaturally produced a full meal for the whole band, but he did not. After fasting for forty days and nights (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 41-13), he could have satisfied his hunger miraculously, but he did not. At the wedding feast at Cana, he provided the necessary wine for others.
 - b. Moses’ first miracle against the nation of Egypt was to turn water into blood; the first miracle of Jesus was to turn water into wine. Moses’ miracle was a curse of punishment; Jesus’ miracle was a timely blessing. When the Law of Moses was first brought to Israel, three thousand rebellious people were executed; when the Gospel of Christ was first presented to people, about three thousand precious souls were saved.
 - c. We are plainly told that this was the beginning (the first) of his miracles. There are myths and fables produced subsequent the first century which allege that Jesus performed various “miracles” while he was young. We can know these are all false because of the affirmation here made by the apostle John. One of these fables says Jesus and his playmates made clay animals; our Lord is said to have made his figures come to life. In another case, one of his little friends bumped into Jesus, making him fall; the Lord struck the boy dead. What foolishness!
 - d. The disciples referred to are those who were named in chapter one.
 7. Verse 12: “After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.” [The Passover was instituted in Exodus 20].
 - a. We are next told that Jesus left Cana, traveling down to Capernaum. Cana was in the hill country of Galilee; Capernaum was on the northern end of the Sea of Galilee, thus on a level with that body of water. The Bible is always right even in the seemingly unimportant notices where one place was higher or lower than another.
 - b. In the company that made this journey from Cana were his mother, his brothers, and his disciples. No mention is made of Joseph from the time Jesus was twelve years old. It appears that this good man, the husband of Mary, had died at some unspecified time and place.
-

- c. “The expression ‘his brethren’ occurs nine times in the Gospels and once in Acts. Of these the first three (Matt. 12: 46; Mark 3: 32; Luke 8:19) tell of his mother and brethren coming to speak with him; the two next (Matt. 13: 5-5; Mark 6 : 3), mention his brothers in connection with his mother and sisters; the sixth is this passage; in three more his brethren are represented as urging him to show himself to the world, and it is stated that they did not believe on him (John 7: 3), In Acts 1: 14 it is said that the Apostles ‘continued in prayer and supplication with the women, and with his brethren.’ In addition, Paul (1 Cor. 9: 5) speaks of ‘the rest of the apostles and the brethren of the Lord, and in Gal. 1; 19 he speaks of ‘James, the Lord's brother.’ These passages would seem to establish beyond doubt that Jesus was the first-born son of Mary, and that she had four other sons, whose names are given, besides daughters” (Johnson, pp.48f).

B. John 2:13-17: First Cleansing of the Temple.

1. Verses 13-14: “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.”
 - a. Johnson: The Gospels are silent concerning any visit of Jesus after his twelfth year until the first passover after his ministry began. The Lord, after his baptism, the temptation, and the witness of John, had begun his work rather quietly in Galilee, but when the passover season came he joined the vast crowds who were seeking the city of David, and repaired to the national capital where popular expectation held that the Messiah would reveal himself. The following events have a fuller significance when it is borne in mind that it is the Lord's first visit to the temple after his work began. The cleansing is an assertion of his Lordship, and authority over the temple, a declaration to the religious rulers that the Holy One of Israel had come (p.50).
 - b. The male Jews were required to journey to the Tabernacle [later the Temple] three times yearly; their families often went with the head of the household. “Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord Jehovah, the God of Israel. For I will cast out nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou goest up to appear before Jehovah thy God three times in the year” (Ex. 34:23-24, ASV).
 - c. At Sinai, when God gave the Law to Israel through Moses, that great leader of God’s people was guided in constructing the tabernacles, with all of it various items of furniture, and revealed all the ordinances pertaining the worship of that dispensation. Later, Solomon was guided in building the great and beautiful temple, which lasted until the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and carried many Israelites into captivity. Zerrubbabel erected another temple when the first group of Jews were allowed to return to their land. Herod the Great enlarged and beautified that temple into the great building that stood during the Lord’s ministry.
 - d. Only the priests were permitted by the Law to enter into the Holy Place, which held the Table of Showbread, the Lampstand, and the Altar of Incense. Only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place, where the Ark of the Covenant was situated; only on the Day of Atonement was he permitted to enter. There were outer areas where the Jews could go. There was also a court for women and a court for Gentiles.
 - e. Evidently it was in this last court when the merchants were carrying on their businesses. These people were selling oxen, sheep and doves, and exchanging money. It appears that these various animals were present, along with the common smells, flies and other things that accompany farm animals. Their very presence in God’s holy temple ought to have been obviously evil even to these covetous people. These animals, which were to be used in sacrifices, could have been sold elsewhere; it was their presence within the temple confines that made the practice so odious.
 - f. “The Jew was required to pay for the support of the temple service a half shekel annually (Exodus 30: 13; Matt. 17: 24). No heathen coin could be put into the temple treasury because they usually had images upon them which the priests regarded idolatrous; the Jewish Shekels were not in general circulation, and hence it was needful that the current coin be changed before the temple tax could be paid. This money brokerage had also installed itself in the temple and much gain was made by the commissions charged” (Johnson, p.51).

2. Verses 15-16: “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.”
 - a. Jesus cleansed the temple at this point early in his ministry and on a later occasion when he made his final trip to Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 21:12). Brother Woods offers this: “Moreover, the Jews came to worship from many lands and before purchasing these offerings they had to change their currency into that in use in Judea and this also afforded another opportunity to profit at the expense of the worshippers, since a fee was charged for each transaction. When Jesus observed this gross and materialistic misuse of the sacred precincts of the temple he was outraged. They had turned the house of prayer into a den of thieves” (p.54).
 - 1) Isaiah 56:7: “Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”
 - 2) Mark 11:17: “And he taught, and said unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers.”
 - b. Finding material at hand, likely from the ropes used in handling the animals, the Lord made a scourge (a whip) from the small cords or ropes. Obviously, this weapon would not be dangerous but would be a means of moving the crowd of people. Does anyone doubt that the Lord's anger was stirred? Jesus would have been a stranger to these people, but his ire was certainly recognized. We do not know what size man the Lord was, but likely he would have been a person of considerable strength since he had evidently worked for a long time with his carpenter father. There assuredly was something about the Lord that struck fear in the hearts of these evil men.
 - c. Being the Son of God, he had the right to cleanse the temple of these covetous merchandisers. He would later issue stern warnings against such attitudes: “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15).
 - d. In the process of this effective work, he drove from the temple the animals, the merchants, and over-turned the tables of the money exchangers. Jesus accused them all of being thieves, indicating that they were crooked in their dealings, cheating those who came from afar to worship God at the holy temple.
 - e. When the mob led by Judas approached Jesus in Gethsemane, he identified himself to them readily. On doing so, this cowardly group fell back from him in fear: “As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground” (John 18:6).
3. Verse 17: “And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.”
 - a. “This action by the Lord prompted the disciples to recall and to comment on a passage of scripture found in Psalm 69. They had witnessed the cleansing of the temple with some trepidation; they were fearful that his exceptional action would result in his destruction by the infuriated Jews. It is not likely that at this point they were aware of his Messianic mission; perhaps they referred to the passage merely to identify this with David's, zeal to advance the Cause of Jehovah; and they wondered if Jesus would not arouse the same type of antagonism David did” (Woods, p.55).
 - 1) Psalm 69:9: “For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.”
 - 2) Compare: “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me” (Rom. 15:1-3).

C. John 2:18-25: The Jews Ask For a Sign.

1. Verse 18: “Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?”
 - a. The Jews demanded that the Lord provide them with some sign that gave him authority to do the things he had done in driving out the animals and the merchants and over-turning the tables of the money-exchangers. These merchants were performing an important public service which facilitated the operation of the temple services. The point they missed or ignored was that the presence of these businessmen was the secularization and commercialization of God’s spiritual operation.
 - b. There are those who think the local congregation of God’s people may with God’s approval enter into business activities for the purpose of raising money for the work of the church. Some local churches are operating yard sales, bake sales, etc., for the use of the church. Although the end result of the money may support mission work, does the end justify the means?
 - c. Would the local church have the right to operate bingo games for the purpose of financing the work of the church? Many of our religious neighbors have been doing that for years. Where is the Biblical authority for such operations? Bingo as practiced in religious circles is gambling, which violates a number of Scriptural principles.
 - d. There is no New Testament authority for the church having yard sales to raise money for the work of the church. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17).
 - e. Can local churches hire secular businesses to conduct evangelism for them? Can that hire some business operation to do their benevolent work? Can a Christian hire someone else to worship for him? Can a group be selected to sing for the congregation?
 - f. Some of the Jews of the passage may have been very sincere about their question. They did not know who Jesus was. They might have thought he was some troublemaker. If that was the case, then we would expect Jesus to provide them with a sign. That he did not produce some supernatural work shows he knew their heart. The Jews were always seeking after a sign: “For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom” (1 Cor. 1:22).
 - 1) Matthew 16:1: “The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.”
 - 2) Mark 8:11: “And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.”
 - 3) Luke 11:16: “And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.”
 - 4) John 4:48: “Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.”
 - g. Miracles were wrought for a limited time and for limited purposes. The Jews had gotten used to seeing the animals and moneychangers in the temple; they thought nothing of these merchandising enterprises; it was a convenience, especially to those people who had traveled from afar. “I don’t see anything wrong with it.” But Jesus did! His actions aroused resentment and opposition, which grew more and more intense as his ministry continued.
 - h. Our Lord refused to perform a miracle to satisfy curiosity. In replying to their request (rather, demand) for a sign, Jesus spoke of the ultimate sign, which would be demonstrated at the end of his earthly work. The reference was to his death, burial and resurrection (cf. Matt. 12:38-41).
 - i. “This verse shows that Jesus fully knew the consequences of casting out the money-changers; and, by this prophecy, he clearly foretold that they would indeed put him to death and that he would rise from the dead on the third day. This statement made in response to the demand for a sign is similar in the Lord’s answer to the demand of the Pharisees recorded in Matthew 12:38ff. In both instances, the only sign the Pharisees were promised was the Lord’s own death, burial, and resurrection; but here he used the analogy of the destroyed temple raised again in three days, while there the ‘sign of the prophet Jonah’ had exactly the same meaning!” (Coffman).
 2. Verses 19-20: “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?”
-

- a. “Jesus met the demand for a ‘sign’ of his mission by pointing to the eventual resurrection of his body. This would be the ultimate test of his claims. By it he was declared to be the Son of God with power. (Rom. 1:4.) By the temple, Jesus meant his body; by raising it up, his resurrection from the grave. These unbelieving Jews either could not, or would not, attempt to follow him and they were thus without any comprehension of his prophetic and symbolic words” (Woods, p.56).
 - b. Their reply was to tell Jesus that the temple had been under construction for forty-six years, and scoffed at the notion that he could rebuild it again in three days! Johnson: “It had been forty-six years since Herod the Great had begun his work. At this time the work was not fully completed and workmen were still engaged on some of its parts. It was eighty years from the time it was begun before it was fully completed by Herod Agrippa II. A. D. 64....To the obstinate and hostile unbelievers he often spoke in parables. To honest seekers for truth his language was plain and simple” [p.55].
3. Verses 21-22: “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.”
- a. Following his resurrection and their new-found faith in the risen Savior, his disciples remembered. At the time of this passage, they did not comprehend this powerful truth. When they saw and talked with him after the resurrection, then they believed the Scripture which foretold his death and resurrection, though they had never understood it before.
 - b. Woods:
 - 1) The temple to which reference is made in the text was actually the third which had stood on Mount Moriah. Solomon built the first one about 1000 B.C. This building of greater splendor and magnificence than any which followed, was destroyed by the Babylonian king at the beginning of the exile, about 587 B.C.
 - 2) Zerubbabel and Jeshua rebuilt the holy edifice on the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity about 520 B.C. This building was torn down but in such fashion as not to interfere with the worship and was begun to be rebuilt by Herod the Great. It was for this reason that it is sometimes called the "second temple."
 - 3) The events of our text occurred while it was being rebuilt. We have seen that the question the Jews raised was designed to make the Lord's statement about raising up "the temple" in three days ridiculous.
 - 4) They dealt with but one aspect—time. They said nothing of the endless hours of labor, the multitude of workmen, the accumulation of vast stores of material and the enormous cost. Did he, a penniless and unknown wanderer, think he could do that which required the planning and resources of a king? Verse 21 is a comment by John, the biographer (pp.56f).
4. Verse 23: “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.”
- a. Coffman:
 - 1) John means by this that a great many other signs had been wrought by Jesus at this first passover, giving the key to the selectivity of his narrative. From the vast number of Jesus' signs, only seven were selected for this Gospel by its inspired author.
 - 2) There is a sense too in which the cleansing of the temple may be considered a sign. Such a frontal assault upon the entrenched forces of exploitation would have resulted in a sudden burst of popularity, the rabble always being capable of sudden, but not sustained, clamor against authority, especially authority which is abused and exploitive as was that of the temple.
 - 3) A multitude would have gathered quickly around such a defender of righteousness as Jesus showed himself in that episode. However, the view here is that the mention of signs (plural) has reference to many of Jesus' mighty deeds that were omitted from this Gospel and all the Gospels.
-

- 4) The cleansing of the temple, though not miraculous, and thus not reckoned among John's seven signs, nevertheless was a dramatic and startling announcement of Jesus as the Messiah who had suddenly come to his temple.
- b. Many believed in his name when they saw the miracles. The miracles that he worked at this passover season are not recorded, but this passage affirms them, as well as John 3:2. Their belief was rather an intellectual assent that he was a divine teacher, than as an obedient trust in him as the Savior.
5. Verses 24-25: "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."
 - a. As always, Brother Woods has great thoughts:
 - 1) These Jews of Jerusalem, unable to deny the reality of the miracles which he performed, did indeed "believe" but they apparently lacked the deep, abiding conviction men must have to follow Jesus, and consequently he did not trust them. Theirs appears to have been more of an intellectual acceptance of him as a teacher and not full and complete trust in him as a person. Because of this shallow and superficial disposition they were not worthy of confidence. Being possessed of supernatural knowledge he was able to look into the innermost recesses of the heart and know what was there. (John 1:42, 47, 48; 4:29, 6:61; 21:17.)
 - 2) There was nothing defective about the way faith was produced in this instance. They saw the signs and believed. (John 20:30, 31.) From this point forward they were unwilling to allow this belief to ripen into loyalty and obedience, doubtless because of their commitment to Jewish traditions. Here is another positive proof of the deity of our Lord. Only deity can know the hearts of men; Jesus knew the hearts of these men; therefore, Jesus is deity. (Jer. 17:10.) [pp.58f].
 - b. Deity can know what is in the hearts of men:
 - 1) 1 Samuel 16:7: "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."
 - 2) 1 Chronicles 28:9: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."
 - 3) 1 Chronicles 29:17: "I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee."
 - 4) Jeremiah 17:9-10: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."
 - 5) Matthew 9:4: "And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?"
 - 6) Luke 16:30: "And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."
 - 7) Acts 1:24: "And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen."
 - 8) Revelation 2:23: "And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

John Chapter 3

A. John 3:1-8: Jesus and Nicodemus.

1. Verses 1-2: "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."
 - a. Regarding the Pharisees;
 - 1) Woods: The Jewish sect to which this man belonged was that of the Pharisees, largest and most influential of the three prominent sects among the Jews of that day. The Sadducees and Essenes were other religious sects of the Jews. The name Pharisee means "separated," assumed by them, perhaps, to indicate their strict adherence to the law of Moses and to the traditions of their fathers. Nicodemus, whose name means "victorious," was "a ruler of the Jews," perhaps a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the supreme council of the Jews, consisting of about seventy members. He is elsewhere mentioned in John 7:50-52 when he defended Jesus (but in a way not involving personal commitment), and in John 19:38, 39, as having brought spices to use in preparing the body of Jesus for burial. (p.59).
 - 2) Smith Dictionary:
 - a) A religious party or school among the Jews at the time of **Christ**, so called from **perishin**, the Aramaic form of the Hebrew word, **perushim**, "*separated*". The chief sects among the Jews were the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes, who may be described respectively as the Formalists, the Freethinkers and the Puritans.
 - b) A knowledge of the opinion, and practices of the Pharisees, at the time of **Christ**, is of great importance, for entering deeply into the genius of the Christian religion. A cursory perusal of the Gospels is sufficient to show that **Christ's** teaching was, in some respects, thoroughly antagonistic to theirs. He denounced them, in the bitterest language To understand the Pharisees is, by contrast, an aid toward understanding the spirit of uncorrupted Christianity.
 - c) *The fundamental principle of all of the Pharisees*, common to them with all orthodox modern Jews, is that, by the side of the written law, regarded as a summary of the principles and general laws of the Hebrew people, there was an oral law to complete, and to explain the written law, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and transmitted by him by word of mouth. The first portion of the Talmud, called the **Mishna** or "*second law*", contains this oral law. It is a digest of the Jewish traditions and a compendium of the whole ritual law, and it came at length to be esteemed far above the sacred text. [Note: The Lord excoriated the Pharisees for putting greater importance on the traditions of men and demoting God's word—BW].
 - b. We are not told why Nicodemus came to Jesus at night.
 - 1) Some have supposed he wanted to avoid being seen associating with Jesus. This may seem to have merit on the surface, but it casts doubt on his courage. Nevertheless, this may be the most obvious reason for making his visit at night. We remember a later passage which tells of many prominent rulers among the Jews who were fearful of making known their belief in Jesus: "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" (John 12:42-43). We do not know whether Nicodemus was part of this particular group of rulers.
 - 2) Night might have been the best time for this man to have the time to spend with the Lord. Being a religious man, a ruler among the Jews, and a teacher of the Law (John 3:10), he might have been a busy man.
 - 3) At night may have been the best time to find Jesus available, seeing he was often surrounded by crowds of people. Having no regular place of abode, perhaps he was on this occasion reposing at a house of a family known to Nicodemus.

- 4) The fact that he had this interchange with Christ is the important matter, not why he approached the Savior at night.
 - 5) A highly important item is that this was the situation when the subject of the New Birth was introduced. As far as we know, it was before an audience of only one.
 - c. The conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus sets forth a strong argument that Jesus is the Messiah. This highly important man, a member of the Jewish court, here acknowledges that Jesus truly was a teacher who had been sent by the Almighty, because no mere man could do the miracles that he was doing. Nicodemus stated this as a fact that he and others knew to be so. The apostle uses this exchange as part of his effort to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
 - d. 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.”
 - e. Luke 1:1-4: “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.”
 - f. The Jewish people knew from the Old Testament Scriptures of God’s promise to establish a kingdom that would never end. Their unwarranted conception of this kingdom perceived it as a material entity on the order of the kingdom of David and Solomon. It was also their view that they would be automatically given citizenship in this kingdom, by virtue of their kinship to Abraham.
 - 1) John the Baptizer’s message was widely announced: “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:1-2; cf. 3:7-12). Jesus likewise spoke of the near approach of the kingdom: “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17).
 - 2) Nicodemus doubtless knew about these announcements—that the long-awaited kingdom was soon to be established. Daniel had shown that the kingdom would be set up during the time period when the Roman kings were reigning: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44).
 - 3) Luke identified certain rulers who were in power at the time when these great events were in process of being fulfilled: “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Luke 3:1-3).
 2. Verse 3: “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.”
 - a. Nicodemus was a high-ranking man among the Jews; he was likely well-known and respected. Being a Jew as well as a Pharisee, he doubtless perceived himself to be in good standing with God. He aided Joseph of Arimathaea in anointing and burying the Lord’s body (John 19:38-42).
 - b. What Jesus here said to Nicodemus must have been a shock to him. Being a well-trained Jew, he would have known about the promised kingdom God had promised to build (Dan. 2:44), although his conception most likely that it was to be restoration of the kingdom of David and Solomon. That he would not be automatically included as a citizen in good standing puzzled Nicodemus.
-

- c. Before he could even see the kingdom he would have to be born again [anew—ASV]. His original birth into the Jewish nation would not be sufficient to make him a citizen in this new kingdom. Our Lord, knowing the thinking of Nicodemus, therefore responded to this good man's statement it would be necessary for him to have a new birth before he could see the kingdom—his physical birth into the nation of Israel was not sufficient to provide him citizenship in this new kingdom.
 - d. Without this new birth, no one can "see" the kingdom. To see the kingdom means to be in the kingdom and to perceive and enjoy the benefits of citizenship.
 - 1) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
 - 3) Ephesians 2:11-13: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
 - 4) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 3. Verse 4: "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?"
 - a. Nicodemus misunderstood the Lord's meaning about this new birth; virtually all of the religious world likewise misconstrues it. In modern times, misguided folks have spoken much about their being a "born-again Christian." However, as we shall show, no one can be a Christian until he has been born again! The process of being born again is the same operation by which the alien sinner is saved from his past sins.
 - b. Of course, it would be impossible for a grown man to re-enter his mother's womb and be re-born. In the first place, his mother might be dead; secondly, he might be far larger than his mother; thirdly, a miracle would be required if he in his embryonic state were returned to his mother's body. Such an operation as Nicodemus thought is entirely unnecessary. The new birth pertains to the spirit of man, not to the physical body.
 4. Verse 5: "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."
 - a. Woods:
 - 1) The fact of the new birth is stated in verse 3; here, the details of it are given. There is one birth; there are two elements, "water," and "the Spirit." Thus, both are essential to the new birth; and the new birth is essential to entering the kingdom. What, then, is meant by being born of water and the Spirit?
 - 2) To enter the kingdom is to be saved. (Col. 1:13, 14.) To be saved one must believe, repent, confess and be baptized for (unto) the remission of sins. (Heb. 11:6; Luke 13:3; Rom. 10:10; Acts 2:38.)
 - 3) To enter the kingdom one must be born of water and the Spirit. Since things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, it follows that to be born of water and the Spirit is to believe the gospel, repent of one's sins, confess one's faith in Christ and be baptized for the remission sins. John 3:5 figuratively states what is literally affirmed in Acts 2:38. To be born "anew" is simply to obey the gospel. [p.61].
 - b. Other passages undeniably declare the essentials of obtaining salvation from past sins in the Christian Dispensation. These requirements were stated before the cross, clearly meaning that they were to be in force after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and the establishment of his
-

eternal kingdom; they were also taught after those historical events as being in force and mandatory. The following verses are from the American Standard Version:

- 1) Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."
 - 3) Luke 24:46-49: "And he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high."
 - 4) Acts 2:36-38: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
 - 5) Acts 3:19: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."
 - 6) Acts 8:35-39: "And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing."
 - 7) Acts 10:48: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
 - 8) Acts 16:30-34: "And brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately. And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God."
 - 9) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name."
- c. As minds which reason correctly have always known, things that are equal to the same thing are equal to each other. This is true in mathematics and in logic. The church of our Lord and his kingdom are used interchangeably, thus are equal to each other (Matt. 16:16-19). To be added to his church (Acts 2:42, 47) and to be translated into his kingdom (Col. 1:13-14) are equal to each other.
- 1) Obeying the gospel results in our being added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:36-47).
 - 2) Being born again results in our being translated into his kingdom (John 3:3-8; Col. 1:13-14).
 - 3) Notice how the apostle Peter joins these two ideas into one operation: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that
-

ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:22-23).

d. Coffman:

- 1) At the time Jesus revealed this teaching to Nicodemus, the great commission had not been given; and the immediate application of the teaching to Nicodemus regarded John's baptism which was mandatory for all the followers of Jesus prior to the resurrection; but the glowing words of this passage anticipated the Great Commission and the baptism therein commanded, thus making the passage equally applicable to all of subsequent ages who would enter God's kingdom....
 - 2) The persistent and ingenious efforts of people to shout baptism out of this passage are in vain, for there is no way it can be made to disappear. "Born of water" refers to baptism; and there is absolutely nothing else connected with Christianity to which it could refer. For centuries after this Gospel was received, "born of water" was never otherwise construed than as a reference to baptism; and, as noted above, in its application to Nicodemus, it pointed to the Pharisaical refusal to submit to the baptism of John; but, by extension, it is even more emphatic in its application to that baptism which is greater than John's, namely, that of the Great Commission.
- e. Luke 7:29-30: “And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.”
5. Verse 6: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”
- a. Nicodemus had been thinking that his fleshly body must re-enter his mother’s body and experience a physical re-birth in order for this new birth to occur.
 - b. In this verse, our Lord makes it clear that he was not speaking of another birth of the body, but a birth of the spirit—the inward man, the soul, the part of us which is made in the likeness of God: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:26-27).
 - c. The fleshly birth of a human is ordered by the law of nature that governs the propagation of the race. The seed is planted, the embryo is generated and begins to grow, and the baby is born into this world at the proper time. When the seed and the egg are joined, life begins; at that instant God places the immortal soul (the spirit) into that new entity. Compare: “The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him” (Zech. 12:1).
 - 1) The Lord forms the spirit of man within him. The formation of the heavens and the laying of the earth's foundation were one-time acts, but the forming of the spirits of men is an on-going work.
 - 2) There is more to a man than the physical body:
 - a) Genesis 35:16-19: “And they journeyed from Beth-el; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.”
 - b) 2 Corinthians 4:16: “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”
 - c) Romans 7:22: “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.”
 - d) Job 32:8: “But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.”

- e) 1 Thessalonians 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- 3) God is the father of our spirits. "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. 12:9; cf. Num. 16:22).
- 4) When does God form the spirit within us? The only logical time is the moment of conception; it is then that the body begins to form and life begins. When the spirit leaves the physical body, death results (Jas. 2:26); consequently, it is when the spirit joins the human body that life begins.
- d. The Spirit is said to have a prominent role in the new birth process, although the Lord does not specify in this verse the exact nature of his work. However, Peter in the passage cited earlier gives us the information that answers that question. He said Christians are born again by the word of God (1 Pet. 1:22-23).
 - 1) The Holy Spirit revealed the New Covenant (the Gospel) to and through the apostles of Christ. They began their work of preaching the Spirit-given word on the Pentecost Day of Acts Two, and continued spreading that word as time continued.
 - a) Luke 24:46-49: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - b) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - c) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
- e. In the light of the foregoing and that which follows, it is clear that the Spirit operates through the Word.
 - 1) The effects wrought, the emotions stirred, and the changes made (on us) are all produced by the Holy Spirit through the medium of God's word.
 - 2) If a man chops down a tree with an axe, one could attribute the result either to the man or the axe since both are directly involved; but neither could accomplish the feat without the other. So it is with regards to the Spirit and the Word!
- f. If we reject the Spirit-given word, what is left? When we reject his word, we also reject God, Christ, and all hope of salvation and heaven! If we accept that Spirit-given word, then all spiritual blessings are opened to us! See 2 Timothy 3:15-17.
 - 1) Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - 3) James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh

into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

- 4) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

How the Holy Spirit Operates Is Seen in Cases of Conversion

CASE	GOSPEL	ACTION	ACTION	ACTION	RESULT
Acts 2	Spoke	Heard	Pricked	Baptized	Added, Saved
Acts 8:1-13	Preached	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Great Joy
Acts 8:26-40	Preached	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Rejoiced
Acts 10 & 11	Spoke	[Heard]	Believed	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 16:12-15	Spoke	Heart Opened	Attended	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 16:19-34	Spoke	[Heard]	[Believed]	Baptized	Washed Stripes
Acts 18:1-8	Reasoned	Heard	Believed	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 9, 22, 26	Spoke	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Sins Washed

The Holy Spirit Operates Through the Word

WORK	HOLY SPIRIT	WORD
Instructs	Neh. 9:20,30	2 Tim. 3:16-17
Begets	John 3:5	1 Cor. 4:15; Jas. 1:18
New Birth	John 3:5	1 Peter 1:22-23
Quickens	John 6:63	Psalm 119:50
Teaches	John 14:26	John 6:44-45; Titus 2:11-12
Convicts	John 16:8	Titus 1:9
Comforts	Acts 9:31	1 Th. 4:18; Rom. 15:4
Gives Love	Rom. 5:5	1 John 2:5
Saves	1 Cor. 6:11	Acts 4:4; Jas. 1:21
Washes	1 Cor. 6:11	Eph. 5:26
Sanctifies	1 Pet. 1:2	John 17:17
Converts	John 16:7-8	Psalm 19:7
Makes Free	Rom. 8:2	John 8:32; 17:17
Strengthens	Eph. 3:16	Deut. 11:8; Acts 20:32
Indwells Saints	Eph. 5:18-19	Col. 3:16
Leads	Rom. 8:14	Psalm 119:105
Witnesses	Heb. 10:15; 1 John 5:6-8	Heb. 10:15-16; Jer. 31:31-34
Produces Fruit	Gal. 5:22-23	Col. 1:5-6

6. Verse 7: “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”
- a. The Lord therefore concludes that Nicodemus does not need to be surprised or concerned about this new birth. It is the spirit of the individual that is reborn. The person’s spirit had its beginning at the instant of conception; for a number of years, that spirit remained uncorrupted by sin; but with the passage of time, the individual reaches an age and point of understanding that his violations of God’s will begin to be held against him—his soul is stained by sin; he is separated from the holy God; his soul is in grave jeopardy.
 - b. When that individual comes to learn, understand and believe the soul-saving Gospel of Christ, and out of sincere faith and conviction, he obeys the gospel, his spirit is *re-born* in the sense that it is cleansed from his contamination of sin, and he starts his life over again.
 - 1) Romans 6:3-4: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

- 3) Here is a beautiful statement enunciating the wonderful blessing of being in Christ. While it is true that Christ died for all mankind, it is also true that only a certain few will ever enter into spiritual union with him (cf. Matt. 7:13-14; 22:14).
 - c. One is *in Christ* because he has obeyed the gospel, not because he is a fleshly descendant of Abraham.
 - 1) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 2) Galatians 3:26-27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - d. When one enters into Christ, he becomes a new creation; old things are done away. It is like beginning life all over again, with a clean record and a fresh start.
 - e. Our guilt of sin is removed.
 - 1) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - 2) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
 - 4) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 - f. We now live a life that is separated from the practice of sin.
 - 1) Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
 - 2) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - 4) James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."
-

Those in Christ Have These Blessings

BLESSING	REFERENCE
In the Kingdom	Col. 1:13
Redeemed by Blood of Christ	Col. 1:14
Forgiven for Offenses	Eph. 1:7; Acts 2:38; 22:16
Spiritually Alive	Eph. 2:1-5; Rom. 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:17
Near to God	Eph. 2:13
Reconciled to God	Eph. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:17-21
Sanctified	1 Cor. 1:2
New Creature (Creation)	2 Cor. 5:17
Liberty	Gal. 2:4
Have Hope	1 Pet. 1:3-5
Saved	2 Tim. 2:10

The Condition of Those Who Are out of Christ

CONDITION	REFERENCE
Spiritually Dead	Eph. 2:1-5
Children of Disobedience	Eph. 2:2
Children of Wrath	Eph. 2:3
Aliens & Strangers	Eph. 2:12; Matt. 7:23
Have No Hope	Eph. 2:12
Without God	Eph. 2:12
In the World	Eph. 2:12
Far Off From God	Eph. 2:13,17
In Spiritual Darkness	Eph. 4:18

7. Verse 8: "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."
- a. Other translations:
- 1) American Standard Version: "The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: **so is every one** that is born of the Spirit."
 - 2) New King James: "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

- b. Woods: There is, perhaps, no passage in the scriptures more misunderstood or more improperly used, regarding the new birth, than this. It is usually cited in an effort to show that as the wind's operations are unknown so also is the Spirit's mode of operation in the new birth. It should be noted, however, that the text does not involve a comparison between the wind and the new birth, but between the wind and the one born anew. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit," Jesus said.
- 1) The confusion results from an incorrect rendering of the word *pneuma* of the Greek text by the word wind in the English text. So glaring is the error that one without any knowledge of Greek, on being provided with the following facts, can at once perceive it. The word *pneuma* (Spirit) occurs several hundred times in the Greek New Testament. In no other instance do the standard translations render it wind. It occurs twice in this passage and is rendered "wind" in the first clause and "Spirit" in the last. It would be no more incorrect to render the final clause, "so is everyone that is born of the wind," as it is to translate the first clause, "The wind bloweth...." Note the absurdity involved in such a rendering in other passages containing the word *pneuma* (Spirit): "But the wind (*pneuma*) saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith... ." (1 Tim. 4:1.) "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal wind (*pneuma*) offered himself without blemish unto God... ." (Heb. 9:14.) "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the wind (*pneuma*) saith to the churches." (Rev. 2:11.)
 - 2) It should be at once obvious that if the word *pneuma* means Spirit in more than 350 instances, it does not mean wind in this one and only instance! Moreover, when wind is intended the word *anemos* usually denotes it. The evidence is thus overwhelming that the word wind is an incorrect rendering of the word *pneuma*, and that it should have been rendered "Spirit" as it is in the final clause of the verse and in hundreds of other instances in the New Testament. Thus understood, the passage may be freely rendered as follows: "The Spirit breathes as he will, you hear his voice but you cannot tell whence he comes or whither he goes, so through hearing his voice is every one born who is born of the Spirit." That is, The Spirit breathes (expresses himself) through the word of truth (the gospel), in full harmony with his will and you receive the expression of this will by means of this word; and while you cannot see the Spirit and are thus without visual evidence of his coming and going it is by means of hearing his voice (as expressed through the word) that you are born anew.
 - 3) So (in this manner), is one born of the Spirit. This is simply to say that one is born of water and of the Spirit by receiving the Spirit's message as expressed in the gospel, and by being baptized for (unto) the remission of sins. (1 Cor. 4:15; James 1:18; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3, 4.) Peter's words which follow provide us with an inspired commentary on the meaning of the phrase, "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." (1 Pet. 1:23.) [p.58].
- c. Vincent:
- 1) The wind *to pneuma*. Some hold by the translation "spirit," as Wycliffe: "the spirit breatheth where it will." In Hebrew the words "spirit and wind" are identical. *Pneuma* is from *pneoo* "to breathe or blow," the verb used in this verse (bloweth), and everywhere in the New Testament of the blowing of the wind (Matt 7:25,27; Luke 12:55; John 6:18). It frequently occurs in the classics in the sense of "wind." Thus, Aristophanes, *to pneuma elatton gignetai*, "the wind is dying away" ("Knights," 441), also in the New Testament, Heb 1:7, where the proper translation is, "who maketh His angels winds," quoted from Ps 103:4. In the Septuagint, 1 Kings 18:45; 19:11; 2 Kings 3:17; Job 1:19. In the New Testament, in the sense of "breath," 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 11:11. The usual rendering, "wind," is confirmed here by the use of the kindred verb *pnei*, "bloweth," and by *fooneen* "sound, voice." Tholuck thinks that the figure may have been suggested to Jesus by the sound of the night-wind sweeping through the narrow street.

- 2) Where it listeth **hopou thelei**. On the verb *theloo*, "to will or determine," see the note at Matt 1:19. "Listeth" is old English for "pleaseth or willeth," from the Anglo-Saxon "lust," meaning "pleasure." Chaucer has the forms "leste, lust, and list." [Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved].
- d. Brother Woods is right regarding his comments on *pneuma* meaning "spirit." Nevertheless, those who translated many versions of the Bible gave "wind" as their rendition of *pneuma* in the phrase, "The wind bloweth...." at the beginning of verse eight. Assuming his view of correct, his interpretation of the passage is accurate. But if "wind" is taken as the better translation, the meaning is still clear, although a different application of the verse is necessitated.
- e. Taking the word *wind* as the proper translation of *pneuma* in this special instance, then the following view would obtain:
 - 1) No one in that old time understood as much about nature as we do in our so-called enlightened age. They could not know where the wind that was at any certain moment blowing upon their brow originated; they could not know where that specific breeze would go after it left that particular place. From the human point of view, the wind had a mind of its own; it blew wherever it decided. Today we know about high and low pressure areas, and how air is moved by atmospheric pressure to circulate around the earth.
 - 2) We cannot see the wind (the air) with human eyesight, but we can feel its movement as it passes around us. We do not know where that breeze started or where it with go.
 - 3) In this same fashion, is the one who is born again. We cannot see the air and we cannot see the human spirit. We can see the effects the air has upon nature around us; we can see the human spirit's actions upon the human body in which it dwells. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:16). When the spirit leaves the body, that body is dead; the spirit has gone elsewhere and cannot cause the body to move or speak or show life again.
 - 4) The Lord's point is that the part of man that is born again is not the physical body but the undying spirit that animates the body in which it abides. We can neither see the Holy Spirit or the human spirit with out physical eyes.

B. John 3:9-13: More Clarifying Information is Given to Nicodemus.

1. Verse 9: "Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?"
 - a. It may be that Nicodemus had lost his doubt and was now asking honestly how these things could be accomplished. It would be some time later before the details of the gospel system were to be made fully known, beginning on the Day of Pentecost of Acts Two.
 - b. Even the apostles of Christ had to wait until that time before they were given complete knowledge, and even that was not delivered at one time. They asked whether Jesus was going to establish his kingdom at that time (Acts 1:6).
 - c. Acts 1:7-11: "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
2. Verse 10: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"
 - a. "The question implies that Nicodemus was one of the doctors of the law. These made very arrogant claims of superior knowledge. Christ intends to show their ignorance of the fundamental principles of the kingdom. Though the prophets had indicated the new heart and spirit as one of its conditions

- they had entirely overlooked it” (Johnson, p.58).
- b. There were many things about the Old Testament prophecies of Christ and his kingdom that the rabbis and other Jewish scholars had failed to comprehend. One of their greatest misconceptions was that the Messiah would be a literal, earthly ruler and that his kingdom would be of a material nature. They presumed that, by virtue of their birth as a descendant of Abraham, the Jews would automatically be members of this kingdom.
 - c. Consider some of these Old Testament prophecies:
 - 1) Daniel 2:44 : “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”
 - 2) Isaiah 2:2-4: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”
 - 3) Jeremiah 31:31-34: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”
3. Verse 11: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.”
 - a. The introductory clause with which this verse begins is the third time it has been used in this chapter, in the Lord’s remarks to Nicodemus. As Johnson wrote, “Each time they mark a new stage of the discourse” (p.58).
 - b. Note that Jesus changed from the singular pronoun *I* to the plural *we* in the point of this verse. He also uses the plural pronoun *ye*. By using the plural *we*, he includes himself, his apostles, and others who would be inspired to teach or write by inspiration. Christ and his inspired spokesmen would **know** what they presented. “In the phrase, ‘Ye receive not our witness,’ the plural pronoun embraces not only Nicodemus, but all unbelieving Jews; hence, the plural ‘we’ indicates that Jesus associated with himself all those who did “know” and who should receive his teaching. It is simply the exercise of good judgment to receive the testimony of dependable witnesses who have seen and heard” (Woods, p.64).
 - c. The Jews who refused to believe on Jesus did so despite the overwhelming evidence that he is the Messiah.
 - 1) John 8:21-27: “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. 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.”

- 2) John 8:39-48: “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. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?”
 - d. The rejection of Jesus by the Jewish leaders and by the general population led to the great disasters the Romans brought upon them in 70 A.D.
4. Verse 12: “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?”
 - a. Nicodemus had trouble understanding what the Lord said about the kingdom and entering the earthly phase of the kingdom. Jesus had shown him that the kingdom did not belong to the Jews because they were physical descendants of Abraham. It was necessary for every one to be born again before he could enter the kingdom.
 - b. This much should have been sufficiently clear for this “teacher of Israel” to comprehend. But since he had so much difficulty understanding this matter, how could he expect to grasp the more profound truths the Lord was about to announce!
 - c. The heavenly things he was ready to discuss included the crucifixion of the very Son of God, thereby providing the means for the salvation of lost souls. This salvation would be extended to all who would believe on the Savior, thus including even Gentiles. The Jews were willing to accept Gentiles who accepted and followed the Law of Moses, but these “outsiders” could not be full partakers of all the Law’s benefits. That being so, how much more difficult would it be for them to perceive and happily receive the notion that the Gentiles could have full membership in Messiah’s approaching kingdom!
5. Verse 13: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” ASV: “And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven.”
 - a. Nicodemus had declared his belief that Jesus was a man sent from God, because no one could do the miracles the Lord did without God being with him (John 3:2). “Christ now declares that he is not ‘a man sent from God’ like John, but has come down from heaven, still is of heaven, and therefore, can bear witness of heavenly things” (Johnson, p.59).
 - b. Nicodemus could not at this time know the truths with which the apostle John would begin his report of the Messiah: “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. 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” (John 1:1-5).
 - c. If Nicodemus later became a Christian, he could be conversant with these and many more great truths of the Gospel. “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to

give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:4-6).

- 1) The light given was the light of the glorious gospel of Christ (verse 4). It provided the light of God's knowledge. This is the same body of knowledge spoken of in 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
 - 2) John 3:19-21: "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."
 - 3) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 4) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
 - 5) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 6) 2 Timothy 1:9-10: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."
 - 7) The light of the glorious gospel of Christ penetrates and permeates the hearts of those who believe, enabling us to bring glory to God and to live up to the glory he expects of us. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).
 - 8) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."
- d. No human being ever ascended to heaven and returned to earth to bear witness of the divine counsel of the Almighty. Enoch and Elijah were each carried directly into eternity; Elijah returned to be part of the Lord's transfiguration scene (Matt. 17; Luke 9). He did not bring back to mankind any message from heaven; Moses was also present in that miraculous scene. What was discussed between Christ, Moses and Elijah is reported in Luke 9:31: "Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."
- e. The Messiah came down from heaven, maintained constant communication with the Father while on his earthly mission, and then returned to heaven, where he is seated on the right hand of God. He brought God's message to mankind, part of which he delivered during his public work, and revealed the rest of it through the apostles, who were guided infallibly by the Holy Spirit.
- C. John 3:14-21: God So Loved the World.
1. Verse 14: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."
 - a. The report of Moses erecting a brazen serpent in the wilderness is reported in Numbers 21:4-9.
 - 1) The snake-bitten person was required to go to the place where the brazen serpent was erected; he was to behold that serpent—not a mere glance at the snake's image, but a look that included the belief that God would heal his ailment. Two physical activities were required: he had to go to the place where the serpent was located and he had to look at the image. It is certain that if the afflicted victim had no faith, no curing would have been forthcoming.
 - 2) The Jewish victim was suffering from the poison inflicted by the bite of deadly serpent; the victim in this verse [14] is one who has been "bitten" by the serpent of sin. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).
-

- b. The punishment sent upon the Israelites was just—they deserved it. Their long sojourn in the empty wilderness was itself a penalty for refusing to enter Canaan when they were first given opportunity. See Numbers 13:26-33.
 - c. God decided that that generation which had thus rebelled against him would remain in the wastes of the wilderness until they had all died. Of the men above a certain age when they left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb would survive to enter the land of promise. “For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun” (Num. 26:65).
 - d. Just as certain as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, just that certainly would Jesus the Messiah be lifted up. This affirmation was clearly stated by the Lord himself. It could be believed with the greatest of assurance. The phrase “to be lifted up” was used to denote crucifixion. “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” (John 12:32-33). Notice how it is used in James 4:10: “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”
 - e. There are many in the modern religious world of so-called *Christendom* who deny that it was God’s plan for Jesus to die on the cross. They erroneously allege that through Christ an earthly kingdom was to be established, over which The Messiah would reign as king. The theory further asserts that it was only after the majority of the Jews rejected Jesus, that God changed his plan; instead of an earthly kingdom, Christ would die on the cross and the church would be established.
 - 1) But at this early point in his personal ministry, Jesus announced that he was to die on the cross. At this point, he had not been rejected by the Jews. There were yet to be great multitudes who would gather around him, and many would follow him from place to place.
 - 2) In fact, in chapter six, there was a strong movement among the Jews to take him by force and put him on the throne: “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” (John 6:15). At the height of his popularity among the Jews, many of them tried to take him by force and make him king. The Lord turned them down! This shows that he never intended to set up a material kingdom. The Lord refused this honor.
 - f. God’s eternal plan called for his Son to die in mankind’s behalf.
 - 1) Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”
 - 2) Isaiah 53:4-11: “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 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. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”
 - 3) Luke 24:44-46: “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.”
-

- 4) Acts 2:29-36: “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”
- 5) 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”
2. Verse 15: “That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”
 - a. The snake-bitten person of Numbers 21:4-9 had to look at the brazen serpent on the pole; does anyone think he could have merely looked at the image without faith in God’s promise, and still be healed? We remember the eternal principle of Hebrews 11:6: “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” The preceding verse (Heb. 11:5) states that Enoch was pleasing to God; he pleased God because he walked with God; he walked with God because he believed and obeyed the will of God. Since he possessed this great standing with the Almighty, Enoch was hugely blessed by God.
 - b. We are here told [Heb. 11:6] of the impossibility of pleasing God without faith. A plain, direct statement is affirmed giving that truth. If anyone wants to enjoy the good pleasure of God, he must have faith. To be pleasing to God is equivalent to having his favor; and having his favor is to have the benefits of his grace.
 - c. God’s blessings are reserved for those who *diligently seek him*. His material blessings are provided generally for all men in nature (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17; 1 Tim. 4:10). His spiritual blessings are given only to his own people (Eph. 1:3).
 - 1) Matthew 5:45: “That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”
 - 2) Acts 14:17: “Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”
 - 3) James 1:17: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”
 - 4) Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”
 - d. He requires that we seek after him; he does not speak to anyone directly from heaven, identifying himself and revealing his will.
 - 1) He took the necessary action in the long ago to provide for the salvation of any person who desires it; the Bible is the product of those actions.
 - a) Hebrews 1:1-4: “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; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the

Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”

- b) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 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.”
 - c) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
- 2) He has provided sufficient evidence of his existence in nature and in the Bible to convince any honest seeker. But we must seek! "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27).
- e. John 3:15 and Hebrews 11:5 show that faith is undeniably required of those who want God's blessings. Faith in God and faith in Christ is essential. One cannot consistently believe in Christ without also believing in God; one cannot consistently believe in God without also believing in Christ. One who believes the Bible will believe in God and Christ, and also the third member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.
- f. Woods:
- 1) The Israelites murmured in unbelief against Jehovah in the wilderness of wandering and serpents were sent to plague them. Those bitten were without earthly remedy and many died. Only when the serpent of brass was erected and the people complied with the instruction of Moses did deliverance come.
 - 2) Similarly, for a world in sin there is no salvation except through Christ and in compliance with his will. "Whosoever believeth may, in him, have eternal life." In him must we be to appropriate this blessing. We are baptized into Christ after having believed the gospel (Heb. 11:6), having repented of our sins (Luke 13:3), and having confessed our faith in him (Rom. 10:10).
 - 3) It should be noted that the promise is not simply to the believer but to the believer who is in him—in Christ, his spiritual body, the church. (Eph. 1:19-23.) Even devils (demons) believed (James 2:19), but they were not obedient. Faith, apart from works (of righteousness), is dead. (James 2:26.) [p.66].
- g. Obedient believers who remain faithful will not perish but will have eternal life.
- 1) For a soul to perish does not mean that it goes out of existence, but that it is forevermore separated from God and all that is holy, and will be consigned to that place of torment prepared for the devil and his angels.
 - a) Matthew 8:12: "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
 - b) Matthew 13:42: "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."
 - c) Matthew 24:51: "And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
 - d) Matthew 25:30: "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
-

- e) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - f) Luke 13:28: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out."
 - g) Revelation 20:12-15 "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire" (ASV).
3. Verse 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."
- a. This verse is perhaps the best known and loved passage in the Bible. We call it the Golden Text of the Bible; it expresses the heart of the Bible's message. It contains much truth in a very concise statement. But is also one of most misunderstood and abused verses in Bible. Sincere people dearly cherish but know little of its profound truth.
 - b. FOR: *gar*; used to explain the foregoing statement. The reference is to fiery serpents and the brazen serpent:
 - 1) John 3:14-15: "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."
 - 2) Cure for the snake bite was not obtained by a mere belief: but by faith, believing God would effect the cure; it was an obedient look.
 - c. The serpent on the pole was symbolic of his death:
 - 1) John 12:32-33: "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."
 - 2) John 8:28: "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."
 - 3) John 3:15: "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."
4. God.
- a. Denies atheism; atheism denies God's very existence. The passage affirms that God exists and took direct action in man's salvation; he took direct action in the creation of the world.
 - b. Atheism would rob us of everything important.
 - 1) God, Son, redemption, the Bible, hope— nothing left.
 - 2) Atheism creates many dire problems: decline in morality and ethics; the rise in crime.
 - 3) The text contends that there is a God and that he is active.
5. God so loved.
- a. Denies Deism: this philosophy claims God has no interest in his creation; he created all things, but left man and the world to their own devices.
 - b. God is unlike idols: he is not vicious, cruel, cold, indifferent, or lifeless.
 - c. God Loved:
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 13:11: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."
 - 2) John 4:16: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."
 - d. God so loved: what is emphasized is the degree of intensity, the genuine interest, the determined dedication he has toward his offspring.
-

- e. We would have a miserable life without God's love:
 - 1) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 2) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - 3) 1 Peter 5:6-7: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."
- 6. The World.
 - a. This truth repudiates humanism, which maintains: "There is no one out there to save or help you."
 - b. Literally, the "world" refers to the orderly universe and often the earth. But in this passage the reference is to mankind; it includes all men:
 - 1) 1 Timothy 2:4: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
 - 3) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - 4) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - c. He is not far from any man who seeks him: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:24-28).
- 7. That he gave.
 - a. This truth destroys the Premillennial Theory.
 - 1) The theory says the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Christ was only a stopgap measure, that it was never part of God's eternal plan.
 - 2) The passage properly interpreted denies this theory:
 - a) Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
 - b) Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."
 - c) Isaiah 53:4-11: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 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. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”

- d) Matthew 1:21: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” Compare: Acts 2:29-33.
 - e) Titus 2:11: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.”
 - f) 1 Timothy 2:4-6: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”
 - g) Revelation 13:8: “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”
- b. Giving is characteristic of God:
- 1) Acts 17:25: “Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.”
 - 2) Acts 14:17: “Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 9:15: “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”
 - 4) James 1:17: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”
- c. Gave His only begotten Son:
- 1) Isaiah 9:6-7: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”
 - 2) 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.”
- d. We must receive the gift to be benefitted:
- 1) John 1:11-12: “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.”
 - 2) John 8:24: “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.”
 - 3) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (ASV). See also Romans 10:13-18.
 - 4) Luke 24:47: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (ASV).
 - 5) Acts 2:38: “And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
 - 6) Acts 22:16: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name.”
 - 7) A gift can be freely given but still have conditions:
 - a) Joshua 6:2: “And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.”
-

- b) Hebrews 11:30: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."
 - c) Acts 2:41: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."
 - e. His only begotten Son.
 - 1) This truth repudiates Judaism and Modernism. Both of these deny Jesus is the Son of God. Judaism was only intended for a limited time:
 - a) Matthew 5:17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."
 - b) Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
 - c) Galatians 2:21: "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."
 - d) Modernism denies the Virgin Birth and the divine nature of Christ.
 - 2) "Only begotten Son translates the Greek word *Monogenes*: only + stock, race; unique in kind. This term is used of Christ five times in the New Testament:
 - a) John 1:14: "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."
 - b) John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."
 - c) 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."
 - d) John 3:18: "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."
 - e) 1 John 4:9: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."
 - 3) The significance of the truth is further indicated in:
 - a) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - b) 1 Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - c) Acts 3:22-23: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."
 - d) John 8:24: "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."
 - f. Whosoever believeth in him.
 - 1) This truth denies the Calvinistic view of election and reprobation.
 - a) "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass" (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter III).
 - b) "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished" (*ibid.*).
 - c) This theory asserts that God chose individuals to be saved or lost. This monstrous theory makes God a respecter of persons.
-

- 2) Whosoever: everyone and anyone; open to all, not just to a few:
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - b) 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.”
 - g. Believeth.
 - 1) This verb is a present tense participle: keeps on believing. It means more than mental assent or proper mental attitude toward him.
 - 2) The Greek term is *Pisteuo*: opposite of *apisteuo* (disobey in Romans 2:8: “But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath”). The same word is used in:
 - a) John 3:36: “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.”
 - b) Hebrews 3:18: “And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient?” (ASV).
 - c) 1 Peter 2:7: “Unto you therefore which **believe** he is precious: but unto them which be **disobedient**, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.”
 - 3) Saving faith is active:
 - a) Galatians 5:6: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love.”
 - b) James 2:24: “Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.”
 - c) James 2:26: “For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.”
 - 4) Believing in Christ gives us the right or power to be saved; faith does not mean we are already saved: “He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:11-12).
 - h. Salvation is not by faith only IF either of following is true:
 - 1) **Saved by active faith**: “What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith. Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and shudder. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:14-26).
 - 2) **Salvation is in Christ**:
 - a) 2 Timothy 2:10: “Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”
 - b) Galatians 3:27: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.”
-

- 3) **A part of the plan of salvation is put for whole:**
 - a) Acts 11:18: “And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.”
 - b) 1 Peter 3:21: “Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”
 - c) Acts 20:7: “And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight.” [Breaking bread is used to include the other acts of worship].
 - 4) **If one believer is lost:**
 - a) John 8:30: “As he spake these things, many believed on him.”
 - b) John 8:44: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth 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 thereof.”
 - c) John 12:42-43: “Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God.”
 - i. Should not perish.
 - 1) Destroys materialism.
 - a) Watchtower Witnesses, Adventists, *etal* maintain that there is no eternal punishment.
 - b) But the text affirms that those who believe will not suffer this eternal penalty; it clearly implies that unbelievers will perish.
 - 2) Perish: does not mean annihilation. The same word is used in Luke 15:24: “For this **my son was dead, and is alive again**; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.” The word means ruin, the loss of well-being—not the loss of being:
 - a) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: “And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might.”
 - b) Matthew 25:46: “And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.”
 - c) Luke 12:4-5: “And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”
 - 3) Should not: no need for any to perish but most will!
 - a) Matthew 7:13-14: “Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.”
 - b) Luke 13:24: “Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”
 - j. But have eternal life.
 - 1) Eternal life is opposite of eternal death:
 - a) Revelation 2:1: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”
 - b) Revelation 20:6: “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”
 - c) Revelation 20:14: “And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second
-

- death, even the lake of fire.”
- 2) The difference is eternal communion with God -vs- eternal separation from God. Both involve and require eternal existence. The contrast is in the nature of the existence. State of glory, rest and happiness, or a state of misery, darkness, sorrow and pain:
 - a) Romans 2:10: “But glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
 - b) 2 Corinthians 4:17: “For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.”
 - c) Matthew 25:21: “His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”
 - d) Matthew 25:46: “And these [others] shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”
8. Verses 17-18: “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.”
- a. The world of accountable humanity was lost because of unbelief. Adam and Eve had taught their offspring about God and his will. Cain’s descendants let that knowledge and belief slip from their minds with the passage of time. Seth’s progeny kept their faith and obedience until they later began to intermarry with those of Cain’s line. Disaster then resulted for the race of mankind:
 - 1) Genesis 6:1-3: “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” [The sons of God were in the line of Seth; the daughters of men were from Cain].
 - 2) Genesis 6:5-8: “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”
 - b. Noah and his family were faithful for some span of time, and their descendants retained a knowledge of the Living God for a time. God had told them to multiply and fill up the earth, but they decided to build a great tower as a means of staying together and thus foil God’s plan to replenish the earth. See Genesis 11.
 - 1) This rebellion caused God to confuse their language; different groups of them spoke different languages. Because of this, they scattered abroad. We know that idolatry developed among some of those groups, for Terah (father of Abram) worshipped idols (Josh. 24:2).
 - 2) But we also know that Abram served the Living God (Gen. 12). His wife undoubtedly was a firm believer in God also: “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Gen. 18:19).
 - 3) We know there were others during Abraham’s time who served God (Gen. 20:1-11). If this king and his people were righteous at that time, there may have been others also who followed God’s will.
 - 4) We may assume that the majority of the world were not righteous; idolatry had already taken effect in and around Ur of the Chaldees (where Terah lived). One reason for getting Abraham away from his home territory and his father’s family was to give him more isolation from idolatry. He and his descendants were forbidden to intermarry with the Canaanites or to have social contact with them.
-

- 5) But the Israelites later contaminated themselves to the extent that God gave up on them. The ten northern tribes were conquered by the Assyrians (722 B.C.), and the two southern tribes were over-come by the Babylonians, beginning in 606 B.C. Seventy years later (536 B.C.), they were allowed to begin their return to Palestine. They experienced long years of trouble and war at the hands of Grecians and later by the Romans. A remnant of the Jews were still faithful when our Lord came.
 - 6) The Gentile nations had long before departed from the Almighty, and had descended into all kinds of licentious behavior. “ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness; because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves: for that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom. 1:18-25, ASV).
- c. Christ did not come to the earth to condemn the world, for the world was already contaminated with sin and stood under the condemnation of sin. The people of the world did not need to be condemned, they needed someone to bring salvation! God dispatched his Son into the world when the time was ripe. There are definite indicators that the timing of the first advent was perfect. Sin had been fully identified as the transgression of God's will. Universal rebellion against God had brought universal suffering and condemnation, with no hope of escape without Christ.
- 1) Psalms 14:1-4: "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God. They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people *as* they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD."
 - 2) Ecclesiastes 7:20: "For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."
 - 3) Both Jew and Gentile had been taught that they cannot save themselves: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).
 - 4) God had shown man that he could not be saved by the law of Moses, and that the natural religions of the Gentiles were likewise without any saving power.
 - 5) Thinking men had learned that they needed the services of a special Savior.
 - 6) Rome had given the world an orderly system of civil law, constructed a network of roads which facilitated travel, established an empire that enabled men to travel without encountering closed borders, and ruled over a world that was presently at peace.
 - 7) The Greeks had provided a language that was able uniquely to express the message of God's word to human minds clearly and accurately.
 - 8) Morality was at a low ebb in all lands, even among the Jews. Mankind was ripe for the high standard of the gospel.
 - 9) Religion was at an extremely low point; every kind of perverted belief and practice had been invented. Many were able to see the foolishness of idolatry, and wanted something better.
- d. One who keeps on believing on the Savior is not under condemnation. His faith being strong, this one has obeyed the gospel: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).
-

- 1) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 2) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
 - 4) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 - 5) Romans 8:1-3: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."
 - e. In contrast to the information immediately above, those who do not believe are under condemnation because of their unbelief. This was true of the unbelieving Jews and of the unbelieving Gentiles. The blood of animals could not remove the guilt of the Jews—the Mosaic Law went out of force when our Lord died on the cross; the Gentiles had nothing that could remove the guilt of their sins.
 - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 4) Romans 3:25-26: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."
 - 5) Hebrews 9:15: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."
 - 6) John 1:29: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
 - 7) Galatians 2:4-5: "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."
 - 8) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 9. Verses 19-21: "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 reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the
-

- light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”
- a. Why would any right-thinking person remain under the condemnation of sin? The light of the gospel has come into the world to illuminate both the awful condition of those in sin and the means by which sin may be remitted. We are told in this verse that men love the ways of darkness than the way of living in the illumination of the gospel.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 4:3-6: “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”
 - 2) There were many in Paul's generation who closed their eyes lest they should see the truth. Our Lord denounced all such people. “For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matt. 13:15). The same severe rebuke applies to everyone, of any generation and land, who will not open their minds to learn the truth.
 - b. The gospel is intended for all, and is well within the reach of anyone who desires to learn it. Those to whom it was hidden were those who have closed their minds against it. In our land, the gospel is readily accessible to every sincere soul. Copies of the Bible are everywhere; faithful teachers of the Bible earnestly seek honest souls in order to instruct them more fully in the will of God.
 - c. What about those in Moslem lands? Since the Bible is not easily found there, will those people who live and die in unbelief receive some special dispensation from God in the Judgment?
 - 1) There are more people on earth now than there as ever been; we have more possible contacts to whom to teach the Gospel.
 - 2) But modern inventions are available for our use.
 - a) Transportation has been greatly enhanced, so we can go farther more quickly.
 - b) Communication makes it possible for us to talk via telephone to most parts of the world.
 - c) The internet makes it possible to send messages to millions of people, instantly.
 - d) Radio and television enable us to communicate the gospel message to an almost limitless audience.
 - e) The internet makes it possible for people even in Moslem countries to learn as much about the Bible as they desire.
 - d. We must remember that no man has the slightest authority to act in God's stead; and no one has the right to make any changes to God's word. What God has stated in his word will be fully respected and applied in the Judgment; God will not set aside his word for the special benefit of any person.
 - 1) Psalms 119:89: “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.”
 - 2) Matthew 24:35: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
 - 3) John 12:48: “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.”
 - e. Those who are lost are defined as those who "believe not." To believe not is to be lost; to be lost is to perish.
 - 1) Matthew 10:28: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
 - 2) Luke 12:4-5: “And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”
 - f. The gospel is hidden to those who will not believe; it is not hidden from them by God's design; it is not hidden from them because it is too difficult for them to comprehend. The god of this world
-

has blinded them so they do not see its glory.

- 1) The god of this world is Satan:
 - a) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."
 - c) John 12:31: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."
 - d) John 14:30: "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."
 - e) John 16:11: "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."
- 2) Satan is the god of this world because the majority of the world chooses to follow his evil will rather than the benevolent will of the true God. "Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke 8:12).
- 3) Satan is able to accomplish this evil effort by means of false teachers, corrupt doctrine, and foolish and evil men. In bringing about the condemnation of men, the devil does not operate directly and miraculously any more than God acts directly and miraculously to effect the salvation of the lost. Both work through mediums. There is a void or empty space between two minds which requires a medium across which communication must be established. Satan is forced to use mediums through which he exerts his evil influence.
 - a) When he enticed Eve to violate the God-given edict forbidding the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tempter did not exert direct, mind-on-mind, miraculous influence. Rather, he offered his temptations by the medium of words. And since there were no other human beings to do his evil work for him, he operated through the wily serpent.
 - b) When the devil wanted to tempt the Savior, he used the medium of words which was addressed to the natural appetites of the fleshly body and the pride of life (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). Even though he approached Christ in person (evidently), he still had to use a medium to offer the temptations.
 - c) 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." When he tempts us today, he does so indirectly through the same three avenues: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. For agents, he uses false teachers, sinners, situations that develop, and the natural weaknesses of the flesh.
 - d) In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, the devil was the source of their temptation: "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and keep back part of the price of the land?" (Acts 5:3). But in the next verse Peter asked, "Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?" The passage does not teach that Satan miraculously placed the temptation into their minds; rather he used the medium of their own greed and pride to entrap them!
- g. The word of the gospel gives illumination; it shows us the way to Christ, the way to serve God acceptably, the way to worship God properly, the way to live, and the way to heaven.
 - 1) Psalms 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
 - 2) 1 John 1:5-10: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the

light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

- h. If Satan, acting through his agents (2 Cor. 11:13-15), can convince us that the Bible is not accurate, or that it is not the final authority in religious affairs, or that it may be correctly followed by merely keeping the spirit of its teachings, he will have very effectively blinded our minds to the truth. Those teachers who affirm that there are many ways to heaven, or who maintain that absolute truth is unattainable, or that sincerity alone is sufficient, blind the minds of many.
- i. Woods:
 - 1) Throughout the scriptures darkness is used as a symbol of sin, of wickedness and of error. Those enamored by sin do not wish to be exposed and they thus avoid the light which reveals the true nature of their actions. Light dispels darkness and the truth drives out error, but those who prefer error to truth and wrong-doing to righteousness reject the light because they do not want their works reprov'd (condemned). This perversity of heart keeps multitudes from obeying the gospel. (Matt. 13:13-15.)
 - 2) But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God.—Those who love the truth, in contrast with those who hate it, seek out the light and in it find great satisfaction and pleasure because it reveals that their lives are ordered by what is good and right and are such as are pleasing to God. These have no fear of the light because they know that the light will reflect the true character of their conduct and this they are not afraid for anybody to see. (pp.68f).
- j. The conversation Jesus had with Nicodemus runs from verse one of this chapter and concludes with verse twenty-one. Thus, one of the most important truths in the Scriptures was spoken to an audience of one man. The great statement about worship (John 4:24) was spoken to an audience of one woman, and she was a Samaritan.

D. John 3:22-30: He Must Increase But I Must Decrease.

- 1. Verse 22: “After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.”
 - a. The things indicated in the verse include the Passover activities and his conversation with Nicodemus. His reception in Jerusalem was not great, so he departed to the rural areas of Judea. We remember that Jerusalem was the capital city of the province of Judea.
 - b. The disciples were with Jesus now, and leaving Jerusalem, their travels took them to the Jordan River. At that place, a number of people were baptized, but not by the Lord personally. His disciples could take care of that process.
 - c. The baptism that was administered by the apostles to these disciples was the baptism of John. The baptism of the Great Commission could not be done until after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. The body of the convert is lowered into water where it is submerged, and then it is lifted to the upright position again. The One Baptism (Eph. 4:4-6) is a replication of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.
 - 1) Romans 6:3-4: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
 - 2) Colossians 2:12: “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”
 - d. An ignorant sectarian preacher made this statement: “I know that baptism is not essential for salvation because Paul said he was sent to preach the gospel, not to baptize.” If one will study the context of that statement (1 Cor. 1:17), he will learn that many of the Christians in Corinth were

aligning themselves behind various preachers, calling themselves by the names of Peter, etc. Paul stated in the passage that he was grateful he had only baptized a few of those people. At this time, little of the New Testament had been written; only those who were inspired could preach the gospel; but anyone can perform the operation of baptism. Having the full revelation of the New Testament at his disposal, this misguided preacher still cannot discern the full and accurate plan of salvation; as discussed above, blindness has beclouded his eyes. How sad!

e. Woods:

- 1) Following these events, the Lord and his disciples went into the land of Judaea. Judaea was the province of which Jerusalem was the capital; they travelled into those sections of Judaea some distance from Jerusalem. There the Lord tarried, perhaps as long as from April to December, since the passover was held in April and he referred to "four months until the harvest" in John 4:35.
 - 2) There, too, he baptized, though not personally, but through his disciples who acted by his instructions. (John 4:2.) It evidently was like that of John's baptism, being a preparatory act for the kingdom. (Matt. 3:1 ff.) It was not into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20), as was the baptism of the Great Commission which began to be practiced no earlier than the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1, 37, 38, 41). It could not have been "into the death of Christ" as is Christian baptism inasmuch as Christ had not yet died. (Rom. 6:3, 4.) (P.69).
2. Verses 23-24: "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."
- a. Aenon: (springs) a place "near to Salim," at which John baptized. John 3:23. It was evidently west of the Jordan, comp. John 3:22, with John 3:26 and with John 1:28. And abounded in water. It is given in the Omomasticon as eight miles south of Scythopolis "near Salem and the Jordan." [Smith's Bible Dictionary, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved].
 - b. At this place along the Jordan there was "much water," to serve John's purpose of immersing many people. Jesus came to this same place; his disciples baptized an unspecified number of people.
 - c. The inspired author tells us that John had not yet been cast into prison. We are told of John's death in Matthew 14:1-12: "At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus."
 - d. Johnson:
 - 1) Because there was much water there. This is assigned as a reason, not why John was at Aenon, or preached at Aenon, but why he baptized at Aenon. It explains "baptizing." "Much water" was essential to baptism in New Testament times, and Aenon provided it. It shows the stress of Pedobaptists when they insist that he chose Aenon because the great multitudes would require much water for domestic purposes. The Scripture explains its necessity otherwise.
 - 2) Nor does the criticism that *polla hudata* means "many waters" help their cause. The phrase is applied in the Septuagint to the Euphrates (Jer. 15; 13), and in Revelation to the Tiber (Rev. 17: 1). It may mean either "much" or, "many" waters. There were many fountains at Aenon and many pools in the stream they created. Whatever *polla hudata* may mean it explains the reason
-

- why John was baptizing there, a fact that can be reconciled only with immersion.
- 3) The reason why the historian gives this explanation is that all the other accounts of John's baptizing locate him at the river Jordan. As it is here affirmed that he was baptizing at a place some distance from the Jordan, it is explained that there "was much water there" also. [p.62].
 - e. This incident occurred just before the seizure of John. The testimony following is the last words recorded of the great forerunner before he was sent to prison and from thence to death. The other Gospels omit this incident.
 3. Verse 25: "Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying."
 - a. The American Standard places this question between some of John's disciples and a Jew (singular). This particular Jew was likely a Pharisee, and was not a follower of John or Jesus.
 - b. There were certain purifying rites practiced by the Jews, for example, washing their hands before eating, and the washing of the priests at the laver before entering the temple. The question might have been to see what difference, if any, between the baptism as practiced by John and that taught by Jesus.
 4. Verse 26: "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." NKJ: And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"
 - a. These disciples of John, though they had often heard John declare his inferior relationship to the Christ (John 1:29, 30), seemed not to have understood what this involved and they were thus unable satisfactorily to defend him in the questioning between themselves and the Jew. They recalled John's announcement of Jesus (John 1:29), and it now seemed to them that he who owed this public introduction to John was on the verge of surpassing him. This both perplexed and worried them and may have made them jealous. They said, in effect, "The people are leaving you and listening to him whom you baptized and introduced to the world." [Woods, p.71].
 - b. John's disciples did not like the fact that Jesus was obtaining greater eminence, while their leader seemed to be losing prestige. These were good men, but they could not grasp what was happening. They remembered the huge throngs of people who had flocked to Jordan to hear John.
 5. Verses 27-28: "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."
 - a. John rightly attributed success to the will and power of Heaven. The greater success and prominence Jesus was gaining was due to God's will.
 - b. He reminded them in verse thirty that he had earlier stated that Jesus must increase while he (John) would decrease. He had also declared that he was not the Christ [the Messiah]; rather he was sent "before" him. He was the Messiah's forerunner; he came to introduce Christ to the world.
 - c. Isaiah 40:1-9: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. 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. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"
 6. Verse 29-30: "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.”

- a. To illustrate his standing in relation to the Messiah, John says that he is like the friend of the bridegroom; Christ is the bridegroom in this description. It is the bridegroom who has the bride.
- b. The friend of the bridegroom [or as we would say, the *best man*], was there to support the bridegroom; when the bridegroom approached the wedding site, the friend would rejoice to hear him come.
- c. In plain words, John affirmed that the will of Heaven was that he was to decrease, and that Christ was to increase. The great man perceived his role correctly; he happily anticipated the time when Christ would take his rightful place in God's eternal plan.

E. John 3:31-36: John's Comments About the Messiah.

1. Verse 31: “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.”
 - a. The words of this section are most likely those of John the Apostle, as he returns to his inspired report of the gospel story. If they were spoken by John the Immerser their truth is still just as accurate.
 - b. John the Baptist was fully a mortal man; he was selected by God's wisdom for the job he was given to fulfill; he was inspired to preach the message of his work. His growing up and lifestyle equipped him for the rough work he was to do.
 - c. Although he was God's inspired spokesman, he was not empowered to perform miracles: “And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true” (John 10:41).
 - d. Christ came from Heaven, and was deity in a fleshly body. His authority was and is far above that of any human.
 - 1) Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
 - 2) Isaiah 9:6-7: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”
 - 3) Matthew 1:21-23: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”
 - 4) Micah 5:2: “But thou, Beth-lehem 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.”
 - 5) Hebrews 10:5-8: “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law.”
 - 6) Ephesians 1:19-23: “And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that

fillet all in all.”

2. Verse 32: “And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.”
 - a. Christ had always existed in eternity; there never was a time or occasion when he did not exist; his activities have been from everlasting. Being a divine being, he had seen and known everything that he needed to know—unlike human beings.
 - b. When he entered into his earthly mission, he did not need to be taught anything.
 - 1) John 3:13: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.”
 - 2) John 6:38: “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”
 - 3) John 6:51: “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.”
 - c. He was full of truth. He is the embodiment of truth (John 14:6); the communicator of truth (John 1:17); he saw that the apostles were guided into all the truth (John 16:13); his truth sets men free from the guilt and penalty of sin (John 8:32).
 - 1) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 2) John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."
 - 3) John 16:13: "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 show you things to come."
 - 4) John 8:31-32: "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."
 - d. The Son of God had resided in Heaven from eternity; he knew the full will of God. He came to earth with his divine message, a set of instructions which can remove all the troubles of the soul. It is able to bring peace and happiness to every human, it can uplift any community, it can alleviate the miseries of human society, it can solve the troubles between nations. But it can do these things only if those involved will sincerely and fully hear, believe and follow the instructions.
 - 1) Matthew 23:37-38: “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! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”
 - 2) Luke 19:41-44: “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”
 - 3) Romans 10:1-3: “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”
 - e. The majority of the Jews refused to follow Jesus during his public ministry; the same was true when the gospel was first taken to them when the full gospel was broadcast from Acts Two onward.
 - 1) Acts 13:44-49: “And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and

Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.”

- 2) Romans 10:13-21: “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! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”
 3. Verse 33: “He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.”
 - a. To set to a seal is therefore to attest a document. The expression is retained from Coverdale's version (1535). So, "They must set to their hands, and shall set to their hands." Compare also the old legal formula: "In wittnesses wherof I haue set to myn seele." The English Revised Version (1885), better, "hath set his seal to this." The meaning here is, "has solemnly attested and confirmed" the statement "God is true." Only here in this sense. Elsewhere of closing up for security; hiding; marking a person or thing. See the note at Rev 22:10. The aorist tense here denotes an accomplished act. [Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.].
 - b. Woods: He who received the Lord's testimony, as to his person, mission, and will, "hath set his seal to this, that God is true." He has demonstrated his faith in the Father by accepting the witness who came from him. To believe Christ is, of course, to believe the Father of whom Christ testified. In that day, one's seal on a document was one's attestation that the document was valid and true. One cannot believe in Christ without believing in the Father; and, conversely, it is not possible to believe in God without believing in Christ. (p.73).
 - c. Coffman:
 - 1) God had spoken out of heaven in broad open daylight in the presence of a multitude, affirming of Jesus that "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"; and John here asserted his unwavering confidence in God's witness of Christ.
 - 2) He that receiveth his witness ... contrasts with "no man receiveth his witness" in John 3:32, leading to the conclusion that John the Baptist here spoke of himself. Those who see something here that is "certainly beyond the scope of John's ministry or message" would appear to have been reading the opinions of men more than they have been studying the word of the Lord.
 - d. Barnes: To seal an instrument is to make it sure; to acknowledge it as ours; to pledge our veracity that it is true and binding, as when a man seals a bond, a deed, or a will. Believing a doctrine, therefore, in the heart, is expressed by sealing it, or by believing it we express our firm conviction that it is true, and that God who has spoken it is true. We vouch for the veracity of God, and assume as our own the proposition that it is the truth of God.
 4. Verse 34: “For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.”
 - a. Other translations:
-

- 1) American Standard Version: "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for he giveth not the Spirit by measure."
- 2) New King James Version: "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure."
- b. God sent his Son; his Son spoke the words of God accurately and fully; God did not limit the power he gave Christ.
- c. Woods:
 - 1) The Father sent the Son into the world; the Son speaks the words of the Father; therefore, to believe the Son is to believe the Father. The reason the Son is able to speak fully, accurately and authoritatively of the Father is that God did not give the Spirit by measure to him.
 - 2) The power which he exercised, by the Spirit, to speak of heavenly things is limitless and unmeasured. Anything given by measure is limited to the measure by which it is determined. Christ's powers by the Spirit were unmeasured, hence without limitation.
 - 3) The context requires that the "he" of the clause, "for he giveth not the Spirit by measure," to be understood of God, the Father; and he to whom the Spirit was not given by measure of Christ. The King James' Version at this point has a clearer and more accurate rendering: "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." [p.74].
- d. The Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism.
 - 1) Matthew 3:15-17: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 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."
 - 2) John 1:33: "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."
5. Verse 35: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand."
 - a. The Father did not limit his Son in doing his job during his public ministry. Everything he needed was provided.
 - b. Being a divine person in his own right, Paul could rightly describe in Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (ASV).
 - c. "Again, the baptismal scene was in the mind of the herald. 'This is my beloved Son!' He was trying to counteract the jealousy of the disciples who would not follow Jesus by repeating the deduction which he had made following the baptism of Jesus, namely, that God had given all things into Jesus' hands, a deduction he could not have avoided, for "beloved Son" would have required it. These words fit the historical situation exactly, leaving no need for any supposition that the apostle was merely injecting his own words into the narrative at this point" (Coffman).
6. Verse 36: "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."
 - a. Woods:
 - 1) The phrases "believeth on the Son," and "obeyeth not the Son," are put in contrast and stand as exact opposites. That is, to believe on the Son is to obey the Son, "believeth" here signifying a faith that acts. Mental assent is not true biblical faith and is nowhere reckoned as such. Belief blesses only when it leads its possessor to obedience. Faith, apart from works, is dead. "Works," as used by James, are the commandments of the Lord. (James 2:14; 3:13.) One who truly believes will not scoff at the duties which are before him, nor will he seek to avoid them; on the contrary, he will find pleasure in doing them, knowing that he is thereby pleasing the Lord. For a discussion of what is meant by the phrase, "hath eternal life," see the comments on John 5:24.
 - 2) The ancient and excellent MacKnight commented on these words of John,

- a) "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," by noting, "Hath a right to it, and is as sure of obtaining it as if he had it already in possession." (Harmony of the Gospels, vol. 1, page 107.) This, as we have shown in much detail, in our comments at John 5:24, is exactly what the phrase signifies. "Shall not see life," means shall neither possess nor enjoy it. "Life," in the foregoing phrase, is the eternal life promised the obedient believer at the end of the age. Life, as thus contemplated is vastly more than perpetual existence; it involves and embodies all of these wonderful characteristics we can but dimly visualize here but which await the faithful in full flower in the world to come.
- b) Such was the inspired view of the great apostle to the Gentiles: "To them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life" (Rom. 2:7.) It is to be sought for with patience here and to be realized when this life is over. (Mark 10:30; Titus 1:2.) On all those who will not believe and obey the Son the wrath of God (the divine displeasure) abides. [pp.75f].
- b. Vincent: He that believeth not *ho apeithoon*. More correctly, as the English Revised Version (1885): "obeyeth not." Disbelief is regarded in its active manifestation, disobedience. The verb *peithoo* means "to persuade, to cause belief, to induce one to do something by persuading," and so runs into the meaning of "to obey," properly as the result of persuasion. See the note at Acts 5:29. Compare 1 Peter 4:17; Rom 2:8; 11:30-31. Obedience, however, includes faith. Compare Rom 1:5, "the obedience of faith."
-

John Chapter 4

A. John 4:1-9: Traveling to Galilee, Jesus and His Disciples Stop at Sychar.

1. Verses 1-2: “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).”
 - a. The Pharisees had opposed John the Baptizer and were even more filled with hatred for Jesus. See also John 1:19-28 and Matthew 3:1-9.
 - 1) John 8:39-41: “They answered and said unto him, Our father is Abraham. 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 heard from God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.”
 - 2) John 8:48-53: “The Jews answered and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon? Jesus answered, I have not a demon; but I honor my Father, and ye dishonor me. But I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my word, he shall never see death. The Jews said unto him, Now we know that thou hast a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who died? and the prophets died: whom makest thou thyself?”
 - b. The Pharisees knew how strong and influential John had been; now they learned that Jesus was even more powerful in influence than John. They must have been thoroughly incensed at this new development. They viewed themselves as being the authorized guardians of Jewish traditions, which were being challenged by the work of John and Jesus.
 - c. “The Pharisees were not happy with John; now that they had learned that Jesus was more successful in attracting people to his standard they would show even more malice toward him. Despite the fact that the Lord was often in grave danger, he never exhibited fear but he often avoided death because much work was yet before him in order to the accomplishment of his mission on earth. Galilee was as ripe for harvest as any area and he would, for the time being, concentrate his energies there” (Woods, pp.76f).
 - d. We are again told that Jesus personally did not baptize anyone. There would have been a temptation on the part of anyone baptized by the Lord’s hands to exalt themselves above those who had been immersed by one of the disciples!
 - 1) The identity of the one doing the baptizing is immaterial; he is simply performing an essential work; what is important is with the individual being baptized into Christ. We do not need to know the heart and life of him who baptized us; we do need to know our own sincerity and intent.
 - 2) Some in the church at Corinth misunderstood this basic truth. “Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos: and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius; lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void” (1 Cor. 1:10-17).
2. Verses 3-4: “He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria.”
 - a. The Lord learned that the Pharisees knew that the number of the followers of Jesus was increasing, and therefore their opposition to him would be greatly enhanced. He was not afraid of them, but

- he used wisdom by returning to Galilee, where his influence could powerfully be exerted. He did not stand in fear of being arrested and executed by his enemies, but the timing of this must be right. Also, he did not want to unnecessarily arouse any resentment from John's disciples.
- b. He had spent time at Jordan near to Salim teaching and baptizing people. One the west side of Jordan, the province at the southern end was Judea; lying just north of Judea, was the province of Samaria; to the north of Samaria was Galilee. Samaria was occupied by people who were hated by the Jews, and the Jews were hated by the Samaritans. Some Jews traveling between Judea and Galilee would cross to the eastern side of Jordan, just to avoid passing through Samaria.
 - c. Having no animus toward the Samaritans, Jesus and his disciples saved time and distance by going through the land of Samaria. The people of Sychar became believers in Jesus because he passed their way and rested at a nearby well.
3. Verse 5: "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."
- a. Woods:
 - 1) Sychar was located not far from the ancient city of Shechem into which area Abraham first came on his initial visit to the land of Canaan. The name "Sychar" signified "the town of the sepulchre." The site is further fixed by the reference to the "parcel of ground" which Jacob gave Joseph of which reference is made in Gen. 48:22. Near Sychar is Joseph's tomb, likely accounting for the name. It has been truly observed that few places in Palestine, with the exception of Jerusalem, have had so much biblical history associated with them. (Gen. 12:6; 37:12; Josh. 8:33; 20:7; 24:1; 1 Kings 12:1; 12:25; Acts 7:16.)
 - 2) Jacob's well, one of the truly authentic ancient sites, is near Sychar. The Lord, having walked for several hours, was fatigued, and he sat down to rest near the well. It was about noon, being the sixth hour, if Jewish time; 6 p.m. if Roman time, the more likely mode of computing, and he had likely travelled from early morning. From verse 8, we learn that the disciples had gone into the city to buy food. [pp.77f].
 - b. Regarding the parcel of ground Jacob gave to Joseph:
 - 1) Genesis 33:19: "And he bought the parcel of ground, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money."
 - 2) Genesis 48:22: "Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."
 - 3) Joshua 24:32: "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."
4. Verse 6: "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."
- a. McGarvey:
 - 1) This plain is first mentioned as a camping-place of Abraham when he first came into the land of Canaan, and in it Jacob, when he had returned from Padan-aram, bought a piece of land from the prince of She'chem. Here he resided until after the exciting scenes connected with the misfortunes of his daughter Dinah.
 - 2) There is nothing said in the Old Testament of his having dug a well there, but in the New Testament a deep well in the plain, at the foot of Mount Gerizim, was known as "Jacob's Well" and it was believed that Jacob dug it, and "drank thereof, himself and his children and his cattle."
 - 3) The well is still there. It is on the principal highway through Samaria, as the text of John requires, being only a few steps to the right of the road ; and, what makes its existence remarkable, it is in the midst of a district well watered by springs and running streams, showing that some extraordinary contingency must have caused it to be dug. One of these streams,
-

having its origin in a copious spring about a quarter of a mile distant, passes within 200 yards of the well.

- 4) The very existence of the well under such circumstances is a puzzle, until we remember that Jacob, having purchased a piece of land in order to be independent of neighbors, had equal need to become independent of them in regard to water, and therefore, to avoid depending on their springs, he must needs dig a well on his own premises. There is no ground, then, for a rational doubt that the tradition, which in the time of Christ ascribed it to Jacob, is correct. [*Lands of the Bible*, 1880, p.283].
 - b. ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: Jacob's Well. The well of Jacob, 100 feet deep and nine feet in diameter, is one of the few places in the life of Jesus that can be identified with certainty and precision. It lies at the foot of Mount Gerizim, which was (and still is, see p. 479) the center of Samaritan worship. Recent archaeological excavations at the summit of Mount Gerizim have begun to uncover the remains of an ancient Samaritan temple. [Halley's Bible Handbook].
 - c. Likely John is using Jewish time when he stated that Jesus and his company arrived at Jacob's Well at the sixth hour; this would be the noon hour. Having traveled a considerable distance, the Lord was physically weary. We also remember that, as his custom was, he regularly dealt with people; many times he was so pressed by their requests, there was not enough time for rest.
 - d. Johnson:
 - 1) The district of Samaria comprised the country formerly occupied by the tribe of Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh. When the Ten Tribes were carried to Babylon the Assyrian king sent in other tribes to occupy the country. These, on account of calamities, and probably influenced by Israelites who had been left in the country, requested of the Assyrian king a Hebrew priest, and one was sent.
 - 2) Henceforth they had a religion partly Jewish and partly pagan. When the Jews returned from Captivity and began to rebuild the temple the Samaritans offered to aid them, but were sternly repulsed. Henceforth a bitter feeling existed between the two peoples. When Manasseh, a priest, was expelled from Jerusalem by Nehemiah, for an unlawful marriage, he fled to Samaria, took charge of their worship, and a temple was erected on Mt. Gerizim, in opposition to the one at Jerusalem.
 - 3) Henceforth the Samaritans, claiming to be the children of Israel (Jacob), insisted that Gerizim, the Mount of Blessing, was the place chosen by God for worship. As the later Jewish Scriptures recognized Jerusalem as the seat of divine worship, they were rejected by the Samaritans, who received the five books of Moses alone.
 - 4) Sychar. This place was the ancient Shechem, so famous in the early history. It was forty miles north of Jerusalem, and was situated between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, the Mounts of Blessing and Cursing (Joshua 8: 30-35).
 - 5) Here Jacob built his first altar (Gen. 33: 18); here Joseph was buried in the land given him by his father (Joshua 24:32); and here also the covenant of Israel was renewed with amens to the blessings and curses, after Joshua had conquered Canaan.
 - 6) Few spots in all Israel had a more interesting history. The word *Sychar* signifies a drunkard and a liar, and was, doubtless, first applied by the Jews in derision. It was afterwards called Neapolis, and at present a village called Nablous exists with a population of two thousand, about two hundred of whom are Samaritans and preserve their ancient worship (p.67).
 - 7) Joshua 8:30-35: "Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal, As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant
-

of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.”

5. Verses 7-8: “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).”
 - a. While Jesus rested and waited for the return of the disciples, a woman of Samaria came to the well to draw water. Why did she come to this well at this time? Was it merely natural or could it have been providential? Our Lord, despite his fatigue, used the opportunity to teach her great truths.
 - b. The Lord requested the lady to give him a drink of water. This simple request led to many at that place becoming believers in Christ, including the woman herself.
 - c. Among the lessons taught here is the awesome results that can grow out of a simple conversation. Perhaps we should all carry with us a card containing the name and worship times of the local church; a brief invitation could be printed on the card. Maybe the plan of salvation could be listed, There are various circumstances where we can give the card to someone: standing in line at a store, or waiting in a doctor’s office.
 - d. The disciples had gone into Sychar to purchase food.
6. Verse 9: “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.”
 - a. She was shocked that a Jew would even make such a request of a Samaritan. But this did not mean that she would refuse him a drink of water. Clearly, it was legitimate for Jews to buy food from the Samaritans; that was the very purpose for which the disciples had gone into Sychar.
 - b. The woman could tell by the Lord’s dress and perhaps by his speech that he was a Jew. There could have been some physical differences that identified a Jew from a Samaritan. The animosity between the Jews and Samaritans went back to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

B. John 4:10-15: The Living Water.

1. Verse 10: “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.”
 - a. At this point, the woman only knew that this man she was talking with was a Jew. Jesus affirmed that if she knew what God was able to give, she would have asked for “living water.” The phrase “Gift of God” does not mean the Almighty was the gift, but the gift that he was able to provide.
 - b. She had not yet learned the true identity of Jesus. Through this unidentified Jew it was possible for the Almighty to give this lady living water. The Lord was weary from his journey and was thirsty, but this Samaritan woman who was presently without this special living water. The physical thirst of the body can quickly and easily be quenched; to satisfy the thirst of the eternal soul cannot be obtained from a man-dug well.
 - c. While *living water* actually meant *running water* the Lord’s meaning had nothing to do with literal water.
 - 1) Jeremiah 2:13: “For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”
 - 2) John 7:38: “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”
 - d. Jesus is the only means through whom we may obtain these living waters, the spiritual blessings which God offers to every sinful person.
 - 1) John 8:24: “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.”

- 2) John 14:6: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
 - 3) Acts 4:11-12: “This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
 - 4) Acts 13:38-39: “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”
 - 5) Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”
 - 6) Ephesians 1:7: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”
 - 7) Colossians 1:13-14: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”
 - 8) Ephesians 2:11-13: “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”
 - 9) Romans 6:3-4: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
2. Verse 11: “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?”
 - a. She made the obvious comment that Jesus had nothing to used in drawing water and that the well was deep. “How do you propose to obtain that living water?” She was thinking entirely in material terms.
 - b. The woman had with her a rope and bucket with which to draw up water. Apparently, the people did not trust others enough to leave their ropes and buckets at the well. There was a time in our nation when the population in a settled rural community did not need to lock up or otherwise to secure their property. In our time, however, when the influence of the gospel has been so weakened on the majority of folks, we must be careful about our property.
 - c. Sensual and materialistic folks of modern times did not want to have anyone object to their sinful conduct. Foolishly, they rejected the Bible, God’s standard for moral conduct among the human family. Not only do they reject God’s word, they even declare that there is no absolute standard for moral conduct. Modern religionists have even extended their absurd view to worshipping God!
 3. Verse 12: “Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?”
 - a. The woman seems to be sarcastic in telling the Lord that even Jacob had to use some physical means to draw water for his thirsty flocks and herds and family. “Do you think that you can do better than our ancient ancestor?”
 - b. Jesus took no offense to this statement. We must not take umbrage from some objective, or even an irreverent, statement from one we are trying to teach. The Lord knew this lady was honest with the truth, that she would accept and follow the truth once she understood it. Although she was steeped in immorality (she was living with a man who was not her husband, and had had several husbands in the past), she was reachable by the truth, as the outcome of the story reveals.
 - c. We do not have the power to know the minds of others, unless they reveal their motives to us, we must assume the best until it becomes obvious that our efforts are useless. We are to be
-

“longsuffering” with our students (cf. 2 Tim. 4:2-3), but we are also told not to cast pearls before swine (Matt. 7:6).

- 1) 2 Timothy 4:2-3: “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.”
- 2) Matthew 7:6: “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”

4. Verses 13-14: “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.”
 - a. Jesus did not reply to her with sarcasm, but plainly observed that the water of this well could not forever quench a man’s thirst; he would have to return continually to obtain a steady satisfaction of his requirement for water.
 - b. But the water of which the Lord was the source, could forever satisfy the thirst of the soul. It is clear that Jesus is not speaking of H₂O. She could know from experience that the needs of the body must be replaced regularly—clothes wear out; food runs out; water is consumed.
 - c. The living water Heaven could supply the soul is never ending, never runs out, and is always fully satisfying. “The water that Christ bestows, the living water, the water of life, not only satisfied the longings of the soul, but is the real ‘elixir vitae,’ and quickens it into a new life that never ends” (Johnson, p.70).
5. Verse 15: “The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.”
 - a. “The mysterious words of the Jewish stranger she cannot yet understand, but she is deeply stirred, and one thing seemed plain—if she could have this water she would thirst no more, and would not be compelled to come to the well. She is bewildered, but eager to comprehend the nature of the gift. The tenor of the whole narrative shows that she was neither flippant, nor sluggish” (ibid.).
 - b. Her mind is still on the material, but the benefit this unknown Jew proposes to give to her is one of very great desirability!
 - c. “She but dimly comprehended the nature of Christ's offer, but was persuaded of two things: 1. The wonderful water was to be desired. 2. Jesus was able and willing to give it. When she spoke of coming ‘to draw’ her words suggested the household to which it was her duty to minister, and prepared the way for the command of Jesus to bring the head of the household” (Fourfold Gospel).
 - d. If her household was great, fetching water might be a heavy job. Cooking, drinking, bathing, washing clothes, mopping floors, etc., would require a considerable amount of water.

C. John 4:16-26: Worship in Spirit and Truth.

1. Verses 16-18: “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.”
 - a. Jesus did not waste words when he asked her to bring her husband to the well. Of course, our Lord needed to confront the woman with her sinful marital relationship. He could do her soul no good until that situation was set right. Her quick reply was to say, “I have no husband.” She thus avoided saying directly that she was living with a man outside of marriage—she was in an adulterous arrangement. She was likely ashamed to have to answer the Lord’s request.
 - b. He complimented her on answering correctly; the man she was living with was not her husband. That was plainly stating that she was living in a relationship without the benefit of marriage. Jesus was quite obviously branding her present situation as sinful. He could not give her this living water while she was living in sin. The Samaritans of old were no God’s people, yet his law of marriage was bound upon them,
 - c. Christ straightforwardly affirmed that she had had five husbands, and that the man she was now living with was not her husband. Repentance demanded that her present condition must be
-

- changed. We cannot surely know that the five marriages were sinful, although that may have been true. Certainly, the union with this sixth man was sinful and must be ended.
- d. “The Lord accepts her statement as true in words, but reveals to her his knowledge of the real facts. She had been married five times; the easy divorce laws of the age, permitting a ‘divorce for any cause,’ would allow many changes without the death of either party. Some of her husbands may have died; a part were almost certainly divorced. Her sixth alliance did not even have the apology of such a marriage. It was illegal and condemned even by her unenlightened conscience as sinful. The Savior's words are like a probe, keen, severe, but gentle” (Johnson, p.71).
2. Verses 19-20: “The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”
 - a. The lady quickly changed the subject from this embarrassing condition to acknowledge that Jesus must be a prophet. Having said that, she brought up an age-old controversy between the Samaritans and the Jews, regarding the proper place to worship God. It was easier for her to talk about a theological matter than to discuss her sorrowful moral state.
 - b. She brought up an ancient disagreement between the Jews and the Samaritans regarding the proper place for worship. Her forefathers alleged that the mountain near which they stood was the right place, while the Jews said that Jerusalem was the place where people ought to worship.
 - c. When the Jews returned from captivity in Babylonia, they found the Samaritans living in the area, following a mixed religion, including some parts of Judaism. They accepted the first five books of the Old Testament, the Pentateuch. The repatriated Jews would have nothing to do with these people. They rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem; the Samaritans worshiped on Mount Gerizim. Before the Romans took over Palestine, the Samaritans had erected a temple on this “mount of blessing,” but a Jewish military leader [John Hyrcanus] destroyed their religious edifice.
 - d. An altar was kept in that place and the Samaritans continued to worship there. The lady’s authority for their worshipping at that place was the fact that “our fathers” worshiped here. This argument is utterly without merit; their fathers were wrong in their worship. For centuries, modern religious groups have practiced infant baptism, sprinkling and pouring, and calling the practice “baptism.” They claim they do it because “our fathers” long practiced this and handed it down to us. Scores of other religious beliefs and practices have no more authority than traditions.
 - e. The only authority in religion is that which originated with God the Father, given through Christ the Son, inspired by the Holy Spirit, who guided the apostles of Christ and New Testament prophets in receiving, recording, confirming and preserving the word of God—the Bible.
 - f. “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, near to this city and this well; there the Samaritan temple was built by Sanballat, in favour of which she insinuates,
 - 1) That whatever the temple was the place was holy; it was mount Gerizim, the mount in which the blessings were pronounced; and some think the same on which Abraham built his altar (Gen 12:6,7), and Jacob his, Gen 33:18-20.
 - 2) That it might plead prescription: Our fathers worshipped here. She thinks they have antiquity, tradition, and succession, on their side. A vain conversation often supports itself with this, that it was received by tradition from our fathers.
 - 3) But she had little reason to boast of their fathers; for, when Antiochus persecuted the Jews, the Samaritans, for fear of sharing with them in their sufferings, not only renounced all relation to the Jews, but surrendered their temple to Antiochus, with a request that it might be dedicated to Jupiter Olympius, and called by his name. Joseph. Antiq. 12. 257-264” [Matthew Henry's Commentary, PC Study Bible Formatted Electronic Database Copyright © 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All Rights reserved]”
3. Verse 21: “Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.”
 - a. “Now comes the announcement of one of the grandest truths revealed by Christ. The Jews said that men must worship at Jerusalem to worship acceptably; the Samaritans contended for Mt. Gerizim
-

- as the true holy place; the Mahometan insists on a pilgrimage to Mecca; the Catholic on praying at some holy shrine, but Christ says that the time even then was at hand when no holy place need be sought for worship. A little later God emphasized this lesson by the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem” (Johnson, p.72).
- b. Under the Gospel system, it is not the earthly location that counts, but the spirit and truth by which the worship is offered.
4. Verse 22: “Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.”
 - a. The worship of the Samaritans was a perverted and unauthorized worship. God had given to the Jews the worship he had set up for the Mosaic Age. It involved the Tabernacle (later the Temple), with its Altar upon which the prescribed sacrifices were made, the Laver where the priests were to wash before entering the Holy Place; in the Holy Place were located the Candlestick, the Table of Showbread, and the Altar of Incense. Into the Most Holy Place only the High priest was permitted enter, and that was allowed only on the Day of Atonement.
 - b. The Samaritans were not permitted to take part in this Jewish arrangement. If individuals from among their nation were to become proselytes to the Jewish religion, they could participate in the worship, but could not become priests.
 - c. The people of Samaria had developed their own religious system; it was not recognized by Heaven; its worship, therefore, was not acceptable, even though they may have offered it most sincerely. Their worship location and activities were wrong. The same can be said of modern sectarian worship which was developed by their own notions, with the implied thought that God is obligated to accept their offerings!
 - d. Salvation is of the Jews. It was to them that God revealed his inspired message. The faithful Jew was pleasing to God. The Gentile who followed the moral precepts of the Mosaic Law could also be acceptable to the Father. During his personal ministry, which took place while the law was still in effect, Christ highly praised certain people who were not Jews:
 - 1) Matthew 8:5-10: “And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”
 - 2) Matthew 15:21-28: “Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”
5. Verse 23: “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.”
 - a. The Lord declared that the time when this great change would occur was in the near future. This would be after the Lord’s crucifixion, burial and resurrection; specifically, when the eternal kingdom was established on the Pentecost Day of Acts Two.
 - b. Christ did not directly answer her question, for doubtless she was still full of the traditions inculcated in her from childhood. The discussion would have descended into assertions from her
-

- and rebuttals from Jesus. The way he handled the situation was first to lead her to faith in him as the Messiah; the rest of the matter would fall into its rightful place.
- c. There is such a thing as “true worshippers.” If there are true worshippers, there are also “false worshippers.” Virtually anything can be counterfeited.
 - d. The Father seeks true worship from his true servants; true worship is acceptable only if it is offered in *spirit* and in *truth*. True worship can only be offered by the true servants of God.
6. Verse 24: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
- a. God is a spirit Being.
 - 1) There is nothing material or physical about him.
 - a) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." The apostles thought the risen Lord was a spirit; he gave them proof that they were seeing a flesh and blood person; a spirit has no such body.
 - b) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - c) Acts 17:19-30: “And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.) Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”
 - 2) God the Father, Christ the Son [in his eternal state], and the Holy Spirit are all spirit Beings.
 - a) We do not know what a spiritual body is like. We cannot see any person’s spirit with our physical eyes; the physical and the spiritual are entirely different.
 - b) In heaven, it will be necessary for us to have spiritual bodies in order to fill our role there; physical items and entities are not fashioned for heaven: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Cor. 15:50). On a much smaller scale, a fish is not equipped to survive on land and man is not naturally equipped to live under water.
 - 3) Those who worship idols think they must have some physical image before them in order to offer their brand of homage to their *god*. They perceive the material image as their god. Any disrespect shown toward the image is an assault against their god. And if they view the image as depicting their god who is not present, then why does not the god defend his image? The idol cannot speak, move, or show emotion. It has no being (life). See Isaiah 44:9-20 for a treatise on the foolishness of idolatry,
 - a) 1 Kings 18:25-29: “And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called

on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.”

- b) Isaiah 46:6-8: “They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble. Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.”
 - 4) There are some who have images of Mary and Jesus prominently displayed in the church buildings. It is to these images they turn when they seek to pay homage to Heaven. Nevertheless, these images are material objects; they have no life in them; they have no power to bless or curse; they cannot pass along to God any sentiment or work presented to the icons by the worshipper.
 - 5) Mary was entirely a human being. Certainly, she was a godly person; she was not sinless. She needed the same cleansing from sin that every other accountable person needs (Rom. 3:23; 6:23).
 - a) She has been referred to by countless misinformed people through many centuries as the “mother of God.” This is a clear example of an oxymoron: “a figure of speech or expressed idea in which apparently contradictory terms appear in conjunction (e.g. *bittersweet*);N from Greek *oxumoros* 'pointedly foolish.” [This definition is from Word Perfect 8 Dictionary].
 - b) By the very nature of deity, a divine person cannot have a beginning, thus cannot have a mother. These sincere, but misguided folks, think that because Mary was the virgin chosen to give birth to the physical body of Jesus, that somehow she produced a divine being.
 - 6) Christ had no beginning. There was never a time when he did not exist.
 - a) Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God [plural word in the Hebrew text] created the heaven and the earth."
 - b) Genesis 1:26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."
 - c) John 17:5: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."
 - d) Micah 5:2: “But thou, Beth-lehem 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.”
 - e) John 1:1-3: “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. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
 - f) John 8:14: "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."
 - g) John 8:58: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."
 - h) John 16:28: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."
-

- 7) Christ is called "God."
- a) John 20:28: "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."
 - b) Hebrews 1:8-12: "But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."
- 8) He possesses the glory that pertains to Deity.
- a) Isaiah 6:1-5: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."
 - b) But John 12:41 shows that the Being Isaiah 6:5-6 is describing is Christ! "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him" (John 12:41).
- 9) The Word was made flesh and dwelt among men.
- a) John 1:14: "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."
 - b) "Dwelt" is a term which in the Greek means that he "pitched tent" or "tabernacled" with men. The same word is used by Paul to denote the human body in distinction to the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1).
 - c) This is a reference to the entry of Christ into earthly life in the fleshly form of a man. The means of this entrance was through the Virgin Birth.
 - (1) Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."
 - (2) Matthew 1:22-23: "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."
 - (3) Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."
 - (4) He was as human as Mary, but he still retained his Divinity as is evidenced by his miraculous activities. "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23).
 - (a) The nature he had while dwelling in the flesh is described by the verse.
- b. Since God is Spirit, those who worship him must worship in spirit.
- 1) "The countless anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament probably caused Jesus to set such a statement as this over against them all. God may be spoken of in terms of the activities of men, such as walking, seeing, hearing, etc., but there is a sense in which God is not like man at all. God is a Spirit, eternal, immortal, invisible, omniscient, ubiquitous, omnipotent, and all-pervading. He is above all and through all and in all. Nothing can be hidden from God. He is the First Cause, himself uncaused, the Creator and Sustainer of everything that exists. He is nonetheless personal, hence the anthropomorphisms of Scripture" (Coffman).
 - 2) Woods:
-

- a) For this reason [that God is spirit] he is not to be regarded as restricted to mountains, to temples, or holy shrines; and is communed with "in spirit," as a spiritual being. He is thus the object of rational and intellectual response and he is not simply or solely approached by physical action.
 - b) Thus, those who worship him must worship him in harmony with his nature and this is to do so "in spirit and in truth." Here, the three simple, but vitally important, aspects of true worship are set out: (1) We must worship God; (2) we must worship God in spirit, i.e., rationally, and sincerely; (3) we must worship God in truth, as his word directs. (Col. 3:17; John 17:17.)
 - c) Only those who thus do are assured of the divine approval. It will be seen that it is possible to worship, to worship God, and yet not worship God in harmony with his will and pleasingly in his sight. Some of whom we read in the scriptures worshipped, but they did not do so acceptably. [p.83].
- 3) The worship we offer to the Almighty is in, with, and from our heart. Our heart is the innermost part of our being. Our intellect (mind), our emotions, our will power and our conscience must be involved in our worship.

What Is the Spiritual Heart and What Does it Do?

INTELLECT	EMOTIONS	WILL POWER	CONSCIENCE
Thinks: Prov. 23:7; Mat. 9:4	Loves: Mark 12:30	Intends & Purposes: Heb. 4:12; 2 Cor. 9:7; Acts 11:23	Commends or Condemns: Rom. 2:15
Understands: Matthew 13:15	Despises: 2 Sam. 6:16	Decides & Wills: 1 Cor. 7:37	Smites Us: 1 Sam. 24:5; 2 Sam. 24:10
Reasons: Mark 2:8	Rejoices: Ps. 33:21		
Believes: Rom. 10:10	Suffers Anguish: 2 Cor. 2:4		

- c. Our worship of God is to be in spirit. We must be sincere and honest and perceive what we are saying, singing, or doing in our worship acts. "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. 14:15).
 - 1) Therefore, Paul was determined to pray and sing in such a way that he could be profited thereby—using words which he could comprehend, and he would put his spirit (heart) into it (he would be sincere in praying, singing, giving, eating the Lord’s Supper, and studying the Bible).
 - 2) For us to be profited by our worship, we must participate in it sincerely, with meaning, and understand what we are praying and singing.
 - 3) This verse indicates the conclusion that was to be reached with the foregoing information in mind. Whether one prays or sings, it must be done in such a way (and in such a language) that the congregation can understand and be edified.
- d. Our worship of God is to be in truth. All of our activities we do in response to the Almighty must be in harmony with his truth—his inspired word [the Bible].
 - 1) “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.

And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:16-17, ASV).

- 2) In all the realms of our life in which the Lord's will has a bearing, all that we say and do is to be by his authority, is to meet his approval.
 - 3) In the realm of worship, his will must be the standard.
 - a) John 4:23-24: "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."
 - b) Matthew 15:7-9: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."
 - c) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 4) Many have learned that to worship God without the authority of his word is folly.
 - a) Cain: Genesis 4.
 - b) Nadab and Abihu: Leviticus 10-1-2.
 - c) The Athenians: Acts 17:19-34.
 - 5) In what way were the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites? [See Matt. 15:7-9; Matt. 23]. "There was hypocrisy in the device of the traditionists, because in proposing to honor God by vowing to him what should go to the poor parent, there was the false pretense of doing for his honor what was really done to gratify avarice. All similar substitutions of human expedients in the place of God's appointments are prompted by some improper desire, and are therefore liable to the same charge" (McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, p.134).
 - a) They claimed to believe the prophets, but Isaiah, one of their most beloved, condemned what they were doing by their traditions. The passage cited is from Isaiah 29:13. By substituting the precepts of men for the word of God, they had made their worship vain and unacceptable to God. "In vain" means void, empty, without purpose. Acceptable worship is based on revelation. After all, God is the object of our worship and has reserved the right to dictate what is to be offered to him in worship. When men insist on following their own precepts instead of what God has said in their various religious activities, their worship is also made vain and unacceptable. So says this passage.
 - b) "Fear toward God, if pure and rightly inspired, springs from the word of God, and not from the commandments of man. So far as it induces any worship at all, induces vain worship, and there is probably not one such addition which does not, to a greater or less degree, make some commandment void. Thus the tradition of infant baptism, to the extent that it is adopted, makes of no effect the commandment concerning the baptism of believers, by baptizing persons in their infancy; and if it should become universally prevalent, by the baptism of all persons in their infancy it would bring to an end forever the only baptism commanded of God" (McGarvey, *ibid.*, p.135).
 - c) Washing hands, of itself, is harmless and commendable. But in binding it as a religious requirement presumed on the authority of the Almighty.
 - 6) To infringe on the legislative prerogatives of God is sinful in the first magnitude. Thus, many warnings and admonitions are given against such intrusion: (Gal. 1:6-12; 1 Cor. 4:6, ASV).
 - a) Revelation 22:18-19: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book."
 - b) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one
-

cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.”

- c) 2 Corinthians 2:14-17: “But thanks be unto God, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savor of his knowledge in every place. For we are a sweet savor of Christ unto God, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one a savor from death unto death; to the other a savor from life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as the many, corrupting the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.”
7. Verses 25-26: “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.”
- a. Other versions:
 - 1) NKJ: The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."
 - 2) ASV: “The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he”
 - b. The Samaritan lady showed that she possessed some degree of knowledge of the Old Testament, especially of the Pentateuch. She had learned that the one called the Messiah was to come; the great Personage would teach us all things. These first five books of the Old Testament contain the following prophecies:
 - 1) Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” [See Galatians 4:4-5].
 - 2) Genesis 49:10: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”
 - 3) Deuteronomy 18:15-18: “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; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.”
 - 4) Compare Acts 3:22-26: “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”
 - 5) She may had learned much from the Old Testament by her business dealings with the Jews who came by Jacob’s well and Sychar. Much can be taught and learned through casual conversation.
 - c. The statement made in verse twenty-five includes the description of Messiah as being the Christ. “The words, ‘he that is called Christ,’ were likely added by John in explanation of the Hebrews word *Messiah* which both Jews and Samaritans used to refer to the coming one. ‘Christ’ is from the Greek *christos* in which language John wrote” (Woods, pp.83f).
 - d. Our Lord then made a startling confession to the woman of Samaria. “I that speak unto thee” am the Messiah. Why did he choose to make the statement to this woman? For one thing, he had perceived that she was sincere and teachable. “This was the first recorded confession of Jesus that he was the Christ. His disciples learned to believe the truth, but until Peter’s confession the last year of his ministry, there was no open admission” (Johnson, p.73).
-

e. Coffman:

- 1) Why did Jesus speak so forthrightly here, while on so many other occasions he was so careful not to say plainly that he was the Christ? Jesus was charged with the duty of convincing all people that he is King of kings and Lord of lords, Dayspring from on High, the Son of God, and the Lord of all creation; but he was also under the most urgent necessity of doing so in a manner that would not provide the Romans with any pretext for executing him as a seditionist.
- 2) To make this even more difficult, the Pharisees and Sadducees would gladly have cooperated with the Romans in just such a judicial murder. This poor woman's word, however, was not good in any priestly court, due to her being a Samaritan; and thus it was perfectly safe for Jesus to tell her that he was the Messiah.
- 3) This same phenomenon appears later in this gospel, in the case of the man born blind; who, after being cast out of the synagogue was not an acceptable witness in Jewish courts, and who was also told plainly by Christ that he was the Son of God.
- 4) Through this woman Jesus taught an entire city and yet left the Pharisees without a single word that they could use in any trumped-up charge against Jesus. It is remarkable how the Lord walked unharmed and untouched through every trap that Satan laid for him.

f. Barnes:

- 1) This was the first time that he openly professed it. He did not do it yet to the Jews, for it would have excited envy and opposition. But nothing could be apprehended in Samaria; and as the woman seemed reluctant to listen to him as a prophet, and professed her willingness to listen to the Messiah, he openly declared that he was the Christ, that by some means he might save her soul. From this we may learn:
- 2) The great wisdom of the Lord Jesus in leading the thoughts along to the subject of practical personal religion.
- 3) His knowledge of the heart and of the life. He must be therefore divine.
- 4) He gave evidence here that he was the Messiah. This was the design of John in writing this gospel. He has therefore recorded this narrative, which was omitted by the other evangelists.
- 5) We see OUR duty. It is to seize on all occasions to lead sinners to the belief that Jesus is the Christ, and to make use of all topics of conversation to teach them the nature of religion. There never was a model of so much wisdom in this as the Saviour, and we shall be successful only as we diligently study his character. [Barnes, *ibid.*].

D. John 4:27-30: "The Woman Invites the Samaritans to Come Meet Jesus."

1. Verse 27: "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?"
 - a. At this point, the disciples return from their shopping in Sychar. They were greatly surprised to find Jesus talking amicably with the woman of Samaritan. Although they sometimes took issue with some of the things the Lord said or did, on this occasion they kept quiet. There was something about the setting that caused them to be silent.
 - b. They probably approached near before the conversation ended, and paused and wondered that he would talk with a woman, and especially with a Samaritan woman. "It was considered by the Jews indecorous to talk with a woman in public, and the Rabbis held that to talk with such an inferior creature was beneath the dignity of a doctor of the law. Their surprise well illustrates the state in which woman was held before Christ lifted her to the side of man as his equal and companion. Among the Greeks, Socrates, their best and wisest teacher, thanked the gods daily, that he was born neither a slave nor a woman; the Roman law gave the husband absolute authority over the wife, even to put her to death; among the Jews the wife could be divorced' for any cause,' their most renowned doctor, Hillel, insisting that for her to burn the bread in baking was a sufficient reason" (Johnson, p.75).
 2. Verses 28-30: "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.”

- a. Perhaps she was so excited by the conversation with Jesus that she forgot to take her water pot as she returned to the city. Maybe she left it there for the Lord’s use [he has asked her for a drink of water].
- b. Our Lord’s comment about “living water” certainly caught the lady’s attention! It appears that the thought for literal water left her mind.
- c. Perhaps in a rush, she returned to the city and began telling the men to come and see a man who had told me “all things that ever I did.” She declared that this man must be the Christ! She would most likely have repeated the Lord’s claim to be the Messiah.
- d. He had revealed his knowledge about some important events of her life, but of course, he did not list every single word and experience. Her great excitement was very obvious and her appeal would be powerful.
- e. People of Sychar took the woman’s advice and went to the well in response to her report. With what they had heard, the nationality of Jesus would have meant nothing. They would soon see that he was a Jew, but they were intent to hear what he would have to say. As a personal worker, this lady was very effective! How many people of the city went out to the well? A better question might be, how many citizens remained in Sychar?

E. John 4:31-38: The Food That Jesus Ate Was Obedience to God.

1. Verses 31-33: “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?”
 - a. While the woman was in Sychar, his disciples pleaded with him to eat. They knew he was tired from traveling and was as hungry as they were.
 - b. His reply was strange to them: “I have meat to eat that ye know not of.” They questioned among themselves whether anyone had given him food. They had been together and could know they had not done so; perhaps they also wondered if some other person had come along to feed him. Could the woman have had food to share with the Master?
 - c. Jesus will quickly explain that the nature of the food he meant was of a spiritual variety.
2. Verse 34: “Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”
 - a. The nourishment which kept him going was his great mission of doing the will of God and to finish his work. This heavy responsibility furnished greater motivation to carry on his work than physical food which would only last for a limited time. Compare: “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12).
 - b. One who is impelled to do an important job will not let danger, hardship, hunger, weakness, or any other such obstacle stand in the way of completing the mission. We have all heard stories of soldiers who, despite oppositions of all kinds, still accomplished the job they were assigned.
 - c. The mission given to Christ was the greatest of all. It was planned from eternity; it affected all accountable souls; it could benefit many who had long been dead; it would be available to all who would live in the future; and his work would have a direct effect on the eternal destiny of all.
 - 1) Matthew 1:21: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”
 - 2) Matthew 28:19-20: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.
 - 3) Mark 16:15-16 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - 4) Luke 24:47: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among

- all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
- 5) Acts 2:38 : “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
 - 6) Romans 10:18-21: “But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”
 - 7) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”
- d. “So absorbed was he in the accomplishment of his mission on earth and so intent was he on doing the will of his Father that earthly needs and desires often vanished. We ought to learn that the chief object in life for those who truly love the Lord is not the gratification of fleshly desires or the satisfaction of worldly needs but the total commitment of our whole being to his will” (Woods, p.86).
3. Verse 35: “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.”
 - a. Johnson: Harvest began about the middle of April in Palestine. The time when the Savior spoke would then be about the middle of December. This would indicate that he had passed eight months in Judea, as he had come from Galilee to attend the passover. Of this period of his ministry but little is recorded, save the incidents of the passover, the conversation with Nicodemus, and the fact that Christ preached and baptized (through his disciples) more converts than John [p.77].
 - b. Our Lord told the apostles to lift up their eyes and look—for the fields were ripe for the gospel, just as the surrounding fields of grain were ripe for the reaper’s scythe. The location of this story was near Gerizim and Ebal, with the attendant fields used by farmers. An excellent place for his illustration of harvesting souls.
 - c. At this point, it is possible that a large crowd of Samaritans were approaching from Sychar. These may have been indicated by Jesus. “Lift up your eyes” and behold the awaiting harvest. We are told that many of these Samaritans believed on him.
 - d. Later, Philip conducted an extended Gospel Meeting in Samaria, which was attended by a great harvest of souls: “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:5-12).
 - e. In those ancient days, harvesting grain was labor-intensive. The stalks had to be cut down; the stalks were bundled into sheaves; the sheaves were scattered on the threshing-floor; the grain was separated from the stalk by treading upon it; large fans and wind would blow away the chaff; the grain could then be swept up and stored in containers.
 - f. The “harvesting” of precious souls which are lost is not usually an easy operation, especially today in a time of wide-spread unbelief and rebellion, when people are much more interested in material bounties and entertainment, than in the condition and destiny of their souls. Added to these things which hinder our progress, there are the multitudinous cases of world religions and perverted Christianity, which distort, deceive and blind many unsuspecting and indifferent minds.
-

4. Verse 36: "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."
 - a. Coffman:
 - 1) Sowers and reapers alike rejoice in the harvest of the gospel; and their doing so together would indicate that, in the instance in hand, sowing and reaping would occur in the closest proximity of time, as it did on that occasion.
 - 2) Jesus was the sower who planted the word in the heart of the woman; but the fruit was coming over the fields at that very moment; and the apostles, who hardly knew that any sowing had taken place, were about to participate in the reaping.
 - 3) Evidently, the Lord intended in these words to show the equal importance of both sowing and reaping, both being necessary, and to show that the reaper should always, in humility, remember the one who had sown. That Christ was indeed the sower here is indicated by "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man" (Matthew 13:37).
 - b. 1 Corinthians 3:3-9: "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."
 - 1) Why were they exalting Paul and Apollos (or any other man)? Who were Paul and Apollos? They were merely servants (ministers) of Christ. Their positions and nature did not put them above any other saint. There was no reason for them to be held up as being worthy of reverence. Paul brought the gospel to Corinth; later, Apollos came to Corinth and taught them further, and encouraged them. These two preachers had necessary work to do in the process, but in the final analysis, they were only servants of Christ.
 - a) Acts 18:1-8: "After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
 - b) Acts 18:24-28: "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ."
 - c) Acts 19:1: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed

- through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples.”
- 2) Paul and Apollos were merely the tools the Lord used to bring the Corinthians unto a knowledge of the gospel. These preachers could not even claim the credit for their ability to impart that information. The information had been given to them by revelation; and the talents (however many or few, great or small) they used in the operation, were from God.
 - 3) Paul planted the gospel in their hearts when he preached it to them; Apollos watered the planted seed; but it was God who brought forth the fruit. Paul preached the gospel to the Corinthians, speaking the words the Lord gave him to present; Apollos worked with them to encourage their obedience; but it was God who provided the power (the gospel) by which they were saved.
 - a) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."
 - c) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - d) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - c. On family farms in previous generations to today, harvest times were happy seasons, even though there was a lot of hard work involved. Part of the harvest was put up as feed for the livestock; part was put up to feed the family; part of it was sold to furnish income for the household. The ones who planted the crops shared in the harvest; the ones who harvested the crops partook of the harvest; the planters, the tenders and the harvester all had a share in the goods produced.
5. Verses 37-38: “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.”
- a. Woods:
 - 1) The disciples were now about to profit from the labors of all who had gone before them, the prophets, John the Baptist, and all others who had kept alive the divine message. In the case of the Samaritans the disciples were about to observe a quick and easy harvesting of seed they had not themselves sown.
 - 2) They would thus reap that whereon they had bestowed no labor. This would be especially characteristic of the work of the apostles following the establishment of the church.
 - 3) Our Lord sowed, often with little visible result; the apostles, as reapers, gathered more souls, on occasion, in one day, than he did throughout his ministry. Yet, their converts were his, and their work his work as they went forth to the great harvest as his workers. [p.88].
 - b. In Acts 8, Philip the evangelist had a great harvest of souls when he went down to Samaria: “And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ... But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:5, 12). Acts 8:14: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John” (Acts 8:14). They furthered the work Philip had done; they also imparted to some of the Samaritans certain spiritual gifts (Acts 8:14-25).
- F. John 4:39-45: Many Samaritans and Galileans Believe in Jesus.
1. Verse 39: “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.”

- a. The woman at the well had returned into her city and reported what she had seen and learned from Jesus. Her statement that he had revealed highly significant things from her past. By relating this, she admitted those things were accurate.
 - b. Her announcement convinced many of the Samaritans that Jesus was truly a prophet. She thought that this man must be the Christ! They had learned from the first five books of the Old Testament that the Messiah was to come; these people were as fully aware of this truth as the Jews.
 - c. What would have resulted if the woman had kept completely silent about her experiences at the well? It is doubtful that the Samaritans would have learned about Jesus. While the disciples were in the city buying food, why did they not tell the people about Jesus? Probably because of their dislike for the Samaritans.
 - d. This episode teaches us the importance of one faithful Christian inviting another to come and learn the full gospel. A simple, short conversation can lead to salvation of one or many.
2. Verses 40-41: “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.”
- a. No details are given about what may have passed between Christ and the Samaritans who came out to the well. Do you imagine that these people strolled slowly from the city to the well? It is likely that they rushed out to see the one who might be the Christ.
 - b. Obviously, there was some communication between the Lord and these people. They were as greatly impressed as the woman had been. They accepted her assessment of Jesus when she first returned to the city, but now their faith was based on first hand knowledge.
 - c. Unlike the unnamed Samaritan city where Jesus and the disciples were denied hospitality (Luke 9:49-56), these citizens besought him to remain with them for a time. He agreed to stay with them for two days. It is clear that he did more teaching while there.
3. Verse 42: “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.”
- a. The new believers told the woman that they now believed and were certain this man was indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world. At first, their faith was founded on the woman’s report; now they had heard his gracious words in a face-to-face setting.
 - b. Our Lord did not allow the long-standing prejudice between the Jews and the Samaritans to keep him from presenting the truth to them. Through the generations, an untold number of prejudices and hatreds have divided nations, societies and races. Human religions and contaminated Christianity have separated people who otherwise could be brothers and sisters in Christ!
 - c. The truth he related to these individuals they fully accepted; there were entirely **convinced** [1. cause to believe firmly in the truth of something. 2. persuade to do something...ORIGIN Latin *convincere* 'overcome, demonstrate', from *vincere* 'conquer'"] (Word Perfect 8 Dictionary).
 - d. They stated strongly that they were certain the Jesus is the Christ, not from the woman’s word only, but because they had now heard the Lord; they knew that he is the Christ.
 - 1) John 6:66-69: “Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Jesus said therefore unto the twelve, Would ye also go away? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God.”
 - 2) Acts 2:36-37: “Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?”
4. Verses 43-44: “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.”
- a. Doubtless the Lord and his disciples were busy during the two days they stayed at Sychar. How many people of that city now believed on him? We are told that there were “many more” who now

- believed.
- b. Jesus' ultimate aim was to break down the partition between the Jews on one side, and Gentiles and the Samaritans on the other [Ephesians 2].
 - c. Johnson has a very interesting comment regarding a feature in the temple:
 - 1) "In the temple, between the court of the Gentiles and the next inner court, was a marble screen or curiously carved fence, some two feet high, beyond which no Gentile could venture. Had a Samaritan put his foot inside of that 'wall of partition,' he would have been whirled away in a fury of rage and stoned to death in the twinkling of an eye. But Jesus was treading down that partition wall.
 - 2) This visit in Samaria is of singular importance, at the opening of Christ's ministry, in two respects: First, as a deliberate repudiation and rebuke of the exclusiveness of the Jewish church; and secondly, and even more significantly, as to the humane manner of his treatment of a sinning woman. It was the text from which flowed two distinguishing elements of his ministry—sympathy with mankind, and the tenderest compassion for those who have sinned and stumbled." (P.79).
 - d. Two prominent passages on the subject:
 - 1) Ephesians 2:12-17: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."
 - 2) Colossians 2:13-14: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
 - e. Our Lord stated that a prophet is not honored in his own country. Elijah had been rejected by many in his native nation of Israel (the ten tribes). Isaiah and Jeremiah were highly unpopular in Jerusalem. Tradition claims that Isaiah was placed in a hollow log and "sawn asunder" (cf. Heb. 11:37).
 - f. We read about his return to Nazareth following his temptations and his reception by the people in Luke 4:15-30: "And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a
-

woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Esaias the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.” [This took place soon after the Lord’s baptism].

5. Verse 45: “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.”
 - a. Jesus had grown up in Nazareth of Galilee. He and his family were known, by name, reputation and by character.
 - 1) Matthew 13:55-56: “Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?”
 - 2) Mark’s record of this is in chapter 6:1-6; he shows this took place on the Sabbath. Having taught them in their synagogue, they were astonished at his wisdom and mighty works. They held him in contempt (cf. Luke 4:29); they were offended at his claims. They knew his father, mother, brothers, and sisters; they had known him from childhood, and until lately, he had not exhibited such powers.
 - a) “They were filled with envy that he should suddenly be lifted so high above themselves and above his humble origin. Their extreme familiarity with his humanity made them blind to the evidences of his divinity, while their unwillingness to admit his divinity made them incapable of answering their own question; and so from that day to this, the words and miracles of Jesus have proved an unsolved mystery to all who deny that he was literally the Son of God” (McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, p.127).
 - b) Catholic theologians assert that Mary remained a perpetual virgin, that she never had any more children. That this is a faulty conclusion is shown by the plain statement of the text. Mary had four other sons and at least two daughters. Jesus was her *firstborn* (Matt. 1:25); her husband Joseph knew her not **till** she had brought forth her first son. "And knew her not till she had brought forth her **firstborn son**: and he called his name JESUS" (Matt. 1:25).
 - b. Following the events at the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-12), the Lord traveled on to Capernaum, where he remained for a short time (John 2:12). He then made the trip to Jerusalem for the Jewish Passover Feast (John 2:13).
 - c. In our present text, we are told that some of the folks from Cana had also been at the Feast, and had witnessed the things he had done during those highly important days. To this point in the book of John, the apostle has only recorded one miracle done by Jesus—at the marriage feast of chapter two. It is evident that the people from Cana had seen other signs he did at Jerusalem, thus believing in him.
 - d. Woods provides this excellent insight: It is significant that these "signs" were more fruitful among those who lived at some distance from the holy city than for its inhabitants, the former being less blinded by tradition. The Samaritans accepted the Lord because of what *he said*, the Galilaeans by what they *saw him do* (p.90).

6. The eight periods of Jesus' life [*Halley's Bible Handbook Deluxe Edition*]:

	Approximate Duration	Location (s)
1. Birth and Youth	30 Years	Bethlehem, Egypt, Nazareth
2. Preparation for Ministry		Jordan River and Wilderness
3. Early Ministry in Judea	8 months	Judea, Samaria
4. Ministry in Galilee	2 years	Galilee
5. Later Ministry in Judea	1 month	Perea and Judea
6. Ministry in Perea	4 months	Perea and Judea
7. Last Week: Crucifixion and Resurrection	7 days	Judea and Jerusalem
8. Appearances after the Resurrection	40 days	Jerusalem and Galilee

G. John 4:46-54: Jesus Heals a Nobleman's Son.

1. Verse 46: "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."
 - a. Our Lord entered into the Galilean town of Cana, the site of his first miracle (John 2:1-12). His repute had already been established there on account of his turning the water into wine. And as we have just been told in the context, people from Cana had seen what Jesus had done at the Passover Feast.
 - b. Notice that Jesus went from Samaria to Cana, not to Nazareth. The reason for excluding his home town from his present excursion may be shown by the statement of John 4:44: "For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country."
 - 1) Luke 4:14-30 relates what happened when he returned home following his baptism; they rejected him and even tried to kill him. He taught in the Sermon on the Mount that it would be folly to cast pearls before swine, meaning if someone has shown his disdain for the Gospel, there are too many others who might be interested to waste our time on this closed mind.
 - 2) Matthew 7:6: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."
 - c. He knew that at Cana he would have a more cordial reception and his teaching would be more likely received where the people were already favorably acquainted with him. There, too, was the home of Nathanael, one of his earliest disciples. This "nobleman" whose son was sick was an officer in the service of the king, he being Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee, often alluded to simply as the king. (Cf. Matt. 14:9.) The term translated "nobleman," *basilikos* is used by Josephus, the Jewish historian, to denote a royal officer or servant, whether of civil, military or household service. This Herod had a place in Tiberias, on the Sea of Galilee, not far from Capernaum. Evidently, this officer was a part of the royal household. Capernaum is but a few miles from Cana [Woods, p.91].
2. Verse 47: "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."
 - a. The repute of Jesus was being widely spread among the people. This important figure had learned that the Lord had returned to Galilee. Certain people of Cana had seen the signs that he had done in Jerusalem.
 - b. Without delay, he found Jesus and besought him to come down to Capernaum and heal his son, who was at the point of death. The man had a degree of faith in the Lord's ability to heal the boy.

He may have thought the Lord had to be in Capernaum, in immediate company with the sick lad, before the miracle could be wrought.

3. Verses 48-49: “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.”
 - a. Jesus had just come from Sychar, where many believed, although no miracle was done there. His knowledge of the woman’s past stirred up faith in her and in the people of the city. The Samaritans knew the first five books of the Old Testament, and were anticipating the coming of the Messiah. The Lord’s knowledge of the Old Testament, in which there were many predictions of his coming, would have opened their eyes to perceive the truth, and believe.
 - b. But in the current setting, Jesus mildly (?) rebuked the nobleman, stating that unless he saw signs and wonders, he would not believe.
 - c. The Lord did not need to go to where the sick one was. The man strongly urged him to come before his child died. He was told that he should go his way, but his son was alive.
4. Verses 50-51: “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.”
 - a. At this pronouncement, the nobleman believed the Lord and returned home. On the way, he met his servant, who told him that the son was alive and well.
 - b. As we will see in the next two verses, the man’s faith was truly established; the faith of the rest of his whole house was likewise kindled.
5. Verses 52-53: “Then inquired 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.”
 - a. We can imagine the great emotional response from the family and servants to learn that the recovery of the son was directly caused by the miraculous power of Jesus!
 - b. Faith had tapped this great supernatural resource. The nobleman’s faith was in evidence when he did what Jesus told him to do—that his son was well and for him to return home.
 - c. The servants told their master that the fever left him at the seventh hour, the very time Jesus has said the boy lived.
 - d. Verse 54: “This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.”
 - 1) “Numerous miracles had been wrought in Judaea; but two in Galilee, each following a trip to Judaea. More, however, believed on him in Galilee than in Judaea; though some in Galilee were prompted to believe because of the miracles wrought in Jerusalem during the passover feast when visitors from Galilee were in the holy city” (Woods, p.94).
 - 2) This is the second miracle Jesus had worked in Galilee; the first was at the wedding feast; the second was from Cana, but occurred in Capernaum. There were others that occurred in Jerusalem, from whence the Lord had recently come.

John Chapter 5

A. John 5:1-9: Jesus Heals a Certain Infirm Man.

1. Verse 1: "After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."
 - a. John usually identifies by name the feast 161 day to which he makes reference, except in this case, its name is not included.
 - 1) Woods:
 - a) The events described in chapter four occurred in late autumn or winter. (John 4:35.) Matters described in chapter 6 (John 6:1-4), were shortly before a Passover. If this feast was not that of the Passover, then there were but two such feasts involved in Jesus' ministry which was then only a little more than two years in length, not three. If this were the Passover, then John 6:1-4 describes a third and there is an additional year involved in the Lord's earthly ministry.
 - b) The Passover, an annual feast of the Jews, thus marks out the period of our Lord's ministry. We believe there were four: (1) When he cleansed the temple. (John 2:13.) (2) The Passover simply called a "feast" in John 5:1. (3) The Passover associated with the miracle of John 6:1-4 when the multitudes were fed. (4) The Passover while our Lord was in the tomb. (John 13:1-19:31.) We also believe there were a little more than three years involved in his ministry, not two.
 - c) The great feasts of the Jews were all held in Jerusalem; all male Jews were required to be in attendance and Jesus, who lived and died under the law and was ever in obedience to it, went up to Jerusalem for its observance. [p.94].
 - 2) The focus of the excitement which followed the healing of this infirm man is that the miracle took place on the Sabbath. The feast of Purim was not celebrated on the Sabbath day.
 - 3) Fourfold Gospel:
 - a) That it was not Purim the following arguments may be urged. 1. Purim was not a Mosaic feast, but one established by human laws; hence Jesus would not be *likely* to observe it. True, we find him at the feast of Dedication, which was also of human origin, but he did not "go up" to attend it; he appears to have attended because he was already in Jerusalem (John 10:22).
 - b) Here the pregnant juxtaposition of "feast" and "went up" indicates that Jesus was *drawn* to Jerusalem by this feast, but Purim was celebrated by the Jews everywhere, and did not require that any one should go to Jerusalem, as did the three great festivals—Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.
 - c) It was kept in a boisterous, riotous manner, and was therefore not such a feast as Jesus would honor.
 - d) It came early in the year, when the weather was too rigorous and inclement for sick people to frequent porticos.
 - e) It did not include a Sabbath Day.
 - b. Halley: The feasts which the Jews observed in Jesus' day, and which Jesus no doubt attended regularly, were these:
 - 1) Passover (April) celebrated the Exodus 1,400 years before (see pp. 169-70).
 - 2) Pentecost (June), 50 days after Passover, celebrated the giving of the Law (see pp. 169-70).
 - 3) Tabernacles (October) celebrated the ingathering of the harvest (see pp. 169-70).
 - c. Exodus 23:14-16: "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, *which is* in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field."
-

- 1) The Feast of Unleavened Bread. He does not mention the Passover but it was the beginning of this feast. The Passover and Unleavened Bread went together so that they were thought of as one. "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover" (Luke 22:1). They were to appear before the Lord, not with empty hands, but with proper sacrificial gifts: "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty: Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee" (Deut. 16:16-17).
 - 2) The Feast of Harvest (Pentecost). The feast of harvest is also known as the feast of weeks (Ex. 34:22). It was celebrated 50 days after Passover, and always fell on Sunday (Lev. 23:15-16). This commemorated the giving of the law at Sinai fifty days after Passover.
 - a) Exodus 34:22: "And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end."
 - b) Exodus 24:18: "And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights."
 - c) Leviticus 23:15-16: "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD."
 - 3) The Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles) commemorated the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. During this feast they erected booths in which they lived.
2. Verse 2: "Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches."
 - a. ISBE regarding this pool: "...there is much to be said for the proposal, promulgated by Robinson and supported by Conder and other good authorities, that the pool was at the 'Virgin's Fount' (see GIHON) which is today an intermittent spring whose 'troubled' waters are still visited by Jews for purposes of cure. As the only source of 'living water' near Jerusalem, it is a likely spot for there to have been a 'sheep pool' or 'sheep place' for the vast flocks of sheep coming to Jerusalem in connection with the temple ritual."
 - b. The specific location and name for this pool of water is not the important matter; what the Lord did there is the keynote of the report. John wrote his account of the gospel many years after the Romans had destroyed the temple and Jerusalem. Some ancient writers [Eusebius and Jerome] report that this pool was still in existence during their time. The apostle was writing by inspiration and thus did not depend on personal knowledge or secular information generally known to write about this pool.
 3. Verses 3-4: "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."
 - a. A large part of verse three [beginning with the word *waiting*, and including all of verse four, is said to be omitted from some of the older manuscripts]. The American Standard Version includes it, but in the margin, casting some doubt on its reality.
 - b. Woods: "Whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole, with whatsoever disease he was holden." These words, omitted from the text, are thought to have been added to the margin, following the close of the apostolic age, to explain the healing believed by many to have occurred there as the result of the magical waters. The crippled and the ill, having exhausted all other means of healing, put their last hope here. A multitude of them were daily brought to Bethesda (p.95).
 - c. If the omitted lines should be allowed into the sacred text, the statement about an angel stirring the
-

water, giving miraculous healing to the first to enter the pool, would be folklore. Why would the healing be limited to the first person to get into the water? He would possibly be the least afflicted since he was so quick about entering the pool.

4. Verses 5-6: “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?”
 - a. The Lord encountered a certain infirm man, who had endured his affliction for thirty-eight years. How much time had he spent at the side of the pool? He may have been like the man of Acts 3: “Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God” (Acts 3:1-8).
 - b. Jesus asked the man whether he would be made whole. The afflicted man stated that someone else always got into the water before he could, thus he had received no healing.
 - c. We were earlier told that a great multitude of people were lying about the pool, waiting for the water to be stirred. All of them believed that healing was possible if they could only get into the water first. It seems odd, that only the first person to enter could be cured of his ailment. Why not more than one? Some limitation would have had to be placed on the supernatural healing, or else the pool would be filled with afflicted folks continually! The water would have been polluted by the dirty clothes and bodies, and could not have been used for ordinary purposes.
 - d. When the Lord asked the man if he wanted to be healed, he said he had never been able to get to the water first. It may be that Jesus implied to the man by his question, that the common belief that an angel stirred the water, providing a momentary healing power, was merely folklore. Thus, “Do you really want to be made whole?” might have suggested that He could truly heal the man.
5. Verse 7: “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.”
 - a. The man’s statement here seems to say that he had seen the waters troubled on more than one occasion, but that a less afflicted person was able to reach the water first. He needed help from some other man to get in the pool quickly.
 - b. If the water was actually stirred (troubled, moved), what caused it? The people believed it was the action of an angel. Nothing the Lord said or did supported that view. The Jews were great believers in angels, that they were active in the affairs of men. They also had many other views, many of which were erroneous [traditions of the ancients, etc.].
6. Verses 8-9: “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: and on the same day was the sabbath.”
 - a. Christ merely spoke the word and the infirm man immediately was healed, took up his bed, and walked. There was no delay of even an hour or a moment. Instantly the healing was done.
 - b. We can well perceive the happiness that suddenly filled this man’s heart! For thirty-eight years he could not walk, now his mobility was fully given to him [or was restored]. We are not told how old he was at this time or how old he was when he contracted the affliction.

B. John 5:10-16: Controversy Over the Sabbath.

1. Verse 10: “The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.”
 - a. The Jews were quick to detect what they considered a rank transgression of the law of the Sabbath.
-

- They instantly accused the healed man of breaking the law.
- b. Christ's enemies closely watched him to see if he ever violated some precept of the Mosaic Law. Never did he break any of those laws. They thought they had seen his disciples violating the Sabbath in Matthew 12:1-2: "At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day."
 - 1) Farms of ancient times were not fenced as in our day, and often paths led through the grain fields. The *corn* which the disciples picked was not what we know as corn, for that grain was not known in the old world until America was discovered. This grain was wheat or barley. Luke 6:1 says they rubbed the grain out in their hands. The heads of grain would be near the path and could easily be pulled off as the disciples passed by. The Mosaic Law gave them the right to thus eat as they traveled. "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn" (Deut. 23:25).
 - 2) The Pharisees were closely watching the Lord, and quickly learned what the disciples had done. Their knowledge of this shows how minutely they spied on him. They accused the Lord with allowing his disciples to violate the law of the Sabbath, but this was a false charge since God did not prohibit the preparation and eating of food on the Sabbath day. Exodus 16:23 deals with gathering manna which was available only on six days during the week.
 - 3) Christ said the disciples were without guilt (verse 5) when they plucked and ate on the Sabbath day. The only things they had transgressed were the Rabbinical traditions. The Talmud says: "In case a woman rolls wheat to remove the husks, it is considered as sifting; if she rubs heads of wheat, it is regarded as threshing; if she cleans off the side-adherencies, it is sifting out fruit; if she bruises the ears, it is grinding; if she throws them up in her hand, it is winnowing" (ALC, 1959, p.130).
 - c. The Fourfold Gospel:
 - 1) "Alford and Schaff both assert that the man broke the Mosaic law; but this position is not well taken. Jesus would not have ordered the sabbath to be broken, for he came to fulfill and not to break the law (Mt 5:17). At no time did he break the sabbath or countenance its violation, as some able thinkers are erroneously led to suppose. In this case a man lying on his bed, away from home, is suddenly healed. Under such circumstances *Jewish tradition* said that he must either spend the rest of the day watching his bed, or else he must go off and leave it to be stolen.
 - 2) "But He who rightfully interpreted the law of his own devising, and who knew that "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mr 2:27), ordered the healed one to carry his bed along home with him....
 - 3) "Elsewhere we shall find that Jesus was careful to show that his sabbatic actions were strictly legal; but in this case, that he might bring his divine claims plainly before the rulers, he ignored the question as to the human legality of his act that he might present without confusion its divine legality.
 - 4) "Hence he used only one order or method of justification; namely: an appeal to his divine rights as exhibited in the habits of his Father. It was the divine and not the human in Jesus which wrought this miracle, so Jesus causes the whole controversy to turn on the divine rights, that he may use the occasion for an elaborate discussion of his divine claims and the proofs by which they are sustained" [pp.196-197].
 2. Verses 11-12: "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?"
 - a. The tradition-binders demanded to know why he was carrying his bed, which violated their opinions of the Sabbath. Obviously, the bed was easily portable; it could be carried by one man.
-

- After his healing, this man would have had no trouble taking up his bed and going home.
- b. The ISBE gives this information about beds:
 - 1) An interesting case for study is that of the man "sick of the palsy" whom they brought to Jesus "lying on a bed," and who when healed "took up the bed, and went forth before them all" (Mt 9:2,6; Mr 2:4,12; Lu 5:18-19; compare Joh 5:8-12). Here the "bed" on which the sick of the palsy lay was let down from the housetop "through the tiles with his couch into the midst before Jesus" (Lu 5:18-19); and when the man was healed Jesus commanded him, as Luke says, to "take up (his) couch and go unto (his) house," and he "took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his house, glorifying God" (Lu 5:24-25).
 - 2) It seems, therefore, that this "bed" was a "pallet" and "couch" combined, a thin mattress upon a light portable frame, such as we have already seen was in use among the ancients. Another kindred case was that of the sick man at the pool of Bethesda (Joh 5:2 ff) whom Jesus healed and commanded to "take up his bed and walk," and he "took up his bed and walked"; only in this case the "bed" is a "pallet" without the frame, it would seem.
 - c. The man plainly stated to the Jews that the one who healed me told me to take up my bed and walk. He did not take it upon himself to carry his bed; the one who possessed miraculous powers told him to do so. The man's ailment might have been known by many people, and they would know that his being able to walk and carry his bed plainly indicated a miracle had cured him. Thus, the one who effected the miracle was one who had Heavenly power. What human had the right to question what Jesus had done and said!
 - d. These Jews demanded to know who it was that told him to carry his bed.
3. Verse 13: "And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place."
- a. The Lord did not identify himself by name to this man. He could give no answer to the Jews. Jesus remained there only a moment—just long enough to ask a question and make one statement.
 - b. It was not important for the Lord to tell the afflicted man his name. On hearing the instruction to "rise, take up thy bed, and walk." Immediately the man was made whole.
 - c. The entire transaction might have taken no more than a few seconds. Jesus was quickly mixed with the multitude that was at that place.
4. Verse 14: "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."
- a. Later, at the temple, Jesus met the man again. We are not told whether the Lord identified himself by name to the man, or that the setting was such that he understood who he was.
 - b. He was told to sin no more. His supernatural knowledge is thereby shown. He knew all he needed to know about that man's past. The implication seems to be that some sin of the man's past had caused this affliction to come upon him.
 - 1) "Many human ills are directly traceable to sin, and this one appears to have been so; for death is the wages of sin (Ro. 6:23), and sickness is partial payment. It is a solemn thought that sin can produce worse conditions than even this case, where it found its victim in youth, and left him a withered old man, bed-ridden, helpless, and friendless" (TFG, p198).
 - 2) "His own sins, thirty-eight years before, had brought on his infirmity. What was their nature we are not informed, but we know that often our fleshly ills can thus be accounted for. The words of Jesus show to the man that he knew his whole life, and brought up a flood of memories. His sins when he was young had ruined his health; now he is well, but is warned to beware lest a worse thing come upon him" (Johnson, p.88).
 - 3) "Not long thereafter, Jesus found the healed man in the temple. This is significant; it evidences the fact that the man quickly made his way to the house of God there doubtless to offer thanks for the blessing of health now his: He did not know who Jesus was nor where he was; he did know that God would hear his prayer at the temple and to it he went. Many people today are the recipients of untold blessings from God for which they never so much as offer thanks. This
-

man puts all such to shame by his action here. While ill he could not go to the temple for prayer; now he could, and he did. Too often those who plead illness as an excuse for not attending services are not faithful when their health improves. Jesus said to the man,

- 4) Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee. Literally, do not keep on sinning, indicating that his affliction must have been the result of sinful conduct on his part. Should he continue, he would make himself liable to an even greater affliction and to greater guilt and thus be deserving of greater punishment. (Matt. 11:21-24.) There is no hint in the text of the nature of the sin of which the man had been guilty” (Woods, p.99).
 - c. The man now had a healthy body; he could follow the demands of the law to tend to his sins. Notice that he was in the temple when he met the Lord. Doubtless he was there to offer thanks and the proper sacrifice.
 - d. From the statement of the verse, the individual’s ailment was caused by some sinful act or conduct of which he was guilty. He had been suffering from this problem for thirty-eight years, and knew the full measure of pain and trouble. If he went back into sin, it might be that some greater thing might come upon him—a more unpleasant ailment perhaps. Of course, if he died with sin’s guilt upon his soul, there would be eternal banishment from God as the ultimate penalty.
5. Verses 15-16: “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.”
 - a. Somehow the healed man learned the identity of the Lord and passed that information on to the Jews. Why did he do this? He wanted Jesus to get the credit for the miracle; he might have thought that they would not complain about carrying the bed on the sabbath since supernatural power had caused the healing; such power could only come from Heaven. Jesus told the man to pick up his bed and walk.
 - b. The Jews were unconcerned about the infirmity of the man being removed; their concern was in inflicting punishment upon one whom they thought had violated their traditions about the sabbath. They determined to persecute Jesus, and even slay him because he had done these good deeds on the sabbath day.
 - c. Knowing from other accounts the harsh attitude many of the Jews had toward Jesus, and their deadly dedication to keeping their human traditions despite what God’s word said, we are not greatly surprised by their reaction to learning that Jesus had told the man to arise and walk, taking his bed with him. Therefore: *Jesus must suffer; Jesus must be slain!*

C. John 5:17-31: Jesus Declares His Close Association With the Father.

1. Verses 17-18: “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.”
 - a. NKJV: But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.
 - b. These Jewish enemies of Jesus wasted no time in accosting the Lord over this “so-called infraction” of the sabbath law. The Jewish teachers through the years had made many additions to the Law of Moses, without any authority to do so. They had been strongly warned against it: “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah your God which I command you” (Deut. 4:2, ASV).
 - c. God had ceased his creation activities following the sixth day of creation; nothing else needed to be created. He described what he had done as being “very good” (Gen. 1:31).
 - 1) We are further told in Genesis 2:1-2: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.”
 - 2) God completed his creative work in the first six days of time; he ceased his creative work at
-

that point; he rested on the seventh day. He did not rest because he was tired; a physical being can get tired, but that is not so with a spiritual being.

- 3) Just because God quit creating things after the sixth day does not mean that he ceased to do anything. Is God active today? Do we not expect our prayers to be heard? Do we not expect our Father to provide the right answer to our requests? Did God cease to hear and answer prayers that were offered on the Sabbath?
- d. Jesus stated that both he and his Father *worketh*.
- 1) Regarding the word *worketh*: “The discussion turned on work on the Sabbath. The Father’s work in maintaining and redeeming the world has continued from the creation until the present moment (εἰς ὧς αὐρῆτι): until now, not interrupted by the Sabbath. And I work (καὶ γὰρ ἐργάζομαι) Or, *I also work*. The two clauses are coordinated. The relation, as Meyer observes, is not that of *imitation*, or *example*, but *of equality of will and procedure*. Jesus does not violate the divine ideal of the Sabbath by His holy activity on that day” (Vincent).
 - 2) The universe and the earth, and the living things with which our world is filled, must be overseen and controlled; God used his natural laws to exert control in many things and his providential power to tend to other matters. The Sabbath Day on earth can place no limitations to God’s work. The Son of God was not prevented from doing good on the Sabbath Day while he was on earth. It is obvious that telling the healed man to take up his bed and walk did not violate the Mosaic Law governing the Sabbath.
 - 3) The Sabbath law had its beginning with the revelation of the Law of Moses; it ended when the Law of Moses was replaced by the Gospel of Christ.
- e. Vine on *work*: *ergazomai*; NT:2038) is used (I) intransitively, e. g., Matt 21:28; John 5:17; 9:4 (2nd part); Rom 4:4,5; 1 Cor 4:12; 9:6; 1 Thess 2:9; 4:11” (p.231).
- 1) Matthew 21:28: “But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.”
 - 2) John 5:17: “But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”
 - 3) John 9:4: “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 4:12: “And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it.”
 - 5) 1 Thessalonians 2:9: “For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.”
 - 6) 1 Thessalonians 4:11: “And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.”
- f. The Jews thought they had two reasons to kill Jesus: (1) for breaking the Sabbath and (2) because he made himself equal with the Father. By healing the afflicted man he proved his right to tell the man to take up his bed and walk; by the same miracle he demonstrated that he was from God. Compare:
- 1) Mark 2:1-12 And again he entered into Capernaum, after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven

- thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.”
- 2) 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.”
2. Verse 19: “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.”
- a. In his response to his opponents, Jesus stated that he and the Father acted in complete harmony in what had been done in behalf of the infirm man who was healed. Therefore, the Sabbath regulations were not broken; the Father would not have shunned his own law; neither would the Son.
 - b. What was ignored was the man-made rules the Jews had invented and tied to the Sabbath. They did not have the right to do so; and to break their rules did not mean the Law of the Sabbath had been broken. See Matthew 15:1-13 and Mark 7:6-13.
 - c. “These words were designed to show the close relationship existing between himself and his Father. So identified were they by nature and purpose that he could do "nothing of himself; his actions were not his alone, but those of the Father through him also; neither acted independently of the other. Moreover, his actions are in perfect harmony with the Father since he does nothing except that which the Father does, endorses and approves. No higher claim to equality can be made than this. Obviously, if two act on the same plane, each able to do all the other does or can, both are equal” (Woods, p.101).
 - d. The Father and the Son are perfectly united in all that they say and do. What is done by one, the other is in full agreement with it. See John 10:30 and John 17:13-26.
3. Verses 20-21: “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.”
- a. Jesus declared that the Father possessed love for the Son. God also loves his offspring (John 3:16). God was working with and through Christ to aid fallen mankind in ways that man could never do for himself. See 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 and Acts 4:7-14.
 - b. Jesus was not working on earth by his own power, but the Father was in constant communion with him. The Father and the Son knew what was to be done and said. He and the Father had healed the afflicted man, which was at the heart of the present controversy. The Lord said that even greater things would be done, things which would create great wonder in those who would behold them.
 - 1) The Jews knew of cases from the Old Testament of certain ones being raised from the dead.
 - a) Elijah the Prophet raised a widow's son from the dead (1 Kings 17:21-22).
 - b) Elisha the Prophet brought back the son of a Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:35).
 - c) A dead man placed in the grave of Elisha also returned to life when his body touched the prophet's bones (2 Kings 4:35).
 - 2) There were certain ones who were resurrected in the New Testament.
 - a) Jesus raised up the daughter of Jarius (Luke 8:54-55).
 - b) Jesus raised up Lazarus (John 11:43-44).
 - c) Peter revived Tabitha (Dorcas) (Acts 9:40-41).
 - d) Paul revived Eutychus (Acts 20:9-12).
 - e) Many Saints rose from the dead at the resurrection of Jesus (Matt. 27:50-53).
 - f) Jesus Himself rose from the dead (Matthew 28:5-8).
 - g) Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain from the dead (Luke 7:11-15).

- 3) The Father could raise the dead; the Son also had that power.
- c. Our Lord also was able to resurrect fallen souls—those who had fallen into sin. This he did for the ailing man in Mark 2:1-12: "...Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Read again that passage and see that the Lord had power on earth to forgive sins. And he is able to forgive penitent, believing, obedient sinners today (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38; 13:38-39).
- 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Acts 2:36-38: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
- d. Woods offers these great thoughts:
- 1) Whether this is a reference to spiritually raising those dead in sin to life or whether it refers to a bodily resurrection is a matter about which students differ; the truth is, Jesus would, and did do both. Instances of the latter will be seen in the raising of Lazarus (John 11:43, 44), and the widow's son (Luke 7:14, 15). A spiritual resurrection occurs every time a precious soul turns away from the fatal course of worldly things and obeys the gospel. Having died to sin, through repentance, and in a state of death to sin (that is, separated from a life of active sin), one is then buried (as is fitting for all who are dead) with the Lord in baptism, to rise from the watery grave to walk in "newness of life." (Rom. 6:1-4.)
 - 2) The "death" to sin one experiences in ceasing its practice does not produce life; it simply terminates the active life of sin formerly characteristic of the sinner; following this must come the burial and the resurrection to life, in which process one receives remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and is translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13, 14). This life he gives "to whom he will."
 - 3) He wills to do so to all who obey him. (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:8, 9.) It is not an arbitrary expression of will involving a system where some are chosen, and others are passed by, as Calvinists claim; provision for the salvation of all has been made and the fact that not all men will be saved is not due to any arbitrary selection on the part of the Son but because of the unwillingness of some to accept the plan offered them. (2 Pet. 3:9.) [pp.102f].
4. Verses 22-23: "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."
- a. In the context, three things are presented which declare the greatness of Christ:
- 1) The Son can do those things which the Father does (verse 19).
 - 2) The Son can give life to the dead.
 - 3) The Son has been given the right to judge the world, an operation requiring omniscience.
 - a) Matthew 25:31-33: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."
 - b) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given
-

assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

- c) John 12:48: “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.”
 - b. “This high honor entitles Jesus to the same consideration as the Father. To ‘honor’ is to do homage to; to show reverence and to give praise. The Father, in assigning to Jesus the work of judging the world indicates his worthiness to receive such honor. To say that the Son is to be honored ‘even as’ the Father means that he is entitled to the same honor as the Father and for the same reason” (Woods, p.103).
 - c. Luke 10:16: “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.”
5. Verse 24: “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.”
- a. The double words with which this verse begins appears about two dozen times in this account of the gospel; in each case it is our Lord who used the phrase. The truth which follows the use of the phrase is thus strongly declared to be absolute. However, even without such an introductory thought preceding the fact about to be stated, every word and thought of inspired scripture is certain.
 - 1) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:1-4: “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”
 - 3) Matthew 22:31-32: “But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” [Argument based on the difference between the past and present tense of phrase].
 - 4) Galatians 3:16: “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” [Argument turned on the difference between the singular and the plural of the word].
 - b. Those who promote the doctrine that alien sinners are saved at the point of faith only—the instant that one believes in Christ, that very second the sinner is saved. Those who cling to this notion declare that no other item is necessary; they particularly assert that since baptism is not mentioned in the verse, that baptism is excluded by virtue of the fact that it is not named in verse.
 - c. But what proves too much, proves nothing. Notice other things that are not listed:
 - 1) Faith in Christ is not named. The Lord speaks of some who hear his word. He said nothing directly about anyone believing that word or believing in him.
 - 2) Repentance is not mentioned in the verse. Can anyone be saved without repenting?
 - a) Luke 13:3: “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”
 - b) Luke 24:47: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
 - c) Acts 17:30: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”
 - 3) Confession of faith in Christ is not mentioned.
 - a) Acts 8:36-37: “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If

- thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
- b) Romans 10:9-10: “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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
- 4) The grace of God is not named.
- a) Titus 3:5: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”
- b) Titus 2:11-12: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”
- d. Anything the Bible says is dependable, not just the information printed in red letters.
- 1) All of the inspired word is bound:
- a) 1 Corinthians 7:12: “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.”
- b) 1 Corinthians 14:37: “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”
- c) Matthew 18:18: “Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”
- d) If said once in Holy Writ, it is true.
- e. I say unto you.
- 1) Confidence in a statement depends on who the speaker is.
- a) Genesis 3:4: “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.”
- b) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”
- 2) There are those who say: “Faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort.” But this is a human doctrine.
- 3) The speaker in our text is Christ.
- a) He has all authority:
- (1) Matthew 28:18: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”
- (2) Ephesians 2:22-23: “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
- (3) Colossians 3:17: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
- b) God speaks through his Son:
- (1) Hebrews 1:1-2: “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.”
- (2) John 12:49-50: “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.”
- (3) John 17:8: “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.”
- c) One who rejects Christ, also rejects God and forfeits all hope:
-

- (1) Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
 - (2) John 12:48: "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."
 - (3) Hebrews 10:24-31: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
- f. He that heareth my word.
- 1) Not just any word, but MY word:
 - a) Matthew 17:5: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."
 - b) Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 2) Some hear but will not believe and follow:
 - a) Luke 8:11-12: "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."
 - b) John 10:27-28: "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."
 - 3) Heareth [in John 10:27-28] is in the present tense (continually hear); the promise does not apply if the individual stops hearing.
 - a) Nehemiah 9:30: "Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands."
 - b) Luke 9:62: "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."
- g. And believeth on him that sent me.
- 1) Believe on whom? He is speaking of the Father.
 - 2) If the verse teaches faith only, it proves too much.
 - 3) It does not say believe on Christ, but believe on the Father. If that is all, then the Jews and Moslems are saved. But we know that cannot be the case because of John 8:24: "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."
 - 4) Believeth includes obedience:
 - a) John 1:11-12: "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."
 - b) John 8:31: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."
-

- c) John 3:36: “He that **believeth** on the Son hath eternal life; but he that *obeyeth not* the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him” (ASV). [Same basic word].
- d) Luke 6:46: “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”
- h. We believe the facts and obey the commands of the Gospel:
- 1) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: “Now I make known unto you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures.”
 - 3) “Baptism not mentioned”—neither is Christ, grace, blood, love, repentance.
- i. Believeth: continued obedience.
- 1) Matthew 10:22: “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.”
 - 2) Luke 8:15: “And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience.”
 - 3) Revelation 22:14: “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”
- j. Those being described continue to have a living, active, obedient faith. One great difference between us and the sectarian world is this:
- 1) We follow what the Bible teaches that obedience is required in order for one to be saved. Sectarian doctrine denies this.
 - 2) We follow what the Bible teaches that obedience is required for Christians to remain in the saved condition. Some sectarian doctrines place heavy burdens upon those who become members of their human organizations. Despite teaching that a saved person can never fall from salvation, they in practice require their members to “work.”
- k. These blessed individuals the Lord herein describes possess everlasting life and will not come into condemnation.
- 1) Romans 8:1-3: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”
 - 2) Romans 8:4-14: “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”
 - 3) 1 John 1:6-10: “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with
-

another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." [Subject is Christians].

- 4) James 5:19-20: "**Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth**, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
 - l. If our religious neighbors are right, then the instant one acquires faith in God (John 5:24), he is automatically saved, no act of obedience is ever required of him, and he can never lose salvation; his destiny in Heaven can never be lost, despite the kind of life he may live. Such a doctrine is repulsive to common sense and is never taught in any part of the Bible.
 - m. One who has become a Christian in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel [and there is no other way for an alien sinner to be saved], possesses everlasting life. He has that great advantage in promise and in hope, not in reality:
 - 1) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."
 - 2) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
 - 3) Romans 6:22: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."
 - 4) Romans 8:24-25: "For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (ASV).
 - 5) Galatians 6:8: "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - 6) Mark 10:30: "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 - n. To retain eternal life in promise and in hope, we must continually remain faithful to the Lord's word.
 - 1) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 2) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - 3) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - o. The saved individual has passed from death unto life. Note the following quotations from Woods:
 - 1) Neither Jesus, nor the Bible anywhere says that a believer has everlasting life right now, in this life. The verb "hath" here translates the word *echei* in the phrase *echei zoen aionion*, third person singular of the present indicative of *echoo*. This is an instance of the futuristic present which Danta and Mantey say "denotes an event which has not as yet occurred but which is regarded as so certain that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass." (A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, page 185.)
 - 2) Why may it be correctly concluded that eternal life, though not an actual realization in this life, may be "regarded as so certain in thought that it may be contemplated as already coming to pass," and "must ensue in virtue of some unalterable law?"
-

- a) The verbs "heareth" and "believeth" in John 5:24 involve linear (continuous action) and the meaning is, "He that keeps on hearing my word and keeps on believing on him that sent me HATH eternal life so certainly in thought 'that it may be contemplated as already coming to pass,' and it absolutely must ensue in virtue of the 'unalterable law' of the immutability of God's promises."
- b) The actual realization of it is at the end of the age when it becomes a present possession and no longer a precious prospect. But, this blessed promise is dependent on keeping on hearing and keeping on believing God's word. Those who forsake him will be cast off forever. (1 Chron. 28:9.) [p.105].
- p. Consider this passage: "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" (John 10:27-29).
- 1) His sheep hear his voice and they follow him; they continue to hear and follow.
 - 2) He gives them eternal life; he did not say they presently have eternal life in actual possession.
 - 3) They shall never perish; as long as they continue to hear his voice and to follow him.
 - 4) No one can pluck them out of his hand; as long as the conditions already stated are still being met, no one is able to remove them from their Lord's hands; they must continue to hear and follow.
 - 5) Unless some who is greater than the Father and his Son comes along, no one will be able to remove these faithful saints away from God and Christ—against the will of the faithful saint. One who was faithful for a time can turn his back on this God and Savior.
6. Verses 25-27: "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."
- a. Notice the common introductory words, Verily, verily, which underscore the certainty of what is to follow. What he is to say is just as absolute without the words, but he calls attention to the serious nature of the upcoming declaration.
 - b. The Lord affirms that the hour is coming, *and now is*, that those who hear his voice, shall live. The voice of the Master was even then being heard and followed. We remember from John 4:1 that Jesus was acquiring more disciples than was John. Although we will see in chapter six, many of his disciples turned back and walked no more with him (6:66), his followers were still rather large in number.
 - c. His point here is that those who hear (and keep listening) to his voice, would possess life—be alive spiritually; not be dead in sin.
 - d. The Father has life in himself; the Son also has life in himself. Life can only proceed from life.
 - 1) A dead stone cannot produce life. God has ordained that every living species (of animal and plant life) has the power to reproduce, but only after their own kind. No non-living item can do so. It is by the power of the God-given natural laws that reproduction is made possible.
 - 2) When a human being is conceived, God forms that individual's spirit in him: "...Thus saith Jehovah, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zech. 12:1, ASV).
 - e. When a person commits sin, his spirit is contaminated; it is then separated from the Holy God. The blood of Christ can remove the taint of sin from the soul.
 - 1) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
-

- f. The Father has given unto the Son the authority to execute judgment. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).
- 1) There was a time in which God overlooked the lack of knowledge that was demonstrated by the ignorant worship the Athenians had been offering. The men of Athens admitted their ignorance by erecting the altar to "The Unknown God." But the time for these things to be ignored by God had passed since he had given his Son to die for the sins of the world.
 - 2) The requirement of repentance is met when one learns God's will sufficiently to believe it, and sees his own condition; genuine sorrow is produced by this faith, which in turn produces a decision to change one's life; that commitment is then lived out in a reformed life.
 - a) Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - b) Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
 - c) 2 Corinthians 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
 - d) Acts 26:20: "But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
 - 3) The reason for the repentance is the fact that the day of Judgment has been appointed by God in which the world will be judged. The Judgment, as taught elsewhere in the New Testament, will include every one who has ever lived on earth. See Romans 3:23.
 - a) Matthew 25:31-32: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats."
 - b) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 4) The basis of the verdict will be God's word.
 - a) John 12:48: "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."
 - b) Revelation 20:12: "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."
 - c) The destiny given each one will be eternal in its scope, and thus unchangeable: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46; cf. Luke 16:19-31).
 - 5) The determining difference will be the "works" of the individuals.
 - a) John 5:28-29: "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."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 5:10: "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."
 - 6) Righteousness is the doing of God's will.
 - a) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
-

- b) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - c) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteous-ness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - d) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
- 7) The Judge will be God's Son, Jesus Christ. In view of this Great Day and its consequences to the human soul, the apostles pleaded with men to obey the gospel.
- a) Acts 26:26-29: "For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 5:11: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
- 8) The assurance given of these truths is the resurrection of Christ. The apostles were equipped to prove his resurrection, to the satisfaction of all who would evaluate the evidence properly.
7. Verses 28-29: "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."
- a. As astounding as the foregoing statement is, the current thought is even more shocking! The hour is coming, declares the Lord, when everyone in the graves will hear his voice and will be resurrected. Every cemetery will be emptied of its dead. Every body which was entombed in the seas will be brought back to life. Every body that has utterly disappeared from human view will be raised to life again. What a tremendous occasion that will be!
 - b. It is a marvelous operation that brings those who are spiritually dead back to spiritual life again; this occurs when a penitent believer is immersed into Christ, and when a sinful saint returns to his Lord by confession his wrong-doing, repenting, and asking for pardon through prayer. The forgiveness of all these sins takes place in the mind of God and affects the individual's soul (spirit) and cannot be seen with physical eyesight.
 - c. But the resurrection of the dead will be a visible operation. This great event will be preceded by the visible and audible return of Christ.
 - 1) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
 - 2) Revelation 1:7: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."
 - d. The dead will be raised to life again, given spiritual bodies that cannot die, and in these new bodies will stand before Christ in the final Judgment.
 - 1) Matthew 25:31-32: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with
-

him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.”

- 2) Matthew 25:46: “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”
- e. Woods:
- 1) The reference here is certainly to the resurrection of the dead at the last great day when the graves are opened and all come forth at his voice. He had just spoken of a spiritual resurrection accomplished by powers inherent in him; such was no less true and significant than the eventual calling of all from their tombs. Before, Jesus spoke of the souls of men; the reference was a figurative one, and the resurrection offered spiritual; here, the allusion is to the bodies of men; the reference to their coming forth is literal, and the resurrection thus to occur is actual and personal. Not all who heard the words of Christ believed; hence, not all received spiritual life; but all who are in the graves will hear him in that last great day and they will come forth to meet their destiny, some to life, because they were faithful and others to eternal death because they were unfaithful in life.
 - 2) The phrases, they that have done good, and they that have done evil mark out clearly the sharp distinction which is to obtain in that Day of Final Accounts. The "resurrection to life" is so designated because it is then when eternal life becomes an actual and present possession; and it is called a "resurrection of judgment" because those involved will suffer eternal condemnation and punishment. (Matt. 25:46.) It should be noted that those who will be privileged to come forth to life are those who have done good; this goodness is reflected toward God through doing his will, and toward man by treating others as we would be treated. It is idle, in the light of such plain affirmations as our Lord here, to insist as do many today that one's actions are not conditions precedent to life hereafter.
 - 3) The words of our Lord in these verses preclude the possibility of two literal resurrections with an interval of a thousand years between them. The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves (not just the righteous) shall come forth to judgment and the words, "unto the resurrection of life" for the good, and "the resurrection of judgment" for the evil conclusively show a general resurrection and a general judgment embracing all men thus demonstrating the falsity of the doctrine of premillennialism to which some today adhere. [pp.108f].
8. Verses 30-31: “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.”
- a. Jesus denied that he possessed any authority to do anything except by his connection with the Father. Being a significant part of the Godhead, his authority and right derived therefrom. No mere human could have known and spoken with authority about the preceding point regarding the resurrection of the last day.
 - b. Woods:
 - 1) It was therefore necessary for him to show that he acted, not independently of the Father, but in perfect harmony with him. Were he not authorized by the Father to speak and to act, his words and his actions would count for nothing; the message he gave was also his Father's message because they are one in purpose though distinct in person. His judgment is "righteous" (just) because it is right; and he acted, not to pursue a plan of which his Father was not a part, but to do exactly the will of the Father who sent him into the world. He acted without prejudice and his motivation was right.
-

- 2) Were he, apart from the Father and the Father's plan, to seek to justify himself, he would prove himself false since such a course would be proof that he and his Father were not united. The godhead is united; such separation would prove he is not of the godhead. [ibid.]
 - c. This does not imply that his own judgment would be wrong if he sought his own will, but that he had no private ends, no selfish views, no improper bias. He came not to aggrandize himself, or to promote his own views, but he came to do the will of God. Of course his decision would be impartial and unbiased, and there is every security that it will be according to truth. See Lu 22:42 where he gave a memorable instance, in the agony of the garden, of his submission to his Father's will. [Barnes].
 - d. The Law of Moses required that every fact be established by two or three witnesses; a man's own witness was insufficient of itself to establish the surety of an important or legal matter. His enemies would not accept the true identity of Christ merely by his claim; the Lord knew this and would not rest his case with a personal assertion only. He will hold up the testimony of John and that of the Father, who presented his witness in the Holy Scriptures.
- D. John 5:32-47: Jesus Had the Greatest of Witnesses.
1. Verses 32-33: "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."
 - a. There is another who "beareth witness" [present tense] of Jesus. That would of course be the Father., whose testimony continues to pronounce itself in the abiding Scriptures. He will further call their attention to the works the Son did by the power and authority of God.
 - b. John the Baptizer also bore witness to the true identity of Jesus: "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" (John 1:19-20). The Jews who were sent thought that John might be the Messiah, which John denied. That great prophet pointed to Jesus as the Messiah.
 - 1) John 1:22-27: "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."
 - 2) John 1:29-36: "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. 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!"
 2. Verses 34-35: "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."
 - a. A large part of the Jewish people accepted John as a prophet, hence to be an inspired spokesman for God. John had affirmed that Jesus was the Lamb of God, the Messiah. They were willing to accept this testimony of John.
 - b. Our Lord did not rely on the testimony of a man only to establish his identity; but he referred them to John to learn what they must do to be saved. The Jews had rebelled against God, thus they needed to repent; John baptized those who repented and instructed them to believe on him [the
-

Messiah] who was to come.

- 1) Compare: “And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” (Acts 19:1-6).
- 2) Matthew 3:1-6: “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.”
- c. Jesus stated that John had been a burning and shining light for a season, and many Jews rejoiced in his light. They all should have paid more particular attention to his words by which he introduced Jesus and presented him to the nation. John's testimony about Jesus was not of human origin, but was a sacred pronouncement God made through the prophet John regarding the identity of his Son.
- d. Our Lord spoke here of John in the past tense, perhaps indicating that that great man had been arrested and was now in prison. See Matthew 14:1-12.
3. Verses 36-38: “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.”
 - a. John the Baptizer effectively accomplished his God-given mission without working supernatural acts: “And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true” (John 10:41). John drew great multitudes to his preaching, most of whom accepted him as a prophet of God. Jesus came to Israel, working a great number of miraculous acts, yet his enemies closed their eyes to the proof his miracles declared!
 - b. Our Lord called attention to the miracles he performed, drawing their notice to what these works proved: His identity; his message; his being sent by the Father; his fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies which pointed to him.
 - c. The Jews had not heard the audible voice of the Father, nor had they seen his form. Compare: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). The divine nature cannot be seen with physical eyes.
 - 1) John 4:24: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
 - 2) Luke 24:39: “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”
 - 3) Exodus 33:20: “And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.”
 - 4) 1 Timothy 6:16: “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”
 - d. They had neither seen nor heard God with their physical senses; beyond that, and inexplicably, they did not allow God's word to abide in their minds and hearts.
 - 1) Woods: Though they affected to believe in God, they did not as evidenced in the fact that they

refused him whom God sent. Thus, their claim to belief in the scriptures was false since these scriptures testified of Jesus and belief would have prompted their acceptance of him. Their refusal to believe showed that they did not have the word in their hearts. The scriptures testified of Christ's coming (Deut. 18:18), and Jesus demonstrated by his works that he was indeed the Christ; thus their refusal of him was in effect a refusal of the scriptures to which they claimed such great allegiance. [p.111].

- 2) Fourfold Gospel: The testimony of the Father was given in three forms: 1. By direct or audible voice and the visible sending of the Spirit—as at Jesus' baptism. 2. By revelations, through the medium of prophets and angels gathered and preserved in the Old Testament Scriptures. 3. Through the Son and his works. Jesus here asserts that all testimony of the first kind had failed to reach the Jewish rulers; that the testimony of the second kind has been utterly lost upon them, for they failed to see its accordance with the testimony of the third kind which he was even then exhibiting to them, neither had it taught them to expect a personal Saviour.
4. Verse 39: “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”
 - a. “Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me” (ASV).
 - b. No greater comment on this verse has been made than by our own brother in Christ, Guy N. Woods:
 - 1) “These Jews professed great loyalty and respect for the scriptures; they searched them minutely and saw significance in every letter and word; these same scriptures testified of Jesus, whom they rejected thus demonstrating that they did not really believe in, nor have respect for, the scriptures. These scriptures testified of Jesus by detailing the manner of his birth, the kind of life he would live and death he would die. (Isa. 53:1ff; Dan. 9:26, 27; Deut. 18:18; Gen. 3:15.)
 - 2) “It should not be overlooked that these people were diligent students of the word but they allowed their prejudices to blind them to the truth. Mere familiarity with the word does not of itself assure genuine belief in it. We ought to study the word to learn the way of salvation as did Timothy and not to sustain a human tradition as did these Pharisees. (2 Tim. 3:15.)” [pp.111f].
 - c. “Those people to whom Jesus spoke these teachings had perverted their knowledge of the word of God in such a manner as to remove all true knowledge of it. And how had they done so?
 - 1) “They had made the word of God of none effect by their traditions; and a perfect example of that was in the episode here under study, these men having substituted their own petty and ridiculous rules in the place of God's true sabbath law.
 - 2) “They had also changed the meaning of the words God had given them. God had promised a Messiah whose paradoxical qualities of glory and humiliation should have been sufficient to identify him when he came; but the hierarchy promptly projected two Messiahs, making one of them the lowly and suffering priest, and the other the mighty conqueror who would chase the Romans and restore the Solomonic empire.
 - 3) “They rejected out of hand many of the plainest prophecies, especially those projecting the call of the Gentiles to salvation (Romans 9:25-29)...” [Coffman].
 - d. Eternal life may be found through the Scriptures, as Matthew 19:16-22 illustrates in the episode of The Rich Young Ruler, who Asked Jesus a Question.
 - 1) Verses 16-17: "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God:* but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."
 - a) For parallel accounts see Mark 10:17-22 and Luke 18:18-23. Mark says that he came running to Jesus and knelt before him. His question implies that he knew that eternal life was not given unconditionally.
 - b) In reply to the young man's first question, Christ told him that he must keep the command-

ments in order to enter into life. So, from the Lord's plain words, obedience to God is a requirement if we would have eternal life. This is what is said in other places (see Heb. 5:8-9). It matters not that this man lived under the Mosaic Dispensation; regardless of the age under which a man spent his time on earth, it must needs be that he have been obedient unto God if he is to have eternal life in heaven. The specific requirements of God's law have changed with the passing of the various laws, but there has never been a time when God did not require obedience to his will.

- 2) Verses 18-20: "He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"
 - a) In response to the Lord's statement about obedience, the young man asked which commandment was to be obeyed. Jesus answered by referring to five commands of the ten in the Decalogue, plus "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This latter command embraces the sentiment in the last requirement in the Ten: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house," etc.
 - b) This young man was a credit to his generation in many ways. He would be considered an outstanding person by many of our day who think a facade of spirituality is sufficient. He inquired whether there was yet something else that he needed to add or change. Thus, "What lack I yet?"
 - 3) Verses 21-22: "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."
 - a) Mark's account tells us that the Lord "beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest...." The Savior knew the man's heart and discerned his great weakness: his interest in material possessions was too great, hence the Lord quickly devised a means of exposing this frailty to the young man's mind. He told him to sell his possession and come follow him, if he would be perfect.
 - b) No one in the flesh is able to attain to a state of absolute, sinless perfection; no one but Christ was ever able to do so. However, each one of us is expected to reach a state of spiritual maturity where all our faculties have been brought under the control of the Lord. (See Matt. 5:48; 1 John 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:6; 14:20; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:15; Col. 1:28; 4:12; Heb. 5:12-14; Jas 1:4; 3:2; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; cf. Gen. 6:9; Job 1:1). But none of us will ever reach a point in this life when we can say that we do not sin (1 John 1:7-10; Rom. 3:9,23).
 - c) The blessings of heaven are described by the Lord as "treasure in heaven" (cf. Matt. 6:19-21). The instruction to follow Christ was probably intended in the literal sense as was the case in Matthew 8:19-22 (cf. the Twelve). To follow Christ requires that we be willing to sacrifice anything we hold dear if it comes between us and the Lord.
 - 4) "Does the Lord require that any who would follow him today must sell their possessions and distribute the proceeds to the poor before they can be Christians?"
 - a) "We can know that this is not required for several reasons. Mary had a house in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12); Philip had a great house in Caesarea Palestina (Acts 21:8); Ananias and his wife were not required to sell their possession, or to give the money it brought to the church after it was sold (Acts 5:4). Philemon was evidently a wealthy man and he was not required to rid himself of his wealth.
 - b) "These all were in good standing with the Lord even though they retained their property. 'Furthermore, the Lord's teachings in the parable of the pounds, the parable of the talents, and many other passages suggest and even demand that ownership of property was not condemned by Jesus nor forbidden to members of his kingdom'" (Coffman, *Commentary on Matthew*, p.298).
-

5. Verses 40-42: "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."
 - a. "And ye will not come to me, that ye may have life. I receive not glory from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in yourselves" (ASV).
 - b. Our Lord did not come to receive worldly acclaim from men, even from prominent men such as some of these Jews with whom he was conversing. It is far better to have the approval of the Almighty than to be held in the highest esteem by mankind. Fame and good standing are as fallible as beauty and physical strength.
 - c. The Lord has established more than sufficient proof that he is the Messiah in the context, including the testimony of the Old Testament, which they professed to have carefully studied. Despite the overwhelming proof, they chose not to come to the Lord for salvation. They were too much dedicated to their religious traditions and exalted positions in society to accept Christ. These were more important to them than the eternal destiny of their souls.
 - d. Woods: It is as if the Lord had said, "You think that eternal life is found in the scriptures. In this you are correct. However, you are in error in thinking that this life is found there apart from me. It is there, but only as it points to me in whom alone is life. You will not come to me to find life; thus, in rejecting me you are rejecting the scriptures which testify of me. And so you are without life because you will not come to me for it" (p.112).
 - e. Doubtless they would have professed a great love for the God of Abraham, but our Lord knew that there was no love for God in their hearts. Love for the Almighty is shown by obeying his will. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).
 - 1) Our love for God makes obedience easier. A loving mother is quite willing and happy to sit up with her sick child throughout the night, or for many days. One who loves God will gladly keep on obeying him despite any setbacks or troubles he may encounter because of his loyalty.
 - 2) Acts 2:41: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."
 - 3) Matthew 5:10-12: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
 - 4) Acts 5:41: "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."
 - 5) Romans 8:18: "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."
6. Verse 43: "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."
 - a. Our Lord came to the earth by the authority of the Father. Without the power of the Godhead behind him, he would have been helpless among men.
 - b. God's great plan for the ages was established before time began; it has always been his intentions to send his Son into the world for the purposes which the Son accomplished. See Ephesians 3:1-11 and Romans 16:25-26.
 - c. Jesus plainly stated the greatness of the authority which the Father gave to him:
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth."
 - 2) Luke 24:44-53: "And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins

should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high. And he led them out until they were over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God.”

7. Verse 44: “How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?”
 - a. These men loved honor and preeminence from their compatriots which clearly was of greater impact to them than to have God’s good favor.
 - b. This was even true among those who professed some degree of faith in Christ.
 - 1) John 12:42-43: “Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God.”
 - 2) Faith can save only if it obeys (Jas. 2:14-26). “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:21-23).
8. Verses 45-47: “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?”
 - a. It would not be necessary for the Lord personally to accuse them to the Father; Moses had already done that in that he had presented an inspired revelation to them, which they had rejected. They liked to have people think they were great students and followers of Moses; they did not even believe what that grand old prophet and lawgiver had revealed.
 - b. Moses had written much in prophecy about Christ.
 - 1) Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Cf. “But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law” (Gal. 4:40).
 - 2) Genesis 12:3: “And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”
 - a) Genesis 22:18: “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Because thou hast obeyed my voice.”
 - b) Galatians 3:16: “Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”
 - 3) Numbers 21:9: “And Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it upon the standard: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived.”
 - 4) Deuteronomy 18:15-18: “Jehovah 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; according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.”
 - 5) Acts 3:22-23: “Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly

destroyed from among the people.”

- 6) Luke 24:44-48: “And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things.”
 - 7) Romans 10:5: “For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby.”
 - 8) Romans 16:25-26: “Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith.”
- c. Verse forty-seven is a natural conclusion drawn from the truths presented earlier in this context. Since the Jews had rejected what Moses had written about the Messiah, it was not possible for them to see that Jesus is the Christ.
- 1) They had developed some preconceptions about the Messiah and his work. He would not be of lowly birth; he would not be a teacher, but a great military leader like David. He would quickly begin building up armies and supplies, and laying plans for the destruction of the Romans. But our Lord never came to fight with literal weapons, but with the gospel (the sword of the Spirit).
 - 2) They thought he would re-establish the material kingdom of David and Solomon, a matter that was never in God’s plans.
 - a) Daniel 2:44: “And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”
 - b) Isaiah 2:2-3: “And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.”
 - c) Jeremiah 31:31-33: “Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
 - 3) Through the generations, the many Rabbis invented many doctrines, interpretations, traditions, thoughts and notions that had been accepted by first century Jews as truth. The Lord’s teachings did not conform to these false ideas, thus they rejected him.
- d. Woods:
- 1) “Only by renouncing their pride and vainglory and, as little children in humble trust and confidence, return to the word would they be able to find their way to the Christ. When Jesus said that Moses wrote of him we must not restrict this in meaning to any specific statements in Moses’ writings regarding Messiah. Everything he wrote had as its ultimate object the producing of faith in the Christ to come.
-

- 2) “The books of Romans, Galatians and especially Hebrews evidence the tremendous significance of the Christology of the Pentateuch. The confrontation began with an attempt on the part of these Jews to convict Jesus of violating the law of the sabbath as taught by Moses and it ended with Jesus having convicted them of rejecting the law and the lawgiver on whom they based their hope! The effect was tremendous!” [p.114].
-

John Chapter 6

A. John 6:1-14: The Feeding of the Five Thousand.

1. Verses 1-2: "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."
 - a. Following the events just related in the preceding chapter, our Lord crossed over the Sea of Galilee, which the author tell us is also known by some [Gentiles] as the Sea of Tiberias. However, we are not told how long afterwards it was when he passed over the Sea of Galilee.
 - b. In chapter five of John, the episodes which transpired occurred in Jerusalem, at the feast of Passover. In the next verse of our present chapter, John reports that the Passover Feast was again at hand. It seems clear that an entire year had passed between the closing of chapter five and the beginning of chapter six.
 - c. Johnson:
 - 1) If the view that I have adopted concerning the time of the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda is correct, John leaves a whole year of the ministry of Christ, that between the Lord's second passover and the third, which is named in the present chapter, to be supplied from the other Evangelists. That year was one of activity.
 - 2) Following the chronological table of Andrews, given in the Appendix, and referring to the three preceding Gospels, we trace the Savior from the passover in April to Galilee in the latter part of the month, where he enters vigorously upon his ministry, as though the fierce opposition from the religious authorities at the capital of the nation had only incited him to a more determined effort to win Galilee to the gospel.
 - 3) Making Capernaum his home, from thence he made the circuit of the province, teaching and healing. At an early period of the year occurred the miracle of the first draught of fishes in the Sea of Galilee (p.95).
 - d. Matthew tells us that just before he made this short sea voyage from the western to the eastern side of Galilee, he learned about the death of John the Baptizer (Matt. 14:1-13). This move would put him out of Herod's jurisdiction, and would give the Lord and his disciples a place and occasion for rest. "And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat" (Mark 6:31). This area is called a desert place, meaning that it was uninhabited.
 - e. But the great multitude which had witnessed his miracles before he took to the boat, followed him, by walking around the northern end of the Sea of Galilee. "And the people saw them going, and many knew them, and they ran together there on foot from all the cities, and outwent them" (Mark 6:33). Think of the unruly crowds crushing individuals at big stores, or at some music festivals.
 - f. When the Lord learned of John's fate, he decided to depart to an uninhabited area on the north edge of the sea. The multitude heard of his departure and traveled around the north end of Galilee to meet the Lord on the other side. Jesus was deeply moved by John's death. "The cruelty of the deed, the love which he bore to the victim, the thought of his own fate which it brought to mind, and the excitement of the people, all combined to stir within him a variety of emotions. These feelings must be held in abeyance, and the excitement of the people must be allowed to subside. To promote both of these ends, he sought the privacy of the desert, where, as the sequel shows (22), he intended to spend a long time in prayer" (McGarvey, p.130).
 - g. The desert place was not a waterless place, but an uninhabited place. Matthew calls it a desert but says there was grass there (14:19); Mark reports that "green grass" was there (6:39); John speaks of "much grass" (6:10). Luke locates the place as being near Bethsaida (9:10). Wide, level grassy places may still be seen there, but they were so far from the city as to make it impractical for the people to return there for food.
2. Verses 3-4: "And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. And the passover,

a feast of the Jews, was nigh.”

- a. When Jesus and his disciples reached the eastern shore, they all went up into a mountain and sat down to rest. This was one of the purposes of crossing Galilee.
 - b. We are told by John in our text that the Jewish Passover was at hand. There would be the need for them to make a journey to Jerusalem to participate in this annual religious gathering. They would need to obtain some rest and make the necessary arrangements to travel to Judaea, if they attended this particular Passover [Johnson thinks the Lord missed this feast].
 - c. Brother Johnson offers these interesting comments:
 - 1) This statement gives us a note of time and shows that the country was green with the freshness of spring. It was not far from April 1st, and the trees were in full leaf. The proximity of the greatest of the festivals that were celebrated at Jerusalem (the passover, which began that year A. D. 29, on April 17th), would give occasion for a large increase of visitors around Galilee, as the crowds gathered for the journey. The gathering at such a time of a crowd of 5,000 men, attracted by so famous a teacher, is not incredible. The mention of the passover is an aid to the chronology of the Lord's ministry.
 - 2) The feast named in John 5:1 could hardly be that of Purim, for then he would not have left Jerusalem before the passover, it following only about a month later. If that feast was a passover, we have now reached a period of two years from the passover at which he cleansed the temple (2: 18). It is clear that the feast, now so near at hand, was not attended by the Savior, the only one that he seems to have omitted during his ministry. Perhaps the plots to kill him when last in Jerusalem explain his absence.
3. Verses 5-6: “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.”
- a. Being at an elevated place, they could see the multitude approaching. Jesus and his company had crossed Galilee in a boat; the people in the great crowd had passed around the north end of the sea on foot.
 - b. These people had been with the Lord on the other side of the lake, and had now travelled a number of miles. Our Lord's first thought was how that large crowd could be fed. There were no towns near from which food could be purchased. The other accounts suggest that the disciples brought this need to the attention of Jesus: “And when even was come, the disciples came to him, saying, The place is desert, and the time is already past; send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food” (Matt. 14:15).
 - c. Jesus raised the question to Philip as a means of testing that disciple. The Master knew how he would solve that need.
4. Verses 7-9: “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?”
- a. The amount of money named by Philip represented a sizeable amount, more than the little band of twelve would likely have in their treasury. Since the day was far-spent, there would not be enough time for the multitude to return to the cities some mile away, around the north end of Galilee to buy food. This large number of people would doubtless have included many who were from other lands, on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover.
 - b. “This sum is mentioned mainly because it was an estimate of how much it would cost to give each one a little (John 6: 7). Some have supposed that this is the amount of money they had in their common treasury, but it seems rather to be mentioned as a sum beyond their ability to pay. It was equal to \$30 ... a large amount of money then, since a denarius, or ‘penny,’ was the hire of a day's labor. The penny, or denarius, was about seventeen cents, and was equivalent to about one dollar now, so that the whole sum would reach \$200” (Johnson, p.98). [Note: Johnson wrote this more
-

- than a hundred years ago].
- c. Andrew announced to the Lord that a boy in the crowd had five barley loaves and two small fish. That would not begin to feed such a multitude. It would appear that the disciples had forgotten how the Lord had produced the wine at the wedding feast at Cana (John 2).
5. Verses 10-11: “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.”
- a. At the Lord’s direction, the disciples had the men in the crowd to sit down; the men numbered about five thousand. The women and children would naturally find places to stand or sit, maybe close to their menfolks. The number of women and children may not have been as great as the males. Many of those present were from other lands and were enroute to Jerusalem for the Passover activities.
 - b. We are told that there was much grass in that place, even though Matthew calls it a “desert place” (Matt. 14:15). Desert in this case describes an uninhabited place, just as it does in Acts 8:26.
 - c. Jesus gave thanks for the bread, which was distributed to the disciples who past the food to each one in the great audience; he did likewise for the fish. Each person took as much of the food as he wanted; they was more than enough to go around.
 - d. Notice that Christ “gave thanks” for the food. In Matthew’s account [also in Mark] we are told that he “blessed” the food. To give thanks is to bless; to bless is to give thanks.
6. Verses 12-13: “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.”
- a. Each person ate as much as he wanted, but there was still much left over. Twelve baskets of the left-overs were collected. The Lord did not allow this extra food to be wasted. Jews who traveled used baskets as suitcases; this accounts for the presence of these containers in the deserted area.
 - b. The miracle wrought was in the multiplying of the original amounts; as each was served, the amount did not decrease. There was more than enough for everyone.
 - c. Mankind is known for being wasteful. Notice how full plates are left at buffet restaurants. Parents will fill (or allow their children to fill) plates to overflowing, with perhaps most of that food being thrown out. What happened to the discarded food after the feeding of this great host?
 - d. Half a century ago, in Memphis, when someone was clearing a heavy tract of timber, containing huge trees, they merely bulldozed those trees over. We saw no use being made of those trees; we did see some large fires used to get the remains out of the way. This was located across the road from Elvis Presley’s mansion. A large waste of good lumber.
 - e. During the Roman days, Italy was covered with heavy timber. When my wife and I lived in that country in the early 1960s, we almost never saw a patch of woods; the only one I recall was comprised of saplings. The biggest trees we saw where those which were allowed to grow beside certain roads, and these trees carried many scars indicating automobile wrecks.
 - f. Think of all the resources which are wasted to produce such things as liquor, beer, wine, tobacco, etc. These are used to the detriment of humanity. A nation’s natural resources can be squandered for the financial profit of a few. Think of all the fine farmland that is being destroyed today to build super-highways, unnecessary shopping centers, huge buildings for banking enterprises (which are paid for by consumers), night-clubs, gambling casinos, great temples used in the destruction of countless precious souls, etc.
7. Verse 14: “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.”
- a. The Old Testament had foretold of the coming of the great prophet, who is also known as the Messiah.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 18:15-16: “Jehovah 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; according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.”

- 2) John 1:21: “And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No.” John denied that he was that prophet, but pointed to Jesus as “the lamb of God” (John 1:29).
- 3) Acts 3:22-23: “Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.” Jesus of Nazareth is that great prophet, the Messiah.
- b. There were about five thousand men present who witnessed the great miraculous feeding; they were convinced that Jesus must be that prophet of whom Moses wrote. The taste of the supernaturally-produced food was still in their mouths; that had both seen and tasted the miracle. One aspect of their twisted notion may have been if they made him king, he could provide for all of their material needs by supernatural power; work could have been dispensed with; diseases could have dissipated; their lives would be without toil, trouble, or pain.

B. John 6:15-21: Jesus Walks on a Tempetuous Sea.

1. Verse 15: “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.”
 - a. Our Lord perceived the plan these men had conceived in their minds, to take Jesus by force, and cause him to be placed on a throne. Since the Passover was at hand, perhaps they intended to carry him to Jerusalem, where in the midst of a huge gathering of Jews, to manipulate him into a position of great leadership. This may give us the reason why the Lord did not go to Jerusalem for this Passover.
 - b. Nothing good could have come from such an operation. His rule was never to have been on earth over a material kingdom. Had such an effort been made to force him to take the rule, what would the Romans have done? His life would have been in danger, along with his disciples, a great tumult would have developed, forcing the Almighty to take action that was not intended. We wonder whether the Twelve might have joined with this mistaken plan.
 - c. The Kingdom of God was to be a spiritual rule, over the hearts of believing mankind.
 - 1) Daniel 2:44: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”
 - 2) Isaiah 2:2-3: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”
 - 3) Matthew 16:18-19: “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”
 - 4) Acts 2:29-36: “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed

forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

- 5) 1 Timothy 3:15: “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
 - 6) John 18:36: “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.”
 - 7) Colossians 1:13-14: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”
- d. To avoid the misguided plan this group had concocted, Jesus went again into the mountain. It seems he had descended from the mountain to some distance, to meet with the multitude on a more level area, where he seated them for the miraculous meal he provided. Now he withdrew back onto the mountain to pray.
 - e. Mark 6:45-46: “And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.”
2. Verses 16-17: “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.”
 - a. The disciples descended to the shore and entered the ship. This vessel was large enough to hold at least a dozen men, but was small enough to be propelled by oars. Likewise, it must have been equipped with one or more sails.
 - b. They did not know when the Lord would appear, so they started their trip to Capernaum, by way of Bethsaida (accord to Mark). Their plan might have been to wait for Jesus at that point. It is possible that they were to sail along the coast toward Bethsaida, expecting to see the Lord walking along the shoreline in that direction. The storm changed things.
 - c. Mark reports that Jesus had “constrained” his disciples to board the ship and start toward the other side of the lake. They could know that he sometimes prayed all night. How long he spent on this occasion in prayer we are not told, but he clearly had a plan about when, where and how to meet them. They were about to witness a scene that they had never seen or considered before—a man walking on the surface of a tempestuous sea!
 3. Verses 18-19: “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.”
 - a. Great storms are common on the Sea of Galilee, coming from the mountains of Lebanon to the north, or following the Jordan River valley from the south, to swoop down upon the lake.
 - b. McGarvey gives this report in his *Lands of the Bible*: “Suddenly, about midday, there was a sound of distant thunder, and a small cloud, ‘no bigger than a man’s hand,’ was seen rising over the heights of Lubl’eb to the west. In a few moments the cloud appeared to spread, and heavy black masses came rolling down the hills toward the lake. At this moment the breeze died away, there were a few minutes of perfect calm, during which the sun shone out with intense power, and the surface of the lake was smooth and even as a mirror. Tiberias, Mejdel, and other buildings stood out in sharp relief from the gloom behind them; but they were soon lost sight of as the thunder-gust swept past them, and, rapidly advancing across the lake, lifted the placid water into a bright sheet of foam.” [The original report was from a certain Captain Wilson].
 - c. Darkness had by now descended; the disciples had been rowing hard for some time and had only
-

- made a distance of three to three and a half miles [25-30 furlongs]. The lake is about twelve miles long (north to south) and about six miles wide. The storm was exceedingly fierce.
- d. We are told of the fear that had gripped the disciples. The storm was enough to create a measure of terror on their part. But now that saw some person walking on the mighty waves, drawing near to the ship.
 - 1) “And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid” (Mark 6:48-50).
 - 2) “In the present instance they tell us, that they regarded His Form moving on the water as 'a spirit,' and cried out for fear; and again, that the impression produced by the whole scene, even on them that had witnessed the miracle of the previous evening, was one of overwhelming astonishment. This walking on the water, then, was even to them within the domain of the truly miraculous, and it affected their minds equally, perhaps even more than ours, from the fact that in their view so much, which to us seems miraculous, lay within the sphere of what might be expected in the course of such a history” [Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Edersheim].
4. Verses 20-21: “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.”
- a. Knowing of their fear, he told them to dismiss their fright, for it was their Lord they saw. The sound of his voice offering comfort and courage quickly quieted their fear.
 - b. They welcomed him aboard the ship, and we are told that immediately the ship was at the landing site toward which they were heading. They were about half-way across the sea when the Lord entered the ship; immediately they reached their intended destination. This was another miracle. Coffman:
 - 1) However, this sign is a whole complex of supernatural occurrences: (1) Christ's knowledge of the disciples' condition, (2) his "seeing them" at night in a storm (Mark 6:48), (3) Jesus' walking on the sea, (4) Peter's walking on the sea, (5) Christ's rescue of Peter, and (6) the sudden cessation of the wind. This interpreter supposes that it is fully in keeping with the whole episode to construe this place as teaching that the boat instantaneously, or nearly so, came to its appointed haven. One more supernatural element in an episode with so many others could do no harm.
 - 2) “This wonder contrasts dramatically with another wonder of stilling the tempest (Matthew 8:23-27). In that situation, Christ was on board; here he was not. There he was asleep; here he was in the mountain praying. There they were afraid of the winds and waves; here they were afraid of Jesus. There he rebuked the winds and waves; here they responded to his will without an audible command. In both situations, the only safety of the disciples was in the will of Christ.”
 - c. Matthew includes another event that took place during this episode: “And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God” (Matt. 14:26-33).
 - 1) They saw him as he neared the boat and cried out in fear; to calm their fears, he identified himself. Peter wanted to walk out to meet him; Jesus assented. Peter’s faith turned to fear and
-

he started to sink, before reaching the Lord. The Savior lifted him up. The wind ceased immediately on their entering the boat. This so impressed them they confessed his divinity.

- 2) "The incident shows that fear is a source of doubt and an enemy of faith; and it illustrates the fact that those who possessed miraculous gifts could only succeed in working miracles when their faith was in lively exercise" (McGarvey pp.132f).
- 3) They quickly recognized his voice though his form was indistinct at first. By simply saying, "It is I; be not afraid," he dispelled their fear. "From this warm and encouraging message to them the disciples lost their fear and rejoiced again to be in the presence of their Saviour" (Woods, p.121)

C. John 6:22-33: The Multitude Sought For Jesus.

1. Verses 22-23: "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)."
 - a. The next day, the people who had been on the eastern side of Galilee, knew that the only boat on that side of the sea was the one in which the Lord's disciple had taken the evening before. They also knew that Jesus had not gone with them in the ship.
 - b. Tiberias was located on the southern end of Lake Galilee, not far from where Jesus fed the big crowd. Boats had come from that city, following the feeding of the five thousand. In these vessels, many of the previous day's multitude were transported across the sea to Capernaum. These extra boats may have come to find passengers; or they may have just been late getting to the place where Jesus taught and fed the people.
 - c. We are again told that the Lord had given thanks for the food which was served to the multitude. He was the Creator (John 1:1ff), but he knew that the Father deserved the expression of gratitude for his gracious provision of the food.
 - d. Tiberias was the largest city on the sea, built by Herod, and named after Tiberius Caesar. Herod Antipas usually occupied it as his capital. It was a place the Lord never entered, though often near it. It is explained that vessels came from there to the place where Christ had fed the five thousand, by which many of them returned to Capernaum. Others had probably dispersed to the neighboring towns and villages, but Capernaum was "on the other side of the sea." [See Johnson, p.102].
2. Verses 24-25: "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?"
 - a. Discovering that neither Jesus nor his disciples were on the eastern side of the sea, they boarded the shipping now present and sailed to Capernaum.
 - b. They found the Lord on the western side of Galilee, and their natural curiosity prompted them to ask when [and how] he crossed the sea. He did not satisfy their prying question.
 - c. Tiberias:
 - 1) About the middle of the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, the mountains fall back from the coast, and leave a roughly crescent-shaped plain, about 2 miles in length. The modern city of Tiberias (Tabariyeh) stands at the northern extremity, where the ground begins to rise; and the Hot Baths (Hammath) at the south end.
 - 2) On the southern part of this plain Herod Antipas built a city (circa 26 A.D.), calling it "Tiberias" in honor of the emperor who had befriended him. In clearing the ground and digging foundations certain tombs were disturbed (Ant, XVIII, ii, 3). It may have been the graveyard of old Hammath. The palace, the famous "Golden House," was built on the top of a rocky hill which rises on the West to a height of some 500 ft. The ruin is known today as Qasr bint el-Melek, "Palace of the King's Daughter." The strong walls of the city can be traced in almost their entire length on the landward side. Parts are also to be seen along the shore, with towers

at intervals which guarded against attack by sea. The ruins cover a considerable area. There is nothing above ground older than Herod's city. Only excavation can show whether or not the Talmud is right in saying that Tiberias was built on the site of Rakkath and Chinnereth (Neubauer, *Geog. du Talmud*, 208).

- 3) The Jews were shy of settling in a city built over an old cemetery; and Herod had trouble in finding occupants for it. A strange company it was that he ultimately gathered of the "poorer people," foreigners, and others "not quite freemen"; and these were drawn by the prospect of good houses and land which he freely promised them.
- 4) With its stadium, its palace "with figures of living things" and its senate, it may be properly described as a Greek city, although it also contained a proseuche, or place of prayer, for the Jews (BJ, II, xxi, 6; Vita, XII, 54, etc.). This accounts for it figuring so little in the Gospels. In his anxiety to win the favor of the Jews, Herod built for them "the finest synagogue in Galilee"; but many years were to elapse before it should become a really Jewish city. [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Biblesoft, Inc.].

d. Capernaum:

- 1) The woe spoken by the Master against this great city has been fulfilled to the uttermost (Matt 11:23; Luke 10:15). So completely has it perished that the very site is a matter of dispute today. In Scripture Capernaum is not mentioned outside the Gospels. When Jesus finally departed from Nazareth, He dwelt in Capernaum (Matt 4:13) and made it the main center of His activity during a large part of His public ministry. Near by He called the fishermen to follow Him (Mark 1:16), and the publican from the receipt of custom (Matt 9:9, etc.). It was the scene of many "mighty works" (Matt 11:23; Mark 1:34). Here Jesus healed the centurion's son (Matt 8:5, etc.), the nobleman's son (John 4:46), Simon Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:31, etc.), and the paralytic (Matt 9:1, etc.); cast out the unclean spirit (Mark 1:23, etc.); and here also, probably, He raised Jairus' daughter to life (Mark 5:22, etc.). In Capernaum the little child was used to teach the disciples humility, while in the synagogue Jesus delivered His ever-memorable discourse on the bread of life (John 6).
 - 2) From the notices in the Gospels we gather that Capernaum was a city of considerable importance. Some think that the words "shalt thou be exalted," etc. (Matt 11:23; Luke 10:15), mean that it stood on an elevated site. Perhaps more naturally they refer to the excessive pride of the inhabitants in their city. It was a customs station, and the residence of a high officer of the king (Matt 9:9; John 4:46, etc.). It was occupied by a detachment of Roman soldiers, whose commander thought the good will of the people worth securing at the expense of building for them a synagogue (Matt 8:5; Luke 7:5). It stood by the sea (Matt 4:13) and from John 6:17 ff (compare Matt 14:34; Mark 6:53), we see that it was either in or near the plain of Gennesaret. [*ibid.*].
3. Verses 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."
- a. NKJ: Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."
 - b. The Master could easily read their true motives. They had been searching for him since they crossed the sea, but he knew that they were not seeking to learn the truth he taught, but for the food with which he satisfied their physical appetite.
 - c. The miracles were the tools the Lord used to confirm his identity and prove his message as being from God. Their interest was not primarily in the truth he taught, but the food he provided—food for the body rather than nourishment for the spirit. Compare: Mark 16:15-20; Hebrews 2:1-4.
-

- d. The order of importance ought to be (1) seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and (2) the physical needs would then be provided: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33).
- 1) *First* gives the order of our diligent search. Above all things, that which Christ here identifies are to be preeminent in our activities of life. Nothing is to equal or to surpass in importance the items he names; these are to be first in importance and in the order of our searching.
 - 2) The kingdom of God is the church of Christ (Matt. 16;16-19; Dan. 2:44; Isa. 2:2-3; 1 Tim. 3:15; Acts 2; Col. 1:13-14; Eph. 1:3; Eph. 5). The common notion of modern religious men is that the church is unimportant. They fail to see that the church and the kingdom are one and the same. If they could learn this truth, then the Lord's statement would become as meaningful to them as it is to us. It is of such great importance that it must be placed first in our priorities. If one puts the church first, will he stay away from the assemblies? Will he refuse to give? Will he work for it? Will he live right?
 - 3) God's righteousness is placed on the same plane as the kingdom. They are joined by the conjunction *and*. It is in the church that we are able to work righteousness and be fully obedient to the will of God. If we do thus, then all these things (food, clothing, etc.) will be thrown in as an added blessing. The primary blessings are spiritual; these material essentials are given *to boot*.
- e. The kingdom [the Lord's church] must be sought. In our sorely divided religious world, where there are so many religious institutions calling for our attention, the church of Christ must be sought.
- f. Jesus states in verse twenty-seven the supreme importance for seeking “food” which endures unto everlasting life. Filling the needs of the physical body is of lesser importance to tending to the needs of the soul.
- g. God has placed his seal of approval on his Son, Jesus Christ. “Sealing is the mark of approval, of authority. A legal document must bear the seal of the State to give it force. The Father had commissioned, authorized, and stamped his seal upon the work of the Son. His miracles were a *divine seal*. In the East a document was always authenticated by the seal of the maker, instead of by the signature of a name, as with us” (Johnson, p.103).
- 1) Acts 2:22-24: “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”
 - 2) Acts 2:36: “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”
4. Verses 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.”
- a. Some in the audience raised the question, “What shall we do in order to perform the works of God?” It appears that there were some of the Jews present who sincerely wanted to do right. Jesus had just told them to seek the spiritual food which would nourish their eternal souls. They wanted to know how to do this.
 - b. The Law of Moses had required certain works of them; the traditions of the rabbis placed human requirements on them. The Lord had spoken of laboring for literal food, and told them rather to work to obtain the food which endures to everlasting life. But how were they to do this? They understood that working the works God requires was the point at hand.
 - c. The Lord's answer: Believe on him whom God has sent.
 - 1) 1 John 3:23: “And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son
-

Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.”

2) Woods:

- a) Belief is thus said to be a work of God. Some, mistaking Paul's teaching that salvation is not "of works," assume that this excludes baptism as a condition of salvation on the ground that it is something one does. However, the "works" which Paul excludes from God's plan to save are those of which one might "boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9); James includes works, as does Peter (James 2:20-24; Acts 10:34, 35); the "works" which Paul excludes are the works of the law; the "works" which James and Peter include are the commandments of the Lord (Matt. 7:21). To exclude all work from the plan of salvation is to exclude faith which is by our Lord affirmed to be a work. Jesus joined faith and work here; denominational theologians seek to separate them.
 - b) Men who truly believe will anxiously seek to determine all that the Lord desires of them and do this; the disposition to question the validity of some commands of the Lord and to classify them as non-essential is not genuine belief; it is, on the contrary, distrust and disregard, presumption of the highest order. Faith—belief—is a work of God in the sense it is that which God has ordered man to do. This does not mean that God requires nothing more than belief; it teaches us that without it all else is worthless since all other responses to God's will results because of it. (p.125).
5. Verses 30-31: “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.”
- a. Jesus had fed five thousand men, plus however many women and children which may have been present. To any honest mind who had seen this miracle, and many of these same people ate the food supernaturally produced, that mighty sign should have been more than sufficient to convince them of the Lord's identity and power. But these people asked for another sign.
 - b. They brought up the subject of their ancestors having eaten in the wilderness, a continuing sign that lasted forty years. There is a subtle implication in their comment; you fed a few thousand; Moses fed a few million over a whole generation! Your sign is puny. What better sign can you give to cause us to believe in you?
 - c. If one sign which clearly was miraculous could not convince them, a hundred other signs would have had little more effect on them. Did they expect Jesus constantly to provide them with fabulous, sumptuous feasts to keep them loyal? Were they dissatisfied with mere bread and fish?
 - d. Our Lord perceived their true inner condition. They were not interested in the truth he gave them, truth proved by miraculous works, but they wanted to be regularly fed with good food, without having to work to produce or serve it.
 - e. John 6:26-27: “When the multitude therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they themselves got into the boats, and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled” (ASV).
6. Verses 32-33: “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.”
- a. It was not Moses who produced the manna. They were not comparing Jesus with Moses, but with God. It was the Angel of the Lord; the gift was from the Almighty. He sent enough to feed everyone, and he provided enough on Friday so that none had to be gathered on the Sabbath Day. That food could be prepared to serve in various ways, and was tasty and nutritious to those who were thankful.
- 1) Exodus 16:15: “And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD
-

hath given you to eat.”

- 2) Nehemiah 9:15: “And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them.”
 - 3) Psalm 78:24: “And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.”
- b. After a while, there were some disgruntled people who said they “hated this light bread.” “And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (Num. 21:4-9).
 - c. “These Jews were in error on two matters: (1) It was not Moses, but God, who provided the manna; (2) the manna was not the "true bread" from heaven but only a type of it. The "true" bread, that which was real and lasting, in contrast with the manna which soon perished (Ex. 16:19, 20), was the gift of God and it was he who stood before them” (Woods, p.104).
 - d. “He here defines the marks of the true bread: 1. It comes from heaven; 2. It bestows life upon the soul and sustains it; 3. It is for the world, not for a single race. The manna did not last longer than a single day; all who ate it died; it was for a single nation. These things are not true of the bread of God. God feeds his people, not with bread made on earth, but prepared by his own hands from heavenly materials” (Johnson, p.105).
 - e. The Lord made a similar statement regarding water to the Samaritan lady: “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. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw” (John 4:13-15).
 - f. As Ponce de Leon sought for a fountain of youth—without success—so those who may seek to find some magical fragment of food that would give eternal life are also doomed to failure.
- D. John 6:34-42: The Bread of Life.
1. Verses 34-35: “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.”
 - a. NKJ: When Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."
 - b. Jesus had been speaking about nourishment for the soul, not the physical body. In their materialistic mentality, they failed to see this truth. Thus, they asked for an unending supply of food for the table.
 - c. He replied that he was the bread of life. He is the only source of the food that nourishes the soul.
 - 1) 1 Peter 2:1-2: “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”
 - 2) Hebrews 5:12-14: “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need
-

- of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”
- 3) Acts 20:32: “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”
 - d. Johnson: Jesus says, I am the bread of life. They ask for this bread. He answers, It is here; I am that bread. The work of God is that you receive it by believing upon him whom he hath sent. He that cometh to me shall never hunger. He that cometh shall not hunger; he that believeth shall not thirst. It is thus shown that faith is the power that brings us to Christ. We come to him by believing. They who thus come will have their souls satisfied, and they who abide with him shall not hunger or thirst more. "Coming" and "believing in" are clearly equivalent to "eating" and "drinking."
 - e. Brother Woods makes these wise observations:
 - 1) His listeners asked for bread; not that which like the manna soon perished; this, they could provide for themselves. They wanted that which would "evermore" be available and without the need of replenishing. That bread was available and was now before them. They could appropriate it through receiving Jesus as Lord and by believing on him. Those who thus did would never again hunger or thirst. To "come" to Christ is to acknowledge him as Messiah; and to believe "on" him, is to trust him fully and comply wholeheartedly with his will. (Matt. 7:21.)
 - 2) Advocates of the doctrine of justification by faith only sometimes cite this passage in an effort to show that salvation is promised to those who only believe since baptism is not mentioned. Should we conclude that because repentance is not mentioned that it is also non-essential? One might with equal reason so affirm. Though not mentioned it is implied as are also all other commandments of the Lord. (1 John 2:4.) [p.127].
 - f. Woods:
 - 1) The phrases "believeth on the Son," and "obeyeth not the Son," are put in contrast and stand as exact opposites. That is, to believe on the Son is to obey the Son, "believeth" here signifying a faith that acts. Mental assent is not true biblical faith and is nowhere reckoned as such. Belief blesses only when it leads its possessor to obedience.
 - a) Faith, apart from works, is dead. "Works," as used by James, are the commandments of the Lord. (James 2:14; 3:13.) One who truly believes will not scoff at the duties which are before him, nor will he seek to avoid them; on the contrary, he will find pleasure in doing them, knowing that he is thereby pleasing the Lord....
 - b) The ancient and excellent MacKnight commented on these words of John, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," by noting, "Hath a right to it, and is as sure of obtaining it as if he had it already in possession." (Harmony of the Gospels, vol. 1, page 107.) This, as we have shown in much detail, in our comments at John 5:24, is exactly what the phrase signifies. "Shall not see life," means shall neither possess nor enjoy it. "Life," in the foregoing phrase, is the eternal life promised the obedient believer at the end of the age.
 - c) Life, as thus contemplated is vastly more than perpetual existence; it involves and embodies all of these wonderful characteristics we can but dimly visualize here but which await the faithful in full flower in the world to come.
 - d) Such was the inspired view of the great apostle to the Gentiles: "To them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life" (Rom. 2:7.) It is to be sought for with patience here and to be realized when this life is over. (Mark 10:30; Titus 1:2.) On all those who will not believe and obey the Son the wrath of God (the divine displeasure) abides. [pp.75f].
 2. Verses 36-38: “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.”
 - a. These Jews had seen Jesus; they had heard his gracious words and had seen the miracle he wrought
-

in the context. If one miracle did not convince them of his identity, a hundred more supernatural signs would have had no effect on them.

- 1) If one today rejects the gospel the first time he hears it, a second presentation is not likely to move him. "No one has the right to hear the gospel more than once" (*anonymous*). But nevertheless, even if this is true, we are more than willing to help a person learn the truth if possible; only when it is obvious that he repudiated it, do we turn from him.
 - a) Matthew 7:6: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."
 - b) Acts 13:44-46: "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 - 2) It is likely that we waste too much time on hard hearts, but it is also true that individuals can have their inner hardness softened by time and sorrowful experience. A gentleman in advanced years, whose heart had been turned away from the gospel when he was young man, by an ignorant and unthinking elder in the local congregation; but over a period of time, with careful instruction given with kindness and patience, this old person obeyed the gospel and remained faithful.
 - b. Compare Hebrews 3:18: "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?"
 - 1) God swore to those who refused to believe (obey) his word that they would not be permitted to enter into the rest he intended (the blessings of Canaan).
 - 2) Exodus 14:30-31: "Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses." These same people who believed (obeyed) the Lord on this occasion, later became guilty of unbelief (were disobedient).
 - 3) Obedience is especially emphasized in the book of Hebrews. This is seen in the bold affirmation of Hebrews 5:8-9; it is illustrated in the lives of great men and women of the Old Testament, as listed in Hebrews 11. In the present verse, a word is used which is properly translated *obedience* by the ASV and NKJ:
 - a) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - b) Hebrews 3:18: "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient?" (ASV).
 - c) Hebrews 3:18: "And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?" (NKJ).
 - c. Coffman on verse 37:
 - 1) All that which the Father giveth me ... refers to all who shall be saved, none being excluded, so long as they truly come to Christ, that being the thrust of the second clause. Significantly, this verse makes no reference to faith like that in the previous verse; but this does not exclude faith, the verses being supplementary each to the other.
 - 2) Thus, one must believe and come to Jesus in order to be saved. Coming to Jesus is equivalent to entering his kingdom; and entering that requires one to be born of water and of the spirit (John 3:5). Coming to Jesus therefore means being born again.
 - 3) No subjective experience whatever can be substituted for the new birth. "Coming" is something that a man does, not something that he thinks, believes, or feels.
-

- d. God is not a respecter of persons. If he had arbitrarily selected humanity by individuals to either go to Heaven or Gehenna, without their having anything to say about the issue, he would surely have been a respecter of persons. God did not predetermine the individuals who would enter Canaan—each one decided that for himself [by his obedience or disobedience].
- e. Scriptural arguments against the theory of unconditional election.
 - 1) God gave man freedom to choose.
 - a) Adam and Eve had that choice but made the wrong decision.
 - b) Genesis 2:16-17: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”
 - c) Genesis 3:6: “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”
 - 2) Every responsible person has the choice to obey or disobey:
 - a) James 1:13-15: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”
 - b) 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.”
 - c) Joshua 24:15: “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”
 - d) Ezekiel 18:31-32: “Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.”
 - 3) God is impartial. He is not a respecter of persons.
 - a) Acts 10:34-35: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”
 - b) Romans 2:11: “For there is no respect of persons with God.”
 - c) 1 Peter 1:17: “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”
 - d) Romans 11:22: “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”
 - e) But if the theory of Unconditional Election is true, Jehovah coldly condemned the non-elect to spend eternity in *Gehenna* without giving them any choice in the matter; at the same time, he will bestow eternal bliss in Heaven to the elect without giving them any obligations to meet. This would be rank partiality! Such is completely alien to the nature of our Heavenly Father!
 - 4) Calvinism tries to explain this away under the guise of the sovereignty of God, that God has the right to save or condemn according to his own will. But this puts God at odds with himself; he affirms many times in the Bible that he is not a respecter of persons. The Almighty could not be true to his own word or nature while showing the worst kind of partiality. God does not want anyone to be lost; he wants everyone to be saved.
 - a) 1 Timothy 2:4: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the

- truth.”
- b) 2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
- 5) God initiated the plan by which to effect man’s salvation, but his plan places some responsibilities on the individual needing salvation.
- a) 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.”
 - b) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - c) Matthew 11:28-30: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
 - d) Philippians 2:12: “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”
 - e) Acts 10:34-35: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”
- 6) One of the basic truths of the gospel is that it is for every accountable person (Mark 16:15-16), but that not all will obey the gospel (Rom. 10:13-18). Each one must make the personal choice.
- f. Our Lord declared that he came down from heaven to do the will of the Father. His home from eternity had ever been with his Father in Heaven. He did not live on some planet in our solar system, or in any other part of the material universe. All things material, including the universe, came into being at the beginning of time; before the beginning, there was nothing material that existed; and after time ends (at the second coming of Christ), nothing material will exist. See also Matthew 24:35 and 2 Peter 3:8-13.
- g. The greatest obligation any responsible person on earth can have is to be a willing follower of the will of Almighty God.
- 1) John 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.
 - 2) Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
 - 3) Romans 10:18-21: “But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”
3. Verse 39: “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.”
- a. NKJ: “This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:39-40).
 - b. Notice: “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" (John 10:27-29).

- 1) Those who are the sheep of Christ (Christians), hear his voice.
 - 2) His sheep, follow him.
 - 3) His sheep have the promise of eternal life.
 - 4) His sheep will never perish.
 - 5) No man is able to pluck them out of the Lord's hand.
- c. The certain conclusions for the above passage:
- 1) His sheep must continue to listen to his voice of the Lord.
 - 2) His sheep must continue to follow the Lord.
 - 3) If these two premises are adhered to, then the security of the saint is certain.
- d. Therefore, those who come to Christ [they are sincere believers who continue to live in obedience to the word of Christ].
- 1) 1 John 1:6-10: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - 4) Romans 8:12-13: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." See also Hebrews 10:26-31 and 2 Peter 1:5-12.
- e. Some thoughts regarding *the last day*. "That day" is often used in the New Testament in reference to the last day, the day of Judgment. It is used without "anything further to designate it, because it is *the* great day; 'the day for which all other days were made.' It seems to have been so much the object of thought and conversation among the early Christians, that the apostle supposed that he would be understood by merely referring to it as '*that day*;' that is, the day which they were always preaching about, and talking about, and thinking about" (Barnes, p.217).
- 1) Matthew 7:22: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"
 - 2) Matthew 24:36: "But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."
 - 3) Mark 13:32: "But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."
 - 4) Luke 10:12: "But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city."
 - 5) Luke 21:34: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and *so* that day come upon you unawares."
 - 6) 1 Thessalonians 5:4: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."
 - 7) 2 Thessalonians 1:10: "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."
 - 8) 2 Thessalonians 2:3: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*,
-

- except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."
- 9) 2 Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." The righteous Judge will provide Paul with that crown of righteousness. God executes the judgment through his Son.
 - f. What one person does through his agent, can be properly attributed to him.
 - 1) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - 2) John 5:22,27: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son....And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."
 - 3) The judgment will be just (righteous). "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" (John 5:30). "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. 6:10).
 - g. The second coming of Christ and the Judgment are not events that fill us with terror, if we love him and are faithful.
 - 1) Luke 21:19: "In your patience ye shall win your souls" (ASV).
 - 2) 1 John 4:17-18: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."
 - h. The early saints longed for, and even prayed for, the return of Christ. Their priorities were right; their faith was strong; and their determination was to gain heaven. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is....He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:12, 22, ASV).
4. Verse 40: "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."
 - a. There have been unnumbered generations who have lived on earth since the first day of Genesis chapter one. Only God knows the total number of days that have passed since that first day, and only God knows when the last day will occur.
 - b. Since he affirms that the last day will eventually come, we may confidently know that verity to be true! This will be the final day of human history.
 - c. The will of the Father is paramount. That will is that "everyone who sees the Son and believes upon him," thus coming to, following and abiding in him, feeding upon him as the soul's food, should have eternal life, and that in the resurrection day Christ should raise him from the grave. [Johnson, p108].
 - d. "It is God's will that all who will obey Jesus should have eternal life. These Jesus will raise up at the last day. They have the faculties to see and believe that God desires them to use them in believing the truths he presents them" (Lipscomb). Those who refuse condemn their own souls.
 5. Verses 41-42: "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?"
 - a. The unbelieving Jews in the audience were disconcerted over the Lord's statement about being the bread which came down from heaven. They knew from the inspired message of the Old Testament about the manna which God send down to feed the Israelite people in the wilderness; this they likely had always believed. But they would not believe that Jesus had come down from heaven.
 - b. Much discussion was still to come about partaking of the flesh and blood of Jesus. We will learn more as the chapter continues about this figurative meal.
-

- c. These Jews had known Mary and Joseph, the parents of Jesus; they had observed Jesus as he grew up in their midst. [They were not aware that the conception of Jesus was a miraculous operation, in which there was no participation on the part of Joseph]. If they had known and understood the prophetic statements by Isaiah, perhaps they would have been moved to make further inquiry about this miracle-worker. See Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-25, and Galatians 4:4-5. [Of course, the book of Matthew was not written until sometime after the present discussion took place].
- d. "Most commentators detect a break in these verses from the situation earlier in the chapter, indicating that the discussion from here to the end of the chapter took place in the synagogue, where official members of the Jewish establishment took up the argument against Christ. If so, this would account for the more hostile trend of the conversation (John 6:59)" (Coffman).

E. John 6:43-59: I Am The Bread of Life.

1. Verse 43: "Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves."
 - a. Murmur: To mutter, murmur, grumble, say anything in a low tone" (Eng., "gong"), an onomatopoeic word, representing the significance by the sound of the word, as in the word "murmur" itself, is used of the laborers in the parable of the householder, Matt 20:11; of the scribes and Pharisees, against Christ, Luke 5:30; of the Jews, John 6:41,43, of the disciples, 6:61; of the people, 7:32 (of debating secretly); of the Israelites, 1 Cor 10:10 (twice), where it is also used in a warning to believers. In the papyri it is used of the "murmuring" of a gang of workmen, also in a remark interposed, while the Emperor (late 2 nd cent. A.D.) was interviewing a rebel, that the Romans were then "murmuring" (Moulton and Milligan, Vocab.). [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words].
 - b. Our Lord's statement was intended as a rebuke. They perceived themselves as being in good standing with God, and had no need of the bread offered by Jesus. And further, they did not believe that this Jesus, who grew up in their midst, could fulfill what he was claiming.
 - c. The evil practice of murmuring has not ended. Multitudes are well-versed in its use. Many in the Lord's church are prone to this wickedness.
 - 1) Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
 - 2) Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
 - 3) Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
 - 4) Proverbs 23:7: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee."
 - 5) Our words are an index to our heart. Things we speak are things which were drawn from our hearts. If we fill our minds with ugly words, thoughts, motives, stories, those kinds of things will find their way through our mouths. Vulgar words, profanity, ribald stories, and the like, are prohibited; these words are corrupt and corrupting; they hurt ourselves and others, and do a great disservice to the cause of Christ.
 2. Verses 44-45: "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."
 - a. ASV: "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me.
 - b. NKJ: No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.
 - c. His present audience was unwilling to partake of the spiritual bread which our Lord was offering. They did not think they needed it and did not believe he could provide it. He told them that it was
-

- impossible for them or anyone else to come to him unless the Father exerted some kind of drawing power upon the individual.
- d. But that drawing power was not arbitrarily extended. There is no respect of person with God; he does not show favoritism. That power is provided by the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who will believe (Rom. 1:16-17).
 - 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 2) Matthew 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - 3) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." [Romans 10:13-18; Acts 2:36-41].
 - e. All are invited but the majority is unwilling to be drawn. In the Parable of the Sower, three-fourths of the seed sown did not bring forth fruit; only the seed which fell on good ground became productive. Many will pass through the wide gate and follow the broad way that leads to destruction; the "few" will find the strait gate and follow the narrow way that leads to life.
 - 1) Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - 2) Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - f. Woods: Some, like these unbelieving Jews, are not drawn, because they do not will to do so; it has been well said that a magnet draws iron, but not all objects are drawn by magnets, because all are not iron! Similarly, one must be of the right disposition and have the proper response to the drawing power of the Father which he exercises through the gospel. This is shown to be true in the verse following which Jesus supported by teaching from the prophets. (Isa. 54:13; Jer. 31:33, 34; Joel 3:16, 17; Micah 4:1.) [p.130].
 - g. Let's suppose that you hold a heavy hammer in your hand; if you turn it loose, the power of gravity draws that object to the earth. But as long as you hold on to the object, the power of your arm keeps it from being drawn away. As long as a sinner's hard heart will not believe and obey the gospel, that impervious heart repels the drawing power of the gospel.
 - h. Those who have been taught by the Father, and have learned, come to Christ. Notice that it is through a teaching process. The gospel is taught; the gospel is believed; and the gospel is obeyed.
 - 1) Acts 17:30-34: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."
 - 2) Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
 - i. This process was foretold in the prophets:
 - 1) Isaiah 54:13: "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children."
 - 2) Jeremiah 31:33-34: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every
-

- man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”
- 3) Joel 3:16-17: “The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.”
 - 4) Micah 4:1: “But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.”
 - 5) Isaiah 2:2-5: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.”
- j. The final result of a penitent believer obeying the gospel in baptism, and remaining loyal to Christ, is that he will be resurrected to eternal life at the last day.
3. Verses 46-48: “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.” NKJ: Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life.
 - a. The Lord adds that no man has seen the Father. God is a spirit being, which the physical eyes of man cannot see. No man has seen God at any time. Since each of the three members of the Godhead is referred to as “God” [deity], then no man has seen either of them in their divine nature; human eyes cannot see a spirit being. The word "Godhead" literally means "Godhood." The suffix "hood" means "state, quality, condition" (Webster's New World Dictionary). *Motherhood* is a term which describes the state, quality, or condition pertaining to being a mother. *Childhood* is a term describing the state, quality, or condition which pertains to being a child. So with *parenthood*, *priesthood*, and *brotherhood*. "Godhood" describes the quality, state, or condition pertaining to being God, having divinity.
 - 1) The Father has this Godhood: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:19-20).
 - 2) Christ has this Godhood: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).
 - 3) The Holy Spirit has this Godhood: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3-5). Notice that the Holy Spirit is called "God."
 - 4) The divine nature cannot be seen with physical eyes.
 - a) John 4:24: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
 - b) Luke 24:39: “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”
-

- c) John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."
 - d) Exodus 33:20: "And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."
 - e) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."
- b. Christ has seen the Father; he was with him in the Eternity before time began; at his ascension, he took his rightful seat at the right hand of the Father.
- c. Woods:
- 1) These words were uttered by the Lord to guard against a misapprehension of his reference to being taught by the Father. They were not to conclude that in order to be taught by the Father they had to see God. No mere man has ever done this. (1 John 4:12.) The teaching which the Father did and does today is through his chosen representatives, the inspired writers of the Bible. Jesus had seen the Father because he came from heaven and from the most intimate association with him there. (John 1:18.)
 - 2) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life.—This is a return to, and an affirmation of the basic proposition involved in the discussion with the Jews. In declaring himself to be "the bread of life," he stated figuratively what he now affirms actually; in him is life; this life is appropriated only by believing on him. On the significance of believing on him see the comments on John 3:16. When and where eternal life becomes an actual possession is discussed in detail in the comments on John 5:24.
 - 3) Jesus had shown that life eternal is obtainable only by believing on him. Literal life is sustained by material bread; spiritual life by the bread which comes down from heaven. Jesus is that bread; there is no other. Their fathers—Jewish ancestors—were fed manna in their wilderness wanderings but this supported their physical life only and eventually they died.
 - 4) The "bread which comes down out of heaven," sustains the inner man and provides spiritual life ultimately springing into life eternal in the world to come. (Titus 1:2.) These Jews to whom our Lord talked had spoken of the manna which God sent to their fathers (verse 31), and evidently they believed that this manifestation showed divine favor which these descendants still claimed.
 - 5) How different, how vastly different was it from that which Jesus offered. True, the fathers were miraculously fed; but, this was for the body only and for a brief period; all were now dead. To eat of the bread which comes down "out of heaven," is to embrace the spiritual life which he who is its source offers.
 - 6) Those who eat thereof shall not die. This does not mean that those who obey Christ escape physical death; the life which he offers is spiritual, and thus the death those who escape by accepting him is also spiritual. [p.131].
- d. The belief on Christ which results in everlasting life is a faith that continues alive and well and is regularly being expressed in obedience. See John 10:27-29: "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." Review comments under verse thirty-nine of this chapter.
4. Verses 49-51: "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."
- a. God supernaturally sustained their physical lives by the provision of manna. The comments below are from author's book on Exodus 16:4: "Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain
-

bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no."

- 1) God's dealings with mankind have been complex. Not only did he intend to feed the Israelites by giving them bread from heaven, but he also used this procedure as background for a great spiritual lesson taught by Jesus: See John 6:29-43.
 - 2) The manna given in the wilderness was a type of the true bread from heaven, God's Son. Some scholars try to explain away the miracle of the manna, or at least lessen its power, by saying it was the natural produce of certain vegetation in the wilderness. But in this first promise about it, God said he would cause it to rain down from heaven. If it had been produced naturally the people would not have been dumbfounded about what it was. And it would not have made a sudden appearance or ceased abruptly when they came to Canaan (vs. 35).
 - 3) The similarities between the manna and Christ are striking:
 - a) Both came from heaven.
 - b) They each gave life.
 - c) They represented the only hope available.
 - d) They both were meant for all.
 - e) Manna was not at first recognized by Israel and Christ was not known by them.
 - f) The manna represented a test for Israel just as Christ represents a test for all men.
 - b. The Lord said that he would provide the bread which they would gather daily at a certain rate, and that this would be a test for them.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 8:2-3: "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and* to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 8:16-17: "Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of *mine* hand hath gotten me this wealth."
 - c. A test was also involved in his allowing them to go hungry. They should have plainly seen that they must trust God for their provisions of food; they murmured instead. God humbled them by letting them suffer hunger, and he further tried them by teaching them the importance of trusting him. They had to depend on the Lord for their very lives and everything they needed. Compare: "Give us this day our daily bread" (Mt. 6:11).
 - d. However, each year under the Mosaic Law the same atonement sacrifice was offered, which shows that sin had not been remitted, but was remembered annually in that great sacrifice. The New Covenant has the ability to remove guilt permanently when the conditions are met:
 - 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Acts 3:19: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."
 - 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 4) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - 5) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - e. Each year on the Day of Atonement a scapegoat was released in the wilderness, symbolically to bear away the sins of the people. But the next year, another scapegoat was released, and another
-

- sacrifice was offered for sin. "And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall *the priest* make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD" (Lev. 16:29-30).
- f. Each first day of the week, faithful Christians gather to eat the Lord's Supper, not to call to mind the sins of the past, but to remember the Lord's death, the only sacrifice sufficient to remove our guilt. The Israelites were told to remember their sins; Christians are told to remember Christ. The blessings enjoyed in Christ include the real forgiveness of sins. See Hebrews 8:12.
5. Verse 52: "The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"
 - a. Their thinking was entirely along literal lines. They should have known such passages as Isaiah 53, which foretold of the death of the *suffering savior* [the Messiah]; he would be with criminals in his death, and also be associated with the rich. He was crucified between two thieves and his body was buried in the new tomb belonging to a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, who was assisted in burying the body by Nicodemus, a ruler among the Jews [prominent and possibly rich]. [John 18:38-42].
 - b. It should have been obvious to the Jews from the context that the Lord did not speak of making a meal of his fleshly body. Under the Mosaic Law, animals were sacrificed on the altar; in some cases, the person who gave the sacrifice and the priests involved, partook of the cooked flesh of the animal.
 - c. Alluding to this practice, Christ spoke of eating of his flesh, but in a different sense. Certainly they would have known the sinfulness (and the revulsion) of cannibalism; clearly Jesus was not speaking of such a repulsive practice.
 - d. The crowd of Jews who had been contending with the Lord were all opposed to him. They perceived him to be saying that in some sense, his flesh would be involved in their salvation; but they thought they already were saved and well-pleasing to Jehovah. The strife among the audience was trying to decide how he meant his flesh was to be eaten.
 6. Verses 53-55: "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."
 - a. "It is a metaphorical reference to the soul-saving benefit procured on behalf of the human family by Christ's atoning death on the cross and the shedding of his blood. The eating and drinking refer to the soul's proper appropriation of that benefit" (Coffman).
 - b. We partake of the spiritual benefits of his death by obeying the gospel. We embrace this sacrifice for our sins and appropriate the power of his blood when we are baptized into Christ. We thus enter and remain in his spiritual body (the church) and constantly have the cleansing power of his blood.
 - c. Those who "eat of his flesh and drink of his blood" have the promise of eternal life, and Christ vows to raise them up in the last day; but those who do not do so, have no life in them.
 - d. Woods:
 - 1) Throughout this section emphasis is given to the fact that only in receiving Jesus as the Messiah is salvation possible and this theme is pursued through a variety of figures in which he is represented as food and drink which forevermore satisfy and his flesh and blood that which one appropriates and lives for ever.
 - 2) Thus, the effort to apply these words of our text to the Lord's supper disregards the context, and makes our Lord discuss matters wholly incomprehensible both to the unbelieving Jews and to the disciples (this was long before the supper was instituted); and the fact that the verbs of the Greek text (cf. verse 56), indicate a continuous eating and drinking it is apparent, as Luther
-

says, that "This chapter does not speak of the bread and wine, but of spiritual eating, i.e. of the belief that Christ, both God and man, hath shed his blood for us."

3) Jesus had earlier shown that through him alone is life eternal available. This life was to be appropriated by accepting him as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. These blessings would become available only because of his willingness to give his life—his flesh—on the cross. Bread we eat because of its ability to sustain physical life; we accept Jesus because we believe that only through him is there salvation. He is the bread of life of whom we eat to live. (p.134).

7. Verses 56-58: "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."
 - a. The figure the Lord is using is parallel to our being in him, and there abiding; thus, we imbibe the benefits of his sacrificial death in which he gave himself for us and shed his blood for us.
 - b. The Living Father sent Christ and he the Messiah lives by the Father. Those who partake of the Son will live by the Son. The context is filled with statements of this nature, including John 6:51: "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."
 - c. The manna which God graciously gave to the Israelites as they abode in the wilderness, was able to satisfy their present hunger and sustain their physical lives just as ordinary food does, but they had to keep on eating it. Even though that generation partook of manna, they nevertheless died before reaching the promised land. Of the men who were of a certain age when they left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb lived to enter Canaan.
 - d. But those who partake of the Messiah (obey his gospel and walk in his way) will have eternal life in the world to come (Heaven). We have eternal life now in promise and in hope.
 - 1) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
 - 2) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."
 - 3) Romans 8:24-25: "For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (ASV).
8. Verse 59: "These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum."
 - a. The preceding statements were made at the synagogue in Capernaum. Since the subject matter is the same, it appears that some of the crowd was still close at hand.
 - b. Notice the beginning of the next verse: We are told that many of his disciples had trouble accepting the message the Lord had just presented.
 - c. Fourfold Gospel: It was in the synagogue built by the centurion, which we have before mentioned. Pots of manna appear to have been engraved upon its walls, possibly upon the frieze, for Colonel Wilson says of it: "It was not without a certain strange feeling that, on turning over one of the blocks (in the ruins), we found the pot of manna engraved on its face, and remembered the words, 'I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.'"

F. John 6:60-71: Will Ye Also Go Away?

1. Verses 60-61: "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?"
 - a. Other translations:
 - 1) ASV: "Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it? But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said unto them, Doth this cause you to stumble?"
 - 2) NKJV: Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this*, said, "This is a hard saying; who

- can understand it?" When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?"
- b. It was difficult for these disciples to accept the various doctrines Jesus had presented.
 - 1) They had not accepted the full truth that is the Messiah, the Son of God.
 - 2) They were not fully convinced that his doctrine was superior to the Law of Moses.
 - 3) The idea of literally eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus was not only hard to accept, but repulsive to consider. It appears that their thinking was basically materialistic.
 - 4) Even the apostles thought the Lord's plan was to establish the kingdom of David on earth again, and rule from an actual throne from the city of Jerusalem:
 - a) "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8).
 - b) When they received the revelation the Holy Spirit gave them in Acts Two, they understood much better the eternal plan of the gospel. As the need arose, other parts of the gospel system were made known, and finally (before the end of the first century), the entire revelation had been unfolded and collected into one book—the Bible.
 - 5) They would come to see that the Lord was using figurative language when he spoke of partaking of his flesh and blood. We partake of him as we learn, believe, and obey his teachings. We thus become more and more like he is. See 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians 3:18.
 - c. Fourfold Gospel: "If the prophecy of his sacrifice disturbed their dreams of a temporal kingdom, what would be the effect of his ascension on those dreams? The Book of Acts answers our Lord's question. In the very hour of the ascension the very apostles were still expecting the revival of the kingdom of David, with Jerusalem for its capital. But ten days later, at Pentecost, they had abandoned the earthly idea and looked upon Jesus as enthroned at the right hand of God—Acts 1:6; 2:32-36."
 - d. Before one can become a Christian, he must become a disciple; all Christians are disciples, but not all disciples are Christians.
 - 1) John 8:30-32: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. 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."
 - 2) Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - 3) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - e. The disciples who were present possessed different degrees of faith in him. As he had said earlier, some were with him only for the food and perhaps other material advantages they thought they could get. Some he would tell in John 8:30-32, the ones he then addressed could truly become his disciples, if they continued in his word; they are said to already believe on him. The Lord asked the disciples of the present context if what he had said "offended" them; did it cause them to stumble.
 - f. Offend: skandalizo (skandali, NT:4624), from skandalon (OFFENSE, No. 1), signifies "to put a snare or stumblingblock in the way," always metaphorically in the NT, in the same ways as the noun, which see. It is used 14 times in Matthew, 8 in Mark, twice in Luke, twice in John;
-

- elsewhere in 1 Cor 8:13 (twice) and 2 Cor 11:29 The RV renders it by the verb "to stumble," or "cause to stumble," in every place save the following, where it uses the verb "to offend," Matt 13:57; 15:12; 26:31,33; Mark 6:3; 14:27,29. [Vine].
2. Verses 62: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?"
 - a. If they were to stumble over the truth he had just taught them, what would they think and do if they had the privilege of seeing the Son of man ascend back to Heaven? The Lord had spoken of going back to his Father, but here he directly speaks of his ascension.
 - b. What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before? [If the prophecy of his sacrifice disturbed their dreams of a temporal kingdom, what would be the effect of his ascension on those dreams? The Book of Acts answers our Lord's question. In the very hour of the ascension the very apostles were still expecting the revival of the kingdom of David, with Jerusalem for its capital. But ten days later, at Pentecost, they had abandoned the earthly idea and looked upon Jesus as enthroned at the right hand of God—Acts 1:6; 2:32-36. [Fourfold Gospel].
 - c. Woods:
 - 1) So he said to them, "Do you stumble because of what you have heard from me? What will you think if you see me return to heaven?" If you question my claim of having come down from heaven how will you answer when I return to heaven?
 - 2) Though the Lord often referred to his return to his Father only here do we have a record of specific mention from him amounting to a prophecy of that event. It should be kept in mind that these disciples were imbued with the concept of an earthly kingdom with Jesus as a temporal ruler and there was thus no place in their scheme for a return to heaven and the spiritual reign he was to exercise.
 - 3) Jesus was to return to "where he was before." These words settle beyond all doubt his former abode and association with the Father, and they make equally clear his intention of returning to heaven whence he came.
 3. Verse 63: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."
 - a. The *spirit* of the opening clause does not refer to the Holy Spirit; the translators did not capitalize the word, and Holy Spirit does not fit into the context.
 - b. It is the spirit of man that gives life to the fleshly body; the body may be fed with manna from heaven or by the best food available on earth; but the body will nevertheless die. It is the presence of the human spirit, which God placed in the body at its conception, and thus gave it life.
 - 1) Zechariah 12:1: "Thus saith Jehovah, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him."
 - 2) James 2:26: "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead."
 - c. If one were able to consume a portion of the flesh of Jesus or drink a portion of his literal blood, the ingestion of these items could do nothing to the spirit of the one doing the eating and drinking. It would violate the Bible's prohibition against partaking of blood. The consumption of human flesh occurred during severe famine, as when a city was being besieged for a long period of time. Being reduced to consuming such a meal would be the last hope of survival, and surely was repulsive.
 - 1) Acts 15:28-29: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well." [James, who was obviously an inspired prophet, stated the official decree growing out of the Jerusalem council. Remember that the decision reached was not a human judgment, but was inspired. "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things" (15:28)].
 - 2) 2 Kings 6:26-30: "And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman
-

unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son. And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh.”

- d. The words of Christ are to the human spirit, what the human spirit is to the human body—it gives life to the spirit.
 - 1) When a person reaches the age at which time God begins to hold him responsible for his sinful conduct, that individual’s spirit is separated from God. It is dead by that separation. The body without the spirit is dead; the spirit out of fellowship with God is dead. Separation is the key part of death.
 - 2) Isaiah 59:1-2: “Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear.”
 - 3) Ephesians 2:12: “That ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”
 - e. Being in that separated and lost condition, how can such a one be redeemed and brought back into full fellowship with God? The Lord has described the process as “eating his flesh and drinking his blood.” Since Christ is no longer on earth, obviously we cannot literally partake of his fleshly body. The Lord had something else in mind, to which he alludes by saying that his words provide life. The Great Commission, which Christ issued, called for the truth of the gospel to be taught to all accountable people. Compare: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:16-17).
 - 1) Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.”
 - 3) Luke 24:47: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”
 - 4) Acts 2:36-38: “Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
 - 5) Acts 11:13-14: “And he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house.”
 - 6) Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”
-

- 7) 2 Timothy 3:14-17: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- 8) John 15:3: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." This cleansing was by means of the word, i.e., through the teaching of the word they were enabled to obtain forgiveness. It is, of course, the Father who forgives, but he does it on condition of faithful obedience to the word. (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21.) It pleases God through the preaching of the word (the gospel) to save men. (1 Cor. 1:21; James 1:18; 1 Cor. 4:15.)
4. Verses 64-65: "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."
 - a. Our Lord made the statement of the first clause; the apostle John provides the inspired observation of the second clause of verse sixty-four.
 - b. Jesus instantly knew the hearts of those disciples who flocked to him; it was obviously known to him which were not filled with genuine faith. In fact, he accused these insincere ones of following him only for the food he could provide (John 6:26-27).
 - 1) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - 2) Every creature is uncovered and open to his eye. His knowledge penetrates even to our thoughts and motives, as well as our words and deeds. Our omissions are equally known to him. This is both encouraging and frightening, depending on the nature of our thoughts, motives, words, and deeds. "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance" (Ps. 90:8). He is fully aware of our needs. "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matt. 6:8)."
 - 3) John 2:24-25: "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."
 - 4) "The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (Matt. 19:20-22).
 - c. Our Lord also knew the identity of the one who would betray him.
 - 1) John 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."
 - 2) Matthew 26:25: "Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said."
 - a) "Although it was written of the Son of man, and predetermined by God, that he should go as Judas had covenanted, yet the woe is pronounced on Judas, and it is said of him that it

had been good for him if he had not been born. This shows that a man who, by a wicked act, brings about a purpose of God, bears the same guilt as though God had no purpose in it. It is his own act and motive for which he is judged, and not the results which God may have intended to bring out of his act. The statement that 'it had been good for that man if he had not been born,' is a denial of the doctrine of universal salvation; for if a man after any conceivable amount of suffering, shall at last enjoy everlasting life, it is not true of him that it had been better for him if he had not been born" (McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, p.226).

- b) The object of the direction the conversation took was to show the foreknowledge of Jesus and to give Judas ample warning against his evil intentions. "Yet so utterly callous had the conscience of Judas become that with brazen effrontery he asks, 'Master, is it I?' Such hardihood in crime is a more convincing evidence of deep depravity than his previous covenant with the chief priests" (ibid.).
- 3) Matthew 26:47: "And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people."
- 4) Matthew 27:3: "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders."
- d. As we have seen for verses 44-45 of this chapter, God draws individuals to Christ through teaching them the gospel: "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45, ASV).
- e. Woods: Because of these powers he already knew who would betray him. By knowing what is in the hearts of all men, he could immediately determine what the course of all such would be. It is important for us to note that to know this is vastly different from *ordaining* it. Some assume that because Jesus knew this, he must have willed it; but, to know and to determine are two very different acts. The "beginning" from which Jesus knew these things was from the first day that these disciples began to follow him. He saw in their character and conduct the course of their lives. Though some affected to follow him they were not true disciples, because they were not drawn to him by the Father. [p.138].
- f. We are told in Matthew 21 of the Lord's great entrance into Jerusalem, in which he was greeted by huge numbers of people. However, a few days later, a great many voices joined together to cry out, "Crucify him." Doubtless many of those who made the latter cry had also called out a welcome when he entered the great city.
- g. They had rabble-rousers then: "But the chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate again answered and said unto them, What then shall I do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him. And Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, Crucify him" (Mark 15:11-14).
5. Verses 66-67: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?"
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) ASV: "Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Jesus said therefore unto the twelve, Would ye also go away?"
 - 2) NKJ: From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"
 - b. Many of his erstwhile disciples turned back and followed the Lord no more. This number included those who were interested only in the material food they could derive from the Master. Also, there were those who were so non-spiritual in their thinking that they could not discern the true meaning of eating the Lord's flesh and drinking his blood. They could have grasped this truth, but they would not do so. It may have been somewhat hard, but it could have been understood.

- c. Speaking to the twelve, Jesus asked them whether they were leaving the Lord also. He would know what they were going to do before asking the question, but putting the issue into words, it became necessary for them to give a direct answer.
 6. Verses 68-69: "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."
 - a. Peter was usually the first to speak or act among the apostles. His question put the finger on the uttermost matter: if they were to turn away from Jesus, to whom could they go? There was no one else.
 - b. Woods:
 - 1) It is significant that the question put to the disciples brought an expected answer. The larger group of disciples had been sifted; it was necessary that the chaff be separated from the wheat. The band of disciples was now smaller but far more worthy and these (with one notable exception, Judas) would not forsake him.
 - 2) The "ye" of the Lord's query is emphatic and the construction of the Greek sentence required a negative answer. "Ye, in contrast with these who have forsaken me, will not go away, will ye?" The question was not raised to reassure Jesus; he knew, of course, the decision which the faithful disciples had already made; the query was for the benefit of the disciples themselves who by it were able more sharply to distinguish between those of true faith and the superficially minded who had gone away.
 - 3) The reference to "the twelve" shows that the apostles had already been fused into one body of disciples and regarded as in some sense apart from the others. This distinction is maintained throughout the books of the Gospel. [p.139].
 - c. It was clear to Peter that Jesus was the only one who had the words of eternal life. He and the others who had been with the Lord had seen and heard enough to have perceived this truth. Jesus told this apostle, when he had made the great confession (Matt. 16:16), that the Father had made this known to him (Matt. 16:17).
 - 1) Demons knew this: "And straightway there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And the unclean spirit, tearing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him" (Mark 1:23-26).
 - 2) A centurion knew it: "Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. 27:54).
 - 3) Pilate's wife was greatly concerned about the identity of Jesus: "And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him" (Matt. 27:19).
 - d. Other translations:
 - 1) ASV: "Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."
 - 2) NKJV: But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - e. Having been with Jesus for a period of time, seeing his supernatural activities, hearing his messages of truth, perceiving the utter goodness of his character, being shown the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies—all of these led the apostles to a strong faith in the identity of Jesus. In the confession Peter made in this passage, he included the other apostles; they all had that certain faith.
 7. Verses 70-71: "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.”

- a. The Lord cautioned them with the warning that, even though he had chosen the twelve men as his apostles, there was one of them that was a devil. Of course, he was referring to Judas Iscariot. “*Iscariot* designates Judas by his former place of residence. It means a man of Kerioth, a town in the tribe of Judah. (Josh. 15:25)” (McGarvey, *op.cit.*, p.89).
 - b. There is a danger in being overconfident. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). Peter fell victim to this problem.
 - 1) Luke 22:31-34: “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.”
 - 2) Luke 22:54-62: “Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. 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.”
 - c. What about Judas? Was he a demon when the Lord chose him?
 - 1) “Jesus did not choose a devil to carry out the commission unless Judas was a devil when he was chosen. If he was not a devil at the time he was chosen, then Jesus merely selected a human being who was no different in this respect to the other apostles. Did Jesus choose a devil, or did he choose a man who later became a devil? NOTE: Judas was a disciple (Luke 6:13-16) ; (2) he was an apostle (Math 10:2-4); (3) he was sent to preach (Matt. 10:5) ; (4) he was given to the Lord (John 17:12); Luke says he ‘became a traitor’ (Luke 6:16); and it is stated that he ‘fell away’ and went ‘to his own place’ (Acts 1:25). It is true that Jesus said, ‘Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil?’ (John 6:70). But Jesus did not say that one was a devil when he was chosen! There is no evidence to establish that conclusion. Jesus could have known what Judas would do, but that would not alter the fact that he was not a devil at the time Jesus selected” [*The Vindicator*, February 15, 1958, Harold Thurman, p.6].
 - 2) Acts 1:25: “That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.”
-

John Chapter 7

A. John 7:1-9: Discussion Between Jesus and His Half-Brothers.

1. Information from Exodus 34 about Jewish feasts:

- a. Exodus 34:18-22: "The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. All that openeth the matrix *is* mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, *whether* ox or sheep, *that is male*. But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem *him* not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty. Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end."

 - 1) "God again gave details regarding the feast days: included in his statements are the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), Tabernacles, and the Passover. The Passover was directly connected with the feast of unleavened bread, and so is included. At the year's end, they were to observe the feast of ingathering (Tabernacles). The marginal rendering for 'year's end' is "revolution of the year," ('...a scientific reference to the circling of the earth around the sun in its annual orbit, producing the years" (Coffman, p.473).
 - 2) They were to keep the sabbath day "in seed-time and harvest." These were the busiest times of the year for their society, but that did not excuse them from their worship obligations. The regulations given earlier about redeeming the firstborn are given again.

- b. Exodus 34:23-24: "Thrice in the year shall all your menchildren appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year."

 - 1) Three times during the year the males among them were obligated to assemble at the appointed place (where the tabernacle was erected). Those three occasions were the three feasts named above. God anticipates their natural doubt of this by stating that there would be no need for them to fear the enemy coming in during the absence of the men and taking over.
 - 2) God would not permit this to happen; he does not specify how he would prevent this, but among the means was the terror God's mighty works in Israel's behalf would create in the minds of neighboring people. "And before they were laid down, she [Rahab] came up unto them upon the roof; And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that *were* on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard *these things*, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he *is* God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Joshua 2:8-11).

- c. From Johnson:
 - 1) Three times a year the whole adult population of Judea was required to assemble at Jerusalem to attend the great feasts. The finest seasons of the year, spring and autumn, were chosen for these gatherings of the people separated into the various tribes, these annual gatherings must have served to cement the bond of national unity and establish acquaintance and friendship.
 - a) Another advantage was the opportunity of an interchange of sentiment on every subject of interest. Whatever was an engrossing topic was sure to be discussed in the great assemblages. Since the Savior had healed the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, about eighteen months before, there is no account that he had visited Jerusalem, but the story of his wonderful teaching and works in Galilee was spread broadcast over the land, and at this gathering at the feast of Tabernacles the great question was whether he would come to the feast.

- b) Among the vast crowds a search was made to know whether he was not present, but when in the midst of the feast he suddenly appeared in the temple, not only the multitude, but the temple authorities, seem to have been startled.
- 2) The feast of Tabernacles was instituted to commemorate the time when the Israelites had dwelt in tents during their sojourn in the desert. To bring vividly to remembrance the forty years of tent life, the people were enjoined, during the seven days of the feast, to dwell in huts made of the branches of trees.
- 3) The flat house-tops of the city were covered with these leafy bowers, which became the temporary home of the family; while the open places and surrounding hills were also occupied by the vast crowd of sojourners.
- 4) The feast began on the fifteenth of the month of Tisri, which this year answered to October 11th, and continued eight days, seven of which were spent in the leafy huts. While it lasted the Jews gave themselves up to festivity and rejoicing. There is a proverb: "He who has not seen the rejoicing at the pouring out of the water of Siloam at the feast of Tabernacles has never seen rejoicing in his life." For the time, manner, and reason of this feast, see Lev. chapter 23. [pp.116f].

Feast	Month	Day	Our Month	Reference
Passover and Unleavened Bread *	Nisan	14-21	March–April	Ex. 12:43–13:10 Matt. 26:17-20
Pentecost *	Sivan	[50 days after Passover]	May–June	Deut. 16:9-12 Ac.2
Trumpets	Tishri	1, 2	Sept–Oct.	Num. 29:1ff
Day of Atonement <i>Yom Kippur</i>	Tishri	10	Sept–Oct	Lev. 23:26-32 Heb. 9:7
Tabernacles * [Booths or Ingathering]	Tishri	15-22	Sept–Oct	Neh. 8:13-18
Dedication (Lights) <i>Hanukkah</i>	Chisleu	8	Nov–Dec	John 10:22
Purim	Adar	14,15	Feb–Mar	Esther 9:18-32

* Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles required of all males (Ex. 23:14-19)



2. Verse 1: "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him."
- a. Woods: For reasons not given John passed over our Lord's labors from the Passover to the feast of Tabernacles—a period of about six months—except for the statement in this verse. (John 7:1.) During this interval occurred those matters narrated in Matt. 15-18, Mark 7-9 and Luke 9:18-50. These include the healing of the daughter of the Syrophoenician woman in the land of Tyre and Sidon, the deaf and dumb man in Decapolis, the feeding of the four thousand, the transfiguration and several conversations with the disciples. [p.141].
- b. Johnson: After the discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum. The report of "the Jews" to the authorities at Jerusalem had intensified the enmity that had been created when the man at the pool

of Bethesda was healed, and the Savior refrained from rushing into danger until "his time" had nearly come. Six months passed, "after these things," before he went to the feast of Tabernacles, and during the time he traveled and taught in Galilee. [p.117].

- c. To "walk in Jewry" meant to live and travel in Judaea, where the animosity toward to the Lord was the greatest. The power of the Jews was centered in Jerusalem and the Temple, where the priests and other functionaries of the Mosaic system were headquartered.
 - d. His danger would be very great where his enemies could exert their powerful and evil influences. He stated in verse six that the time for the conclusion of his great mission was not ripe. The time of his entry into the world was perfectly timed just as the timing of his sacrifice was precisely established.
 - 1) Luke 2:4-7: "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."
 - 2) Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."
 - e. The purpose of Christ's earthly mission was to redeem the lost. They are described in Galatians 4:4-5 as those who were under the law. The context shows that the Mosaic Law is the law under consideration. But since he did not come to save only the Jews, the redemption of all is included. Of course, salvation is not obtained by all; it is offered to all, but only those who will believe and obey the gospel are redeemed.
3. Verse 2: "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand."
- a. From Smith's Bible Dictionary:
 - 1) Tabernacles, The Feast of Exod 23:16 ("the feast of ingathering"), the third of the three great festivals of the Hebrews, which lasted from the 15th till the 22d of Tisri.
 - 2) The following are the principal passages in the Pentateuch which refer to it: Exod 23:16; Levit 23:34-36, 39-43; Numb 29:12-38; Deut 16:13-15; 31:10-13 In Nehe 8, there is an account of the observance of the feast by Ezra.
 - 3) The time of the festival fell in the autumn, when the whole of the chief fruits of the ground, the corn, the wine and the oil, were gathered in. Exod 23:16; Levit 23:39; Deut 15:13-15. Its duration was strictly only seven days, Deut 16:13; Ezek 45:25 but it was followed by a day of holy convocation, distinguished by sacrifices of its own, which was sometimes spoken of as an eighth day. Levit 23:36; Nehe 8:18. During the seven days the Israelites were commanded to dwell in booths or huts formed of the boughs of trees. The boughs were of the olive palm, pine, myrtle and other trees with thick foliage. Nehe 8:15, 16.
 - 4) According to rabbinical tradition each Israelite used to tie the branches into a bunch, to be carried in his hand to which the name lulab was given. The burnt offerings of the Feast of Tabernacles were by far more numerous than those of any other festival. There were offered on each day two rams, fourteen lambs and a kid for a sin offering. But what was most peculiar was the arrangement of the sacrifices of bullocks, in amounting to seventy. Numb 29:12-38. The eighth day was a day of holy convocation of peculiar solemnity.
 - 5) On the morning of this day the Hebrews left their huts and dismantled them, and took up their abode again in their houses. The special offerings of the day were a bullock, a ram, seven lambs and a goat for a sin offering. Numb 29:36, 38. When the Feast of Tabernacles fell on a sabbatical year, portions of the law were read each day in public, to men, women, children and strangers. Deut 31:10-13. We find Ezra reading the law during the festival "day by day, from the first day to the last day." Nehe 8:18.
-

- 6) Though all the Hebrew annual festivals were seasons of rejoicing, the Feast of Tabernacles was, in this respect, distinguished above them all. The huts and the lulabs must have made a gay and striking spectacle over the city by day, and the lamps, the flambeaux, the music and the joyous gatherings in the court of the temple must have given a still more festive character to the night. The main purposes of the Feast of Tabernacles are plainly set forth in Exod 23:16 and Levit 23:43. It was to be at once a thanksgiving for the harvest and a commemoration of the time when the Israelites dwelt in tents during their passage through the wilderness.
 - 7) Leviticus 23:34: "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD."
 - b. The first verse of this chapter tells us that Jesus kept away from Judæa because the Jews sought for his life This keeping away or seclusion began at the Passover season, and led Jesus not only to keep away from Judæa, but even to hover upon the outskirts of Galilee itself We now turn back to take up with John the narrative which tells how, after his six months' retirement, Jesus prepared to appear once more in Judæa. The Feast of Tabernacles began on the 15th day of the month Tisri, which answers to our September-October, and consequently came six months after and six months before the Passover. It was the most joyous of the two great feasts, and not only commemorated the time when Israel dwelt in the wilderness in tents, but also celebrated the harvest home. It was, therefore, a thanksgiving both for permanent abodes and for the year's crops. As the people dwelt in booths, the feast partook much of the form and merriment of a picnic. [Fourfold Gospel].
 4. Verses 3-4: "His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, 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."
 - a. The Lord's half-brothers urged him to go to Judæa, reminding him that his works could be be openly manifested to those who believed on him.
 - b. Mary and Joseph had four more sons and at least two daughters; Jesus was the Firstborn, which implies one or more other offspring.
 - 1) Matthew 13:54-56: "And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?"
 - 2) Mark's record of this [Mt. 13:54-56] is in chapter 6:1-6; he shows this took place on the Sabbath. Having taught them in their synagogue, they were astonished at his wisdom and mighty works. They held him in contempt (cf. Luke 4:29); they were offended at his claims. They knew his father, mother, brothers, and sisters; they had known him from childhood, and until lately, he had not exhibited such powers.
 - c. "They were filled with envy that he should suddenly be lifted so high above themselves and above his humble origin. Their extreme familiarity with his humanity made them blind to the evidences of his divinity, while their unwillingness to admit his divinity made them incapable of answering their own question; and so from that day to this, the words and miracles of Jesus have proved an unsolved mystery to all who deny that he was literally the Son of God" (McGarvey, p.127).
 - d. Catholic theologians assert that Mary remained a perpetual virgin, that she never had any more children. That this is a faulty conclusion is shown by the plain statement of the text. Mary had four other sons and at least two daughters.
 - 1) Jesus was her *firstborn* (Matt. 1:25); her husband Joseph knew her not till she had brought forth her first son. "And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS" (Matt. 1:25).
 - 2) They allege that the four brothers were cousins, and not actual brothers. We wonder who the sisters were?
-

- 3) It is much better, indeed the only way, to take the text as it reads; it is obvious to anyone who does not have a false doctrine to protect that these four men (and their names are provided) were the Lord's half-brothers. Mary was the mother of them all (the four brothers and unnumbered sisters, and Jesus); Joseph was the father of these other children, but Jesus had no earthly father.
5. Verse 5: "For neither did his brethren believe in him."
- a. These half-brothers of the Lord did not believe on him yet (Verse 5), perhaps they had not personally seen any of his miraculous works; but it is unlikely that they had not heard of them. They should have learned from their parents about the virgin birth.
 - b. Woods: If his aim was to attract attention, he should go where the greatest possible attention would be upon him—Jerusalem, and during the great feast. Though not now believers, these brothers of Jesus became such following the Lord's resurrection and perhaps because of it. (Acts 1:14.) Their attitude as exhibited here was far from good. Patiently, without bitterness, Jesus explained why he had not gone to Jerusalem as they suggested. [p.142].
 - c. In the previous verses, these men used the word "if" which implies that they doubted his Messiahship. This verse affirms that they were unbelievers. "While the counsel of these brothers, from a worldly point of view, might seem wise, it is in another form the same counsel offered by the devil in the second temptation, and spurned by our Lord. It shows the stress to which those who hold the tradition that the mother of our Lord always remained a virgin are put that they should insist on a theory that requires three out of four of these unbelievers to be apostles! A clear distinction is made here between 'the brothers of him' (Greek) and his disciples. The distinction is still clearer in Matt. 12:47. They afterwards became believers (Acts 1: 14)" [See Johnson, p.118].
 - d. These four half-brothers were all younger than Jesus, who was not much over thirty. Since Jesus grew up in Nazareth, doubtless the children of Joseph and Mary also lived there. We remember that the Lord refrained from miraculous activities in Nazareth.
 - 1) Matthew 13:57-58: "And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."
 - 2) He did not do **many** miracles there due to their unbelief. Mark 6:5 shows that he healed a few sick people. It would have been fruitless to perform many miracles there because of their extreme prejudice.
 - 3) "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." "This implies that he performed *some* miracles. Mark tells what they were: 'He laid his hands upon a few sick folk and healed them.' (Mar. 6:5)...It would have been useless to the great purposes of his mission to have worked miracles there. We are not to suppose that his *power* was limited by the belief or unbelief or men; but they were so *prejudiced*, so set against him, that they were not in a condition to *judge of evidence* and be convinced. They would have charged it to derangement, or sorcery, or the agency of the devil....He gave *sufficient* proof of his mission, and left them in their chosen unbelief without excuse" (Barnes, *Commentary on Matthew*, p.150).
 - e. "This was the first council of unbelief ever held against Jesus the Son of God. It occurred not in some ivory tower of learning, nor in some gathering of wise and learned men, ah, no! It occurred in the wretched and miserable village of Nazareth; and the protagonists of this dark drama of rejection were not intellectuals, nor educated and cultured men, but were prejudiced gossips, vulgar, and ignorant buffoons, but still entitled to one marvelous distinction: *They were the spiritual ancestors of all the unbelievers who ever lived!*"
 - 1) "Satan has long sponsored the lie that unbelief is sophistication, intellectuality, erudition, and 'smartness'! But in this original pilot-project for the rejection of the Christ, the truth is evident. Unbelief is not a courageous rejection of ancient dogma; it is not a brilliant conclusion of philosophical intelligence, and could lay claim to no particular power, culture, or worthy of any
-

- kind that could have endowed their rejection with any semblance of justification or honesty.
- 2) “Those who fancy that the rejection of Christ is the result of comparing all religions let them know that at Nazareth there was no study, no comparison, no investigation, precious little information, and a dreadful suspicion of intellectual mediocrity, if not indeed downright stupidity.
 - 3) “It is clear as the sun at perihelion that the blighting unbelief of Nazareth which blinded their eyes against the only Person who saved that town from oblivion—their unbelief was not intellectual superiority, nor moral courage, nor logic, nor philosophy, nor honest doubt. What was it? (1) It was unworthiness...(2) It was egotism...(3) It was mental laziness...(4) It was illogical...(5) It was moral cowardice...(6) It was the opiate of the people...(7) It was unbelief...The epic falsehood of the devil that unbelief is any form of intellectual activity is surely and certainly destroyed by a careful analysis of this classic example of it at Nazareth!
 - 4) “...Helvidius, the most ancient commentator on this passage, said that they [the brothers and sisters of Jesus] were all the children of Mary and Joseph, born after Jesus was born. It was only in ages after men had invented religious doctrines incompatible with the obvious truth of Matthew’s words, that ingenious interpretations were devised to relieve the embarrassment. All such efforts fail in the light of the simple, obvious, and necessary meaning of Matthew 13:55,56. The truth was built into the passage by the Holy Spirit and is incapable of destruction. As the noted Dr. Adam Clarke so ably expressed it, ‘Why should the children of another family be brought in here to share the reproach which it is evident was designed for Joseph the carpenter, Mary his wife, and their son Jesus?’ Cousins or lodge brothers simply do not fit into the picture here at all, nor would their being pulled in have aided the reproach in any way. No, the reproach was directed at Jesus and his immediate family; those others named were his literal brothers and sisters....
 - 5) “This rejection at Nazareth occurred on the second visit of Jesus, the first being described in Luke 4:16ff. This second rejection, recorded also by Mark (6:1-6), was final and determinative. Mark’s words, ‘He marveled at their unbelief,’ show the shock and amazement which attended the conduct of the people of Nazareth. Christ himself was made to marvel at it.
 - 6) “Christ quoted this same proverb [verses 57-58] on his other visit to Nazareth (Luke 4:16ff). The human side of Christ’s dual nature was foretold by Isaiah who noted that the Messiah would be ‘despised and rejected of men.’ (Isa.53:3). Nazareth provided the first in a series of rejections; but it should be remembered that this was precisely what was prophesied, the very unbelief of the people becoming, therefore, a further testimony of his divinity” (Coffman, pp.209-212).
6. Verses 6-8: “Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always 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.”
- a. The time for the full manifestation of himself had not yet come. He had revealed himself gradually, step by step, until his apostles had recognized and declared him as the Christ, the Son of the living God (John 6: 69; Matt. 16:16). He had satisfied the woman of Sychar that he was the Christ, and had revealed himself in the synagogue at Capernaum as the Bread of life.
 - b. Three of his apostles were eye witnesses of his majesty on the Mount of Transfiguration, but the time for the grand final lesson of the cross, the tomb, the resurrection and the ascension had not come. His presence in the church, in the hearts of believers, as a power, has gone on increasingly ever since, but his full manifestation to the world does not take place until his second coming, when "every eye shall see him" (Rev. 1:7).
 - c. These four half-brothers of Jesus had nothing to fear from those who rejected the Lord as Messiah. They were not trying to support him; they did not at this time even believe on him. The world hated the Lord because he exposed and repudiated their sinful doctrines, practices and other sinful ways.
-

- 1) John 3:19-21: “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.”
 - 2) John 15:19: “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.” [This statement was made to his apostles].
 - d. Their time for persecution would come when they later became followers of Jesus. Saul of Tarsus was well treated by the Lord’s Jewish enemies while he was himself opposing the influence of Christ. But Saul the persecutor became Paul the persecuted after he obeyed the gospel (Acts 9).
 - e. The Lord told his brothers that he would not at that time go to Jerusalem for the feast. He would not be a part of the great company that would make its way southward toward the city; there would be many enemy spies among that crowd, who would be ready to point out the Lord to his enemies when he reached Jerusalem.
 - f. We are told in verse fourteen that Jesus went to Jerusalem in the midst of the feast—when the feast was half finished. He would be able to come into the city amid the huge crowd which would be there by this time. But he did not hide from his enemies. Rather, he openly taught at the temple: “Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught” (John 7:14).
 - g. He could know that his enemies would be too fearful to arrest him when so many were avidly listening to his message. Later, at the feast of Passover, we read of the devious plot they concocted to arrest him during the night, where he was isolated from the people.
 - 1) Matthew 26:4-5: “And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.”
 - 2) Luke 22:1-2: “Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.”
 7. Verse 9: “When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.”
 - a. Woods: That is, he chose not to accompany his brothers to Jerusalem for the feast of tabernacles but remained in Galilee. Often, large groups travelled together to the great feasts and likely those brothers of Jesus were in one of those caravans. He had rejected his brothers' suggestion both as to time and as to motive. In his infinite wisdom he would go at the proper time and for the right reason. His motivation was wholly spiritual; the suggestions of his brothers resulted from worldly and material reasoning. [pp.143f].
 - b. If he had been in company with his brothers when he entered Jerusalem, he could have been more easily identified and hustled off into the control of his deadly foes.
 - c. Wisdom and truth always guided the Lord’s actions and words. He had no fear whatsoever of his enemies; but as his entry into the world was divinely planned and timed, so also the means and timing of his death. There were many prophecies that must be fulfilled in all of these concerns.
 - 1) Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”
 - 2) Galatians 4:4: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”
 - 3) John 12:31-33: “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.”
 - 4) John 8:28: “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.”
 - d. When his brothers began their journey to Jerusalem, our Lord remained in Galilee. It was fully in his intention to go to Judaea, but not to manifest himself to the nation at this time—it was not the right time. Half a year later, at the Passover Feast, he would make his triumphant entry into
-

Jerusalem.

B. John 7:10-13: Jesus Goes to Jerusalem For the Feast.

1. Verse 10: "But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret."
 - a. "This section follows immediately after the preceding. The secrecy of this journey consists in the fact that Jesus did not join the caravans or pilgrim bands, and that he did not follow the usual Peræan route, but went directly through Samaria" (Fourfold Gospel).
 - b. He did go to the feast, but he did not go up to manifest himself, as his brothers asked, and hence, in the sense in which they made the request, he did not go up. Six months later, at the Passover, he manifested himself by the triumphal entry somewhat as his brothers wished. [*ibid.*].
 - c. Some affect to see a contradiction between what Jesus said to his brothers and his later actions but this is to misapprehend his meaning. It is clear, from the context, that he rejected their suggestion to go for the purpose of declaring himself openly; his subsequent visit, quietly and without ostentation, is vastly different from what they visualized. His desire to visit Jerusalem without fanfare was realized as the verses following indicate (Woods, p.144).
 - d. If Jesus had entered Jerusalem, in company with the great crowds, he would have most likely been pointed out by those who knew him or spotted by the spies who were on the lookout for him. In such a case, a miraculous work would probably have been necessary. Supernatural acts were only done when they were required. With six more months of teaching, by the Lord and his disciples, information about him would spread through the population, thus increasing the pool of potential converts when the full gospel was openly presented to the Jewish people.
 - 1) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-20: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 3) Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
2. Verse 11: "Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?"
 - a. Secretly entering as he did, the Jewish enemies were unable to foment a premature operation against the Lord; no miracle was needed to protect him from their schemes, and he was able to return to the city at the next Passover season, and then complete his mission.
 - b. Fourfold Gospel: It was now eighteen months since Jesus had visited Jerusalem, at which time he had healed the impotent man at Bethesda. His fame and prolonged obscurity made his enemies anxious for him to again expose himself in their midst. John here used the word "Jews" as a designation for the Jerusalemites, who, as enemies of Christ, were to be distinguished from the multitudes who were in doubt about him, and who are mentioned in the next verse.
 - c. Mark 12:37: "David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly." The Bible has always had a greater appeal to the common folks than to the upper classes and authority figures. Pride has kept countless people from serious study of the gospel. The Jews noted in this verse would have reference to the rulers of Israel, both religious and civil.
 - d. Those opposed to the work of Jesus perceived that their positions and authority would diminish if his work grew. "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” (John 11:47-48).

- e. These Jews were seeking him for the purpose of doing harm to him. We see their true designs in chapter eleven, on the Lord’s last trip to Jerusalem. “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” (John 11:49-54).
3. Verse 12: “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.”
 - a. Despite the evil motives of their rulers, there were some who described Jesus as a good man; others alleged he deceived the people. The rulers wanted to kill him.
 - b. Notice the plural word *multitudes*. People from different parts of Palestine would gravitate toward others of their home areas. In Galilee, where the Lord had done much work, many had heard his messages and seen or learned of his miracles. Such people would be warmly inclined toward Jesus.
 - c. By calling him a good man, they spoke of his good morality, soundness of teaching, and dependability. This does not necessarily mean they had accepted him as the promised Messiah.
 4. Verse 13: “Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.”
 - a. While there was much murmuring among the multitudes, no one spoke openly in support of Jesus. They were aware that the Jews (the Lord’s enemies) were searching for him; the intentions of the foes were certainly not friendly.
 - b. The population did not have free speech; neither did they have freedom of religion. Opposing the authority of Rome was most dangerous. It was scarcely less lethal to oppose the Jewish rulers, especially the religious powers. This was a perilous time!
 - c. Many in America in our times, may not appreciate our great freedoms: of speech; of independent thought; of religion; of assembly; to bear arms. All of our present freedoms are in a precarious state. There are influential people and movements abroad today who would deprive us of them. Socialism and communism, who are at least cousins, and bedfellows, are a growing force with the ugly design of overthrowing our republic, and replacing it with a system where freedoms are rigorously limited and controlled. That system has never succeeded; it ends in chaos, with an inevitable dictatorship.
 - d. The so-called progressives in the last century succeeded in denying to school children any real knowledge of the Bible in the classrooms. Until that time, schools inculcated a hardy sense of morality in the students; since then, they are bombarded from all sides with denials of any standard of moral conduct, except that which the individual desires. Compare: “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 21:25).
 - e. In our present society, we face various dangers if we speak out against the current evil trends; but we must oppose in word and action these wicked beliefs and practices which are being force-fed.
- C. John 7:14-24: Jesus Begins to Speak Openly.
1. Verse 14: “Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.”
 - a. This was still fraught with danger for him, but he knew that the enemy was fearful that a riot might ensue should they arrest Jesus publicly. He took this action when the feast was at its zenith, while the greatest number of people were present.
 - b. The feast lasted eight days. “This indicates the time, probably, when Jesus reached Jerusalem. Bengel calculates that on this year the middle of the feast would come on the Sabbath day; the temple would, therefore, be unusually crowded, and the day itself would suggest the remarks about the Sabbath which are found in verses 22, 23. *Went up into the temple and taught.* He had come
-

- secretly and had refused to make a show of himself, but he did not hesitate to proclaim his doctrine in the most public manner. He seems to flash upon the Jewish multitude on this occasion with the suddenness of the lightning flash. How he came to Jerusalem, whether he dwelt in a leafy booth as others, whether his voice was heard in the Hallel, we are not told. All we know is that suddenly he presents himself in the temple, the very stronghold of his enemies” (Johnson, p.121).
- c. There were many people for him to teach, and the crowd would dampen the fervor of his enemies to openly take him into custody. The multitude might object with enthusiasm.
 - d. His brothers encouraged him to go up to the feast openly, and publicly declare his identity, and tell the people boldly that he is the Messiah. That was foolish; it could only have ended in tragedy, unless there was some powerful supernatural intervention exerted. Our Lord knew that the time of the end of his great mission had not arrived. At the next Passover season, that was the intended occasion.
 - e. Johnson: Eighteen months had passed since he was last in Jerusalem. Then, although the miracle at Bethesda had aroused a controversy and had called for teaching, he had not presented himself as the public teacher of Israel. Now, however, throwing off all concealment, and apparently passing from extreme caution to the very verge of daring, he plants himself in the temple and addresses the multitude in a capacity that was assumed only by the oldest and most renowned Rabbis of Israel. Olshausen, following Tholuck, thinks that the Savior on the Sabbath day, did not merely teach in the open court, but delivered a formal discourse in the synagogue which was situated in the court of the women. [p.121].
 - f. Malachi 3:1: “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.”
 - 1) The question was raised by the Israelites in the previous verse concerning the whereabouts of the God of justice. The reply given by Malachi is found here. God promised that he would come; God's coming was in the person of Christ, who was preceded by his *messenger*, John the Baptizer.
 - 2) By speaking of the appearance of the Lord as being sudden, he did not mean his arrival would be immediate, but would be at a time when they were not looking for him; it would be unannounced to the general population. When Christ was born in Bethlehem, his situation was not one which suggested greatness. He was born in a stable, into a poor family.
 - 3) This passage from Malachi may not have had direct reference to our Lord's sudden appearance at the temple on this occasion, but the words of that Old Testament prophet surely flash to our minds.
2. Verse 15: “And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?”
 - a. Woods: These unbelieving Jews, not having before actually heard Jesus expound the scriptures and knowing that he was not a product of their rabbinical institutions of learning expressed much surprise at the knowledge he exhibited. Their attitude, however, was not one of admiration but of contempt. They were actually displeased that he, who was not a graduate of their schools, should pretend to teach the law and the prophets. The words of verse 15 were intended for the benefit of the listeners and were designed to reflect on both the right and the ability of Jesus to teach. Jesus demonstrated his knowledge of matters which normally were known only by those who had spent years in study. How did he come to know these things? Unbelievers answer by saying that he acquired this knowledge in Jewish schools but this these Jews specifically contradict. Being divine, his knowledge was supernatural. [p.146].
 - b. Johnson: In the preceding generation Hillel had presided over the school or university in which all who became doctors of the law were expected to take their course. At this time Gamaliel, a disciple of Hillel, had succeeded him in the supervision of this renowned school. Here "letters," the written law, and the unwritten interpretations and traditions, were made the subjects of study. No person was expected to become a rabbin, a public teacher of the synagogue or temple, until he had passed
-

- regularly through such a course. Yet Jesus, who had never learned of any of the doctors, never attended any of the rabbinical schools, now stood forth publicly in the temple as a teacher of religion. The Jews " marvelled " at this, but their question implies more. They question the right of one who had not a Doctor's diploma to appear thus as a public teacher. [p.121].
- c. Later, the knowledge and boldness of Peter and John surprised the Jewish leaders: "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).
 - d. These high-ranking Jews thought that they were the only ones who could train and *ordain* men to perform religious duties. The best-trained and empowered preachers were the apostles of Christ. They had been to the *school* of Jesus; their knowledge was miraculously provided.
 - 1) Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - e. Many elderships and individual Christians have little or no respect for a preacher who does not have one or more degrees to add to his name. That one has a *doctorate* from some prestigious religious *seminary* may be more of a hindrance than a benefit. Advanced degrees can add greater influence to him as an individual when he mingles with the intellectual crowd, but are not apt to enable him to better instruct the common man.
 - 1) The writers of the Bible were all inspired by the power of Heaven; all they revealed was entirely accurate and true and authoritative. If one studies the Bible with an open mind, using the sense God has provided him, and comes to understand that grand revelation, and believes and follows what it teaches, surely he will be able to effectually communicate the knowledge he has obtained to others who are willing to listen and learn.
 - 2) Although Timothy had been given some spiritual gift, he was still required to study the inspired word, and then teach others what he had learned.
 - a) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
 - b) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - c) 1 Timothy 4:12-16: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - d) 2 Timothy 3:15: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."
 - 3) Even the apostles and prophets of the New Testament were required to study, learn, believe and apply the truths that were revealed through them.
 3. Verse 16: "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."
 - a. The Lord knew what these people had said. It was unnecessary for him to go to some human school to learn the will of the Father. He is co-equal with God. Indeed, he was God's agent in creating the universe and all life by the power of deity.
 - 1) John 1:1-3: "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. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
- 2) Colossians 1:15-19: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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 he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.”
 - 3) Hebrews 1:1-4: “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; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”
- b. Jesus denied that he was reporting his own doctrine, but that which originated with the one who sent him.
- 1) John 8:26-29: “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.”
 - 2) John 17:6: “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.”
 - 3) John 17:14: “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.”
 - 4) John 6:38: “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”
4. Verses 17-18: “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.”
- a. Other translations:
 - 1) ASV: “If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself.”
 - 2) NKJV: “If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own *authority*.”
 - b. Those who rejected the teachings of Jesus were also rejecting the teachings of the Father. Anyone who speaks by his own authority, is trying to bring glory upon only himself. But Jesus sought to bring glory only to the Father, thus he had not invented his own doctrine. Human religious productions such as “The Book of Mormon” bring glory only to its inventors and promoters and can proffer no salvation or eternal reward to any of their followers.
 - c. The Lord affirms that if one wills to do the will of God, this strong resolve will lead that student into a deep and honest investigation of the doctrine of Christ; this will result in his perceiving that this truth has God the Father as its source. He will assuredly know that it is God’s word.
 - d. This does not suggest that he will come to perfectly comprehend every truth or nuance found in the Scriptures, but he will certainly know that it is God’s revealed truth!
 - e. Woods: The honest heart, the sincere soul, whose only motivation is to do right will have no difficulty in determining what right is. Such will seek in the right place, the scriptures; in the right way, sincerely; and for the right purpose, to be saved and to do the will of God. Strong belief leads
-

- on to great faith ("from faith unto faith," Rom 1:17), and unbelief encourages rejection of God's word. One truly desirous of doing the Master's will never quibble at its requirements or question its validity, one thus influenced gladly and happily bows in full submission to it. [p.147].
- f. Johnson: The true teacher of men does not preach himself. Christ came to speak of and exalt the Father. The true preacher hides his own personality behind Christ. The general truth is stated. Whenever a preacher is met who keeps himself prominently before his hearers he is not a true man; but when one forgets himself in the message of his Lord "the same is true." Egotism and the spirit of Christ are not in concord. [p.122].
5. Verse 19: "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?"
- a. The Jews believed that Moses was the God-sent author of the Mosaic Law. The Bible teaches this simple truth in a variety of places.
- 1) "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua..." (Ex. 17:14).
 - 2) "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel" (Ex. 34:27).
 - 3) "These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord: and these are their journeys according to their goings out" (Num. 33:1-2).
 - 4) Exodus 24:3-8: "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood, and put *it* in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words."
 - 5) Deuteronomy 31:9-11: "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of *every* seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing."
 - 6) Deuteronomy 31:24-26: "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee."
 - 7) Acts 7:53: "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*."
- b. Israel had received the Law through the instrumentality of angels. It was an angel who appeared to Moses in the burning bush; it was an angel who led Israel from Egypt to Canaan. The Law "was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19). The mediator was Moses (Exodus 20; John 1:17).
- c. But neither they nor their fathers had kept (obeyed) the Law. They had accused Stephen of blaspheming the Law and Moses, but they were guilty of that crime, not Stephen. Instead of being tried himself, this man of God placed the council, and the nation in general, on trial.
-

- d. Jesus asked rhetorically, *Did not Moses give you the law?* Of course the answer was yes. The Old Testament affirmed it and the Jews believed it. But the Lord accused them of being disobedient to the Law. Stephen made the same accusation later in Acts 7:53. A large part of the work of the Old Testament prophets was to call Israel back to the truth of the Law. Strong warnings and threats of impending doom were directed to them. They were steeped in a great apostasy during the time after the close of the Old Testament history, and were still in that contaminated condition when John and Jesus did their work. Certainly, there were a number of the Jewish people who remained faithful during that time, but generally the majority was misguided and in a wayward spiritual condition
 - e. He next asked about the conspiracy to bring about his death. Knowing the past, present and future, and being able to read their minds and motives, he was fully aware their intentions and schemes. Many times we are told of specific cases where he read their minds and had the right response.
 6. Verse 20: "The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?"
 - a. They knew that their aims were to bring evil upon Jesus, but they alleged he must have a demon to make such a charge against them. Their reply demonstrates their dishonesty with truth.
 - b. These Jews then demanded him to identify those who wanted to kill him. They denied that they had such a thought, speaking a falsehood in making this statement.
 - c. Other comments:
 - 1) Johnson: This answer is not given by "the Jews," of whom the Savior's words were just spoken (see verse 15), but by "the people," the great multitude of the nation who were yet undecided. There were people standing there, "people of Jerusalem" (verse 25), who knew of the plot to assassinate him, but the great body of the people were probably ignorant of it and, therefore, spoke honestly. It seemed to them so abhorrent that there should be a purpose to murder him that they think that the error must have been impressed on his mind by demoniacal influence. They mean nearly what we would say if we were to say of one that he is under a delusion, or is "mad."
 - 2) Woods: The multitude, bystanders listening to the discussion between Jesus and the authorities, and not the rulers themselves, gave utterance to this irresponsible and ignorant observation. It evidenced the antagonistic feeling of the people who had been influenced against Jesus by the Jewish leaders and it was designed to impair further his influence. It said, in effect, "You must be under a demoniac hallucination to think that somebody seeks to kill you." It was an ignorant outburst by those not in possession of information regarding the true attitude of the authorities and deserved no reply. Jesus knew the hate which these Jewish rulers harbored would spring into action as soon as they could manage it. [page 149].
 - 3) Fourfold Gospel: The multitude had sought to kill him at his last visit, and it now affects to deny it. Wild notions and extraordinary conduct indicated insanity, and insanity was usually attributed to demoniacal possession. Comp. Matt 11:18. Their meaning therefore was that the words of Jesus were insanely preposterous, and their words savored more of roughness and irreverence than of malignant unkindness.
 7. Verses 21-22: "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."
 - a. Jesus let the present subject drop in order to bring up another important matter. They had taken great offence at his healing the man at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-16). This had taken place at his last visit to Jerusalem, nearly two years earlier. Surely they had not already forgotten the rage they had on that occasion!
 - b. G. Campbell Morgan makes this comment about the healing of the impotent man (John 5):
 - 1) "A supreme interest attaches to this story because it gives the account of an activity of Jesus in connection with which He made a claim that, so far as human instrumentality is concerned, cost Him His life. It was what He did and said upon this occasion stirred the malice of the
-

- rulers against Him, and that hostility never ceased.
- 2) "John tells us: 'For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only brake the Sabbath, but also called God His Father, making Himself equal with God.' [John 5:16].
 - 3) "If we glance on to chapter seven, which so far as the chronological sequence of our Lord's life is concerned carries us nearly two years on, we find that He, speaking to these same men in opposition to Him, said: 'If a man receiveth circumcision on the sabbath, that the law of Moses may no be broken; are ye wroth with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the sabbath?' [John 7:23, ASV].
 - 4) "The reference was unquestionably to this healing of the man in Bethesda's porches. It was here and now that their determination was taken to slay Him, and they never rested until, again on the human level, they had accomplished their purpose.
 - 5) "The claim which He made, and which they resented, was that of co-operation with God, and He made it in such terms that whatever we might be inclined to think it meant, they clearly understood by the claim itself, and the form in which it was made, that He was claiming equality with God" 'My Father worketh even until now, and I work'" (*The Great Physician*, p.89).
- c. The reason they objected to his healing the man, was that it was done on the Sabbath Day. Did the Lord do any kind of work by merely telling the man to, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk"? (5:8). He did tell the afflicted man to take his bed [i.e., pallet] and walk. Walking did not violate the Sabbath, unless it was beyond a certain distance.
- 1) "Acts 1:12. The law as regards travel on the Sabbath is found in Ex 16:29. As some departure from a man's own place was unavoidable, it was thought necessary to determine the allowable amount, which was fixed at 2000 paces, or about six furlongs from the wall of the city. The permitted distance seems to have been grounded on the space to be kept between the ark and the people, Josh 3:4, in the wilderness, which tradition said was that between the ark and the tents. We find the same distance given as the circumference outside the walls of the Levitical cities to be counted as their suburbs. Num 33:5. The terminus a quo was thus not a man's own house, but the wall of the city where he dwelt" (Bible Dictionary).
 - 2) "Acts 1:12 states that they returned to Jerusalem from the ascension site which was about a Sabbath Day's journey (estimated to be about seven-eighths of a mile). "A 'sabbath day's journey,' according to Jewish tradition, was based on Josh. 3:4. The Israelites were required to march about two thousand cubits (approximately three quarters of a mile) behind the ark, and from this came the belief that the tabernacle was that distance from the camp of Israel; and since the people were allowed to go to the tabernacle on the sabbath (cf. Num. 28:1-10), two thousand cubits became the distance allowed for a sabbath day's journey" (ALC, 1962, pp.78f).
 - 3) The pallet would be such a small, light item that it should not logically have been considered a job of work.
- d. "Elsewhere we shall find that Jesus was careful to show that his sabbatic actions were strictly legal; but in this case, that he might bring his divine claims plainly before the rulers, he ignored the question as to the human legality of his act that he might present without confusion its divine legality. Hence he used only one order or method of justification; namely: an appeal to his divine rights as exhibited in the habits of his Father. It was the divine and not the human in Jesus which wrought this miracle, so Jesus causes the whole controversy to turn on the divine rights, that he may use the occasion for an elaborate discussion of his divine claims and the proofs by which they are sustained" (Fourfold Gospel).
- e. "When the Lord commanded there was always prompt obedience. He spoke not as man, but as the Son of God. He healed not by some other power, as did prophets and apostles, but by his own. His commands are always imperative, whether to the winds, the waves, the dead, the sick and infirm, and are always followed by immediate obedience. The powers of nature recognize it as the same
-

- voice that said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' Note, however, that while Christ speaks with divine authority, the act of obedience is required. The man must rise, take up his bed, and walk. The bed was either a mattress which served as a couch by night and a seat by day, or a low bedstead. He was commanded to take it in order to emphatically show that he was a perfectly cured man" (Johnson, p.87).
- f. Returning to the present time, Jesus stated that he had done only one work [healing the infirm man at the pool] and they had been shocked [that it was done on the Sabbath] and they sought to kill him. As already noted, that event had taken place a year and a half earlier. They were amazed that this long-time cripple had been healed; but they became angry that this miracle had been done on the Sabbath.
 - g. The Lord showed in verse twenty-two that they were inconsistent in condemning him for performing a miracle on the Sabbath Day, while happily complying with performing circumcision on the Sabbath Day. Jesus healed the infirm man with a simple spoken message; the rite of circumcision required a careful surgical operation. This procedure was to be done on the eighth day after birth, which would often fall on the Sabbath.
 - h. Circumcision predated the giving of the Mosaic Law; it was first required of Abraham when that man was ninety-nine years old (Gen. 17). This action was also made part of the Mosaic Law (Lev. 12:3).
8. Verse 23: "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?"
- a. They were zealous and happy to comply with the law of circumcision on the Sabbath, but were quick to condemn Jesus for speaking the words of healing to a man who had long been infirm.
 - b. Woods: It was by them concluded that the specific law of circumcision should take precedence over the general law of the sabbath which forbade work on that day; and, in this they were right, even though the act of circumcision was regarded as a purifying process involving only a part of the body. Jesus, in healing the infirm man performed something much greater since it involved the deliverance of the entire man. The argument, put in brief form is this: "If the act of circumcision, involving only a small portion of the body, must be done to comply with the law of circumcision even if it falls on the sabbath day, by what right do you condemn me for an act done on the sabbath which brings healing to the whole body?" [p.149].
 - c. Of course, the individual being circumcised was not active in that procedure, but the surgeon was active! In the practical action of baptism, the individual is passive; the one doing the baptizing is active.
 - d. False teachers in religion cannot be consistent; when they bind an opinion, they often find themselves conflicted. Consider: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes 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" (Matt. 23:23).
9. Verse 24: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."
- a. Woods: Judgment should be "righteous," in harmony with the principles of right, and not by "appearance," that is, by what the eye sees on the surface of things. "Granted that the healing of the infirm man and his consequent carrying of his pallet appeared to be in violation of the sabbath law, it was not really so because a higher law of God takes precedence in such cases as is recognized by you in circumcising a male child on the sabbath though on the surface such would appear to be wrong," — our Lord, in effect, replied. [*ibid.*].
 - b. A belief or practice may on the surface appear to be either right or wrong, but we must know the truth of the matter before we pronounce judgment for or against it.
 - c. An event occurred one Saturday afternoon as a lady was walking past the preacher's house. The front door suddenly flew open, the preacher's wife came running outside, with the preacher rapidly coming after her, flailing with a broom. The lady reported to the elders the next morning that the preacher was beating up his wife with a broom, that he must be disciplined for this vicious act. The
-

preacher told the elders the full story: His wife was terrified of mice; one had chased after her, resulting in her fleeing from the house; he immediately followed his wife, using a broom, not to hit his wife, but to kill the mouse.

D. John 7:25-31: His Time Had Not Yet Come.

1. Verse 25: "Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill?"
 - a. During the great festivals of the Law, huge crowds of Jews were in attendance, many from other lands. In this case, it is from some of the citizens of Jerusalem that this question of this verse is raised. It appears that they were asking this among themselves.
 - b. They knew that the rulers were seeking to identify, arrest and execute this man Jesus. They were baffled as to why they did not take him into custody.
 - c. Our Lord had been working in the northern sections of Israel, especially in Galilee, where many saw his miracles and accepted his teachings and were firm believers in him. Undoubtedly a large number of these were kindly inclined toward the Lord. Although these Jewish leaders held great power in Israel, they perceived that if they arrested him in the midst of great crowds, their actions might spark a outburst of support for Jesus.
2. Verses 26-27: "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."
 - a. The Jews of the previous verse are still the source of the comments of this passage. Jesus is speaking boldly in public settings, and yet his enemies do nothing.
 - b. Is it possible that these rulers know that he is truly Christ, the Messiah? Woods:
 - 1) They ask if it is possible that these same rulers have concluded that Jesus is the Christ, the expected Messiah? The construction of the Greek sentence here is such that a negative answer is expected. "It surely cannot be that the rulers know that this is the Christ, can it?"
 - 2) But, how otherwise to account for the strange reluctance of the authorities? Were they now accepting defeat at his hands? Had he completely rebuffed them by his argument on the sabbath? They were baffled by the developments and knew not how to account for them (p.150).
 - c. They observed also that they knew where Jesus lived (in Nazareth) of Galilee. Nathaniel had earlier asked whether any good thing ever came out of Nazareth (John 1:45-46). The present speakers said that when the Messiah came, no one would know from where he came, but they knew this about Jesus.
 - d. Johnson:
 - 1) There was an expectation, probably due to Dan. 7: 13, that the Messiah would suddenly appear in Jerusalem without anyone knowing whence he came. These men, therefore, reason that this cannot be the Christ because they knew from whence he was. They knew that he came from Galilee and probably that his early home was at Nazareth, but were ignorant of the fact that Bethlehem was his birthplace. [Note: Daniel 7:13 does not refer to the first coming of the Lord to earth, but to his return to Heaven–bw].
 - 2) Nor did they know of his heavenly origin, so that it was literally true that the Christ was before them and no man knew whence he came. It might be well to add that the Jewish tradition held that Bethlehem would be the Messiah's birthplace, but he would be caught away by spirits and tempests and lie hidden until he should miraculously appear to enter upon his mission. [p.124].
 - e. The events connected with the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem were not unknown. The chorus of angels, the activities of the shepherd, the appearance of the wise men at Jerusalem seeking the new-born king were matters of public report. But since about thirty years had passed in the meanwhile, their memory of those earlier events might have faded somewhat.
 - f. Woods: His coming into the world, far from being an unknown and unheralded event is set out in minute detail, so that we know where he was to be born, of which tribe, of what ancestry, and of what family. Thus, the affirmation of the people that "When the Christ cometh, no one knoweth

- whence he is," evidences either gross ignorance of the Jewish scriptures, or inexcusable disregard of them, or both! (Isa. 40:3; 9:1, 2; Gen. 49:10; Micah 4:1-5; 5:2; Zech. 9:1.) [pp.150f].
3. Verses 28-29: "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."
 - a. Other translations:
 - 1) ASV: "Jesus therefore cried in the temple, teaching and saying, Ye both know me, and know whence I am; and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. I know him; because I am from him, and he sent me."
 - 2) NKJ: Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."
 - b. They had misconceived notions about the Messiah, their traditions had clouded their thinking and their understanding of the Old Testament prophecies, and their utter rejection of what Jesus had taught, blinded them to the truth.
 - 1) Matthew 13:14-15: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
 - 2) Matthew 15:13-14: "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."
 - c. There were many people in the temple area where our Lord was teaching; he called out sufficiently loud to be heard by many, whose attention would thus be called to his current message.
 - d. Woods:
 - 1) To this point, the Lord's discussion had evidently been in subdued voice not being heard by any except those immediately about him; now, however, he shouts out his words so as to be heard throughout the temple area thus prompting others to come near. He concedes that they knew him as an individual; they were aware of the fact that his childhood and youth had been spent in Nazareth, that he had worked as a carpenter there and that he had kins-people in Galilee; but of his true identity and of his mission in the world they were wholly unaware.
 - 2) He had come from the Father but the Father they knew not; hence, they did not really (truly) know him. His relationship with the Father was real, i.e., true and actual; their traditions to which they so slavishly subscribed had obscured the Father whom they affected to know. This, to those who fancied themselves the guardians of the faith and the only true exponents of religion, was a type of criticism which infuriated them and led them to seek his destruction. They were restrained for the time being by considerations they knew not of. This is indicated in the verse following (p.151).
 - e. There were certain occasions when the Lord raised his voice, as in this present case.
 - 1) John 7:37: "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."
 - 2) John 12:44: "Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me."
 - 3) Luke 23:46: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."
 - f. But our Lord was not a rabble rouser, shouting up a crowd in the streets. "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets" (Matt. 12:19). The following is from author's commentary on Matthew:
 - 1) "Jesus was no street corner egotist, bawling for attention. Techniques of the rabble rouser, the
-

sensationalist, and the soap-box orator were beneath his dignity....In keeping with these words concerning Christ, some of the antics of certain religionists appear to be totally improper. On Times Square in New York City, one often sees screaming advocates of this or that doctrine jostling the throngs pouring forth out of the theaters; and, although their zeal may be commendable, one cannot help remembering that the Christ drew the throngs to himself. He did not invade them, beating on a bucket, and yelling for the attention of the passers-by" (Coffman, p.170).

- 2) The Lord never intended to foment riots by his preaching. He went about teaching whenever a situation presented itself; he taught publicly, when he had opportunity; he taught privately on many occasions. But never did he seek to arouse the multitudes against the civil authorities (cf. Rom. 13:1-7).
 - 3) Our Lord's tactics are to be ours. He did not use street-corner antics; he did not call attention to himself by religious garb.
4. Verse 30: "Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come."
 - a. His hate-filled enemies sought to arrest him at this time, but were unable to do so. At an earlier time, when he was in Nazareth after his baptism, what he said to those people in the synagogue so infuriated them that they tried to throw him off a high cliff.
 - b. Luke 4:28-30: "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way."
 - c. "The charge that they were without the knowledge of God so angered them that they sought to lay hands on him It was the attempt of a mob They were in some way restrained, perhaps by awe, and no man could yet do him violence, for the set time had not come" (Johnson, p.125).
 - d. In this case, we are told why they did not lay hands on the Lord. The situation was such that they could not or dared not try to subdue Him.
 5. Verse 31: "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?"
 - a. There were in the great audience some right-thinking people who believed on Christ. They correctly reasoned that if Jesus were not the Messiah, could the promised One be able to do more signs that this man had done?
 - b. No greater proof was necessary to prove to open-minded people that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah! Thus many of them believed on him.
 - c. Part of the audience were filled with hatred toward Jesus; another part earnestly believed in him. The difference was in the condition of the individual hearts. Most assuredly it behooves us to maintain an open mind to receive the truth. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (John 7:17, ASV).
- E. John 7:32-39: The Pharisees and Chief Priests Sent Men to Arrest Jesus.
1. Verse 32: "The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him."
 - a. Enemies of the truth are quick to learn about the success it reaps and of those who can be taken into their adversarial fold. Not wanting the Lord to obtain any more followers and desiring to take advantage of every opportunity to oppose him, his foes decided to move fast. "It is apparent that the Sanhedrin was quickly called together, it was announced that Jesus was in Jerusalem and teaching in the temple, also that the people were moved by his doctrine and ready to acknowledge him; it was therefore determined to send at once 'the officers,' temple guards always on service within the sacred precincts and composed of Levites, to arrest him" (Johnson, p.125).
 - b. The Pharisees and chief priests sent officers to arrest Jesus. Some scholars state that these chief priests and Pharisees comprised the Jewish Sanhedrin Court, and that the court issued an official
-

- warrant to take the Lord into custody and that he be brought before this august body for trial. This is doubtless the case.
- c. Verse forty-six reports that the officers did not arrest Jesus, saying, "Never man spake like this man." God used the attitude of these officers to disallow the Lord's arrest at this time.
 - d. Smith states: The priesthood was divided into four and twenty "courses," or orders, 1Ch 24:1-19; 2Ch 23:8; Luk 1:5, each of which was to serve in rotation for one week, while the further assignment of special services during the week was determined by lot. Luk 1:9. Each course appears to have commenced its work on the Sabbath, the outgoing priests taking the morning sacrifice, and leaving that of the evening to their successors.
 - 1) Read 1 Chronicles 24:1-19.
 - 2) 2 Chronicles 23:8: "So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men, those that were to come in on the sabbath; with those that were to go out on the sabbath; for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses."
 - 3) Luke 1:5: "There was in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah: and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth."
 - 4) Luke 1:9: "According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense."
2. Verses 33-34: "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."
- a. Other translations:
 - 1) NKJ: Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and *then* I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me and not find *Me*, and where I am you cannot come."
 - 2) ASV: "Jesus therefore said, Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, ye cannot come."
 - b. Other comments:
 - 1) Johnson: Now he gives another part of his discourse. His first words show that he is aware of the beginning of the end. He will not be arrested now for "yet a little while I am with you," but the triumph of his enemies will come shortly, for "I go to him who sent me," "and ye shall seek me and not find me." This is very plain to us in the light of subsequent history, but it is not strange that his hearers on the other side of the cross, did not understand. (p.125).
 - 2) Woods:
 - a) But a "little while" remained of his earthly ministry; in approximately six months he would die on the cross. He said, in effect: "I shall be on earth but a little while and then I shall return to my Father, who sent me. Until that hour comes you cannot touch me. Eventually, however, you will seek me and be unable to find me because where I am you cannot come."
 - b) Tragedy would fall upon the Jewish nation. In its hour of bitter trial it would vainly seek for Messiah to deliver them. Him they could not then find and where he was they could not go because their character and disposition excluded them from that place. (John 8:22, 23.)
 - c) It is well to remember that our Lord here has in mind only those who were his inveterate enemies and whose hearts were so filled with hate that they could never bring themselves to accept his offer of mercy. Their eyes were blinded (2 Cor. 3:16), and their ears were closed (Matt. 13:14, 15), and would evermore remain to his tender entreaties.
 - d) The time came when adversity, like a mighty river, overwhelmed them and they longed to experience and to share in the deliverance of Messiah's reign. But, it was then too late; they had already crucified the Lord of glory when their sorrows engulfed them and their sins had brought destruction upon themselves and their nation. (pp. 152f).
 - c. "Jesus said that he was only with them for a little time; and the day would come when they would search for him, not to arrest him, but to obtain what only he could give, and it would be too late. He would be gone where they could never follow. Jesus meant that he would return to his Father,
-

- from whom by their disobedience they had shut themselves out. But his hearers did not understand.” (Barclay).
3. Verses 35-36: “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?”
 - a. “Throughout the centuries the Jews had been scattered across the world. Sometimes they had been forcibly removed as exiles; sometimes in the time of their country's misfortune they had emigrated to other lands. There was one comprehensive term for the Jews who lived outside Palestine. They were called the Diaspora, the dispersion, and scholars still use this term to describe the Jews who live outside Palestine. That is the phrase the people used here. ‘Is Jesus going away to the Diaspora? Will he even go the length of going away and preaching to the Greeks and so become lost in the masses of the Gentile world? Is he going to run away so far that he will be completely out of reach?’” (Barclay).
 - b. Of course, our Lord did not personally travel into the world, in Gentile lands, teaching those poor lost souls. But his apostles and other of his followers have done just that! The following verses are from the American Standard Version:
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.”
 - 2) Acts 8:4: “They therefore that were scattered abroad, went about preaching the word.”
 - 3) Colossians 1:23: “If so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister.”
 - c. The place Christ went was back to was Heaven, where he remains seated at the Father’s right hand.
 - 1) Daniel 7:13-14: “I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”
 - 2) Acts 1:9-11: “And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.”
 - 3) See also Acts 2:29-35.
 - d. The unbelieving Jews of the context in John had already rejected Jesus as the Christ. They and all others of a similar mind cannot go to where our Lord is.
 - 1) John 8:21: “He said therefore again unto them, I go away, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sin: whither I go, ye cannot come.”
 - 2) John 8:24: “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”
 - 3) Revelation 21:8: “But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.”
 - 4) Matthew 25:46: “And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.”
 4. Verses 37-38: “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.”
-

- a. "There were seven active days of the feast and the eighth was a day of holy rest. It is probable that he to whom all the feasts of Israel pointed, chose this eighth day, the last day, for the proclamation of himself as the hope and joy of Israel. Seven days in tents commemorated the sojourn in the desert, but the eighth day, it is supposed, was devoted more especially to rejoicing and thanksgiving for the blessings of the year" (Johnson, p.126).
 - b. Franklin Camp comments:
 - 1) This passage has been a thorn for commentators. The phrase, "as the scripture hath said," has been a part of the problem. Commentators have been at a loss to find a Scripture in the Old Testament that says this. Some say that it is a reference to several passages and not a single passage.
 - 2) The vital question concerning these verses is, What is the significance of the reference to the Holy Spirit and the believer? Is this a promise of a non-miraculous gift of the Spirit and a reference to a non-miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit? This is what some contend. This passage is used to claim a non-miraculous personal indwelling of the Spirit in the Christian....
 - 3) Let us now consider the first part. The first statement does not need any discussion. The passage points to Pentecost and the beginning of the church. Consideration of point No. 2: What is the relationship of the Spirit to the glorification of Christ? Another passage in the same book will help to clarify this point—John 16:7-16: "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...."
 - 4) Here Christ makes it plain as to the relationship of His glorification to the coming of the Spirit. Christ says that it was expedient for Him to return to the Father in order that the Spirit might be sent (John 16:7). There is no question but that this passage points to the apostles and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.
 - 5) The coming of the Spirit upon the apostles was to glorify Christ. This was done through the revelation of the gospel, which the apostles proclaimed (John 16: 14-15). These verses show that the coming of the Spirit was related to the glorification of Christ. This coming of the Spirit is the miraculous coming on Pentecost. Now I have established by the Scriptures that the coming of the Spirit in connection with the glorification of Christ was the miraculous manifestations beginning at Pentecost. I have found the miraculous manifestation connected with the glorification of Christ. Where is the passage that teaches a non-miraculous indwelling that is connected to the glorification of Christ? I know that brother Thomas appeals to Acts 2:38 as proof, but that is another assumption on his part. I'll deal with Acts 2:38 in a separate chapter.
 - 6) What about the difference in manifestations of the Spirit in contrast to the previous dispensation? Brother Thomas thinks this must refer to a non-miraculous indwelling, since it included more than the apostles, but again he assumes this.
 - 7) As I have continually shown in these studies, the background of the references to the Holy Spirit in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is Joel 2. Pentecost and the book of Acts is in the foreground. Now consider Joel's prophecy and see if it throws any light on this question. Does the prophecy of Joel include more than the apostles? The answer is yes. Joel's statement that your "sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams, and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit and they shall prophesy," is a reference that is not limited to the apostles. There were no women apostles and women were included in the reference to miraculous gifts in Joel's prophecy, but if it's not a reference to the apostles, what is it a reference to? The only answer that can harmonize with what the Bible teaches is that it's a reference to the miraculous endowment that believers received through the laying on of the apostles' hands. Thus, Joel's prophecy promised miraculous endowments to believers. (The book of Acts, as well as other passages, shows that these could only come through the laying on of the apostles' hands.) The
-

book of Acts gives an account of believers receiving miraculous endowments through the hands of the apostles. See Acts, Chapters 8 and 19. This is the first difference between Pentecost and the period of direct revelation, and the previous dispensations. Miraculous endowments were not given in general to the Israelites in the period of Judaism as they were given to believers during the period when revelation was being given directly and confirmed. As added proof that John 7:38 and 39 points to Pentecost and the things that followed, look again at Mark 16: 16-20:

- a) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.
 - b) And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
 - c) They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.
 - d) So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.
- 8) And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.
- a) First, let us examine Mark. Mark says, ". . .Go . . .preach . . .he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . .these signs shall follow them that believe."
 - b) Second, look at John 7:38-39: "He that believeth . . .out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit...)" The word "believeth" in John 7:38 is a generic term; a reference to the obedient believer. It is equal to the obedience of faith (Romans 1:5). The believer of John 7:38 is the same as the baptized believer of Mark 16: 16. The reception of the Spirit by the believer of John 7:39 is equal to the signs that followed believers of Mark 16: 17. The signs of Mark 16:17 are simply the miraculous endowments that believers received through the hands of the apostles.
 - c) Third, the statement in John is general, while the one in Mark is more specific. I am sure that brethren would agree that the believer in John 7:38 is not the "faith only" kind of believer. I think that they would further agree that the believer of John 7:39 is the baptized believer of Mark 16: 16. If this is true, then why does not the reception of the Spirit in John 7:38-39 mean the same thing as the signs that believers received in Mark 16: 17-20? This is the truth about the matter. The promise of the Spirit in John 7:39 was the promise of miraculous endowments through the hands of the apostles to believers. Joel's prophecy promises it. Mark 16:16-18 promises miraculous endowments to believers. The book of Acts gives examples of believers receiving miraculous endowments, and the Epistles refer to believers having received miraculous endowments. This was an entirely distinct thing and had never characterized any previous period.
 - d) Fourth, (this is still not all the difference in the miraculous manifestation which began at Pentecost that came through the hands of the apostles, which believers received during this period while revelation was being given), look at the signs of Mark 16:17 and 18: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Note the number of things that are mentioned, as signs in these verses which would characterize believers during this period that were distinct from any previous dispensation. For example, new tongues were something that characterized not only the apostles, but others as well. Acts 19: 1-6 is proof that some spoke in tongues other than the apostles. Of course, the tongue here is a language. The figure of living water flowing from the belly of believers was the preaching of the gospel by direct revelation and the confirmation of the gospel by these miraculous manifestations. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word," (Acts 8:4). This preaching was done by the miraculous endowments
-

that believers had received through the hands of an apostle. Philip is an example of this in Acts 8. Summary of John 7:38-39.

- 9) The coming of the Spirit and the glorification of Christ is a reference to the miraculous operation of the Spirit beginning at Pentecost.
 - a) The believer of John 7:38 and 39 is the baptized believer of Mark 16:16.
 - b) The reception of the Spirit by believers of John 7:38-39 is the miraculous endowments of believers that came through the hands of apostles and is according to the promise of Joel 2 and the Commission as recorded by Mark 16: 16-20. [*Work of the Holy Spirit*, pp.114-119, Adapted slightly to fit my outline].
 - c. Regarding the Feast:
 - 1) This feast, the feast of Tabernacles, was held from the 15th to the 21st of the Jewish month Tisri, corresponding to a portion of September and October of our year. The first two days and the last day were regarded as especially sacred. The feast is called the feast of Ingathering (Ex. 23:16) because it was a time of thanksgiving for the harvest of oil, corn and other produce being gathered in. It also commemorated that period the Israelites spent in the wilderness wanderings and the people lived in booths or arbors throughout the week in memory thereof. These booths were made from limbs of trees and leaves. During the week no one lived at home and special services were conducted in the temple.
 - 2) Expositors differ regarding the "last day" of the feast alluded to in the text. Many think it was the eighth day, when a special, solemn service was observed following the feast. But what appears to be an insuperable objection to this conclusion is the fact the ceremony of drawing water from the pool of Siloam was not observed on the eighth day and it appears to have been this action which prompted the Lord's words regarding the living waters. Each day, during the feast a priest carried a golden pitcher to the pool, filled it and returned to the court of the temple, accompanied by throngs of people rejoicing greatly and poured it on the altar. Immediately, the Hallel, consisting of Psalms 113-118 was chanted by the Levites and the people repeated each line after the priests. It was a ceremony of much joy and satisfaction. [See Woods, pp.154f].
 - d. Tabernacles, Feast of: From Easton's Encyclopedia:
 - 1) The third of the great annual festivals of the Jews Le 23:33-43. It is also called the "feast of ingathering" Ex 23:16; De 16:13. It was celebrated immediately after the harvest, in the month Tisri, and the celebration lasted for eight days Le 23:33-43. During that period the people left their homes and lived in booths formed of the branches of trees. The sacrifices offered at this time are mentioned in Nu 29:13-38. It was at the time of this feast that Solomon's temple was dedicated 1Ki 8:2. Mention is made of it after the return from the Captivity. This feast was designed (1) to be a memorial of the wilderness wanderings, when the people dwelt in booths Le 23:43 and (2) to be a harvest thanksgiving Ne 8:9-18. The Jews, at a later time, introduced two appendages to the original festival, viz., (1) that of drawing water from the Pool of Siloam, and pouring it upon the altar, Joh 7:2,37, as a memorial of the water from the rock in Horeb; and (2) of lighting the lamps at night, a memorial of the pillar of fire by night during their wanderings.
 - 2) "The feast of Tabernacles, the harvest festival of the Jewish *Church*, was the most popular and important festival after the Captivity. At Jerusalem it was a gala day. It was to the autumn pilgrims, who arrived on the 14th (of the month Tisri, the feast beginning on the 15th) day, like entrance into a silvan city. Roofs and courtyards, streets and squares, roads and gardens, were green with boughs of citron and myrtle, palm and willow. The booths recalled the pilgrimage through the wilderness. The ingathering of fruits prophesied of the spiritual harvest." Valling's Jesus Christ, page 133.
 - e. Woods on the Feast of Tabernacles ceremonies:
-

- 1) Ancient rabbis are quoted as having said that he who had never witnessed this ceremony did not really know what rejoicing meant. At the close of the singing of the Hallel there was a pause in the activities and it was evidently at this moment that the voice of the Lord rang out saying, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink... ." John says Jesus "cried out," which emphasizes the fact that he shouted loudly so that all might hear.
- 2) His words would have special significance to the people at the feast. It was during the dry season when the rays of the burning sun shone from a cloudless sky on a parched earth which had received no rain for months. Thirst was a common experience in a land where water is often scarce and dry seasons extended. The ceremony of pouring out the water on the altar commemorated that period in the wilderness wanderings when the people of Israel suffered so greatly from want of water that Moses was instructed by Jehovah to bring them water from the rock. (Num. 20:1-11.) The people knew what it was like to experience physical thirst; some, at least, among those at the feast were thirsting for spiritual water; and Jesus bade them come to him and drink and live. [p.155].
- f. The apostles of Christ received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts Two. They had the power also to lay their hands on converts and bestow certain miraculous gifts to them (1 Cor. 10:8-10). No one else had the power to confer those spiritual gifts, thus, when the apostles had all died, and all of those upon whom they had laid hands also died, no one on earth had access to supernatural gifts from that time forward.
- g. But those gifts are no longer necessary. Through those inspired and Spirit-guided men of the first century, the entirety of God's final revelation was revealed; those writings were collected and passed on to future generation in the form of the Bible. When the gospel is taught to others, the blessings inculcated therein are passed on to those penitent, baptized believers.
 - 1) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
 - 2) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - 3) 1 John 1:6-10: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
5. Verse 39: "(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)."
 - a. The following passages have a direct bearing on our present verse:
 - 1) Joel 2:28-32: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call." Joel predicted that some marvelous events would transpire "in the last days."
 - 2) Some attribute these last days to the closing period of the Mosaic Age. God's miraculous dealings of that era began with the birth and ministry of Christ. The Mosaic Age ended with the crucifixion of the Lord, but Joel's prediction had to do with the events beginning on Pentecost Day (Acts 2).

- b. This last great demonstration of supernatural powers (excepting those associated with the return of Christ at the end of time) was predicted by Joel. Micah 7:15 also contains a reference to these "marvelous" powers, stating that they would last for a time period equivalent to the journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan (forty years). It is unlikely that the closing years of Jewish history from Pentecost to 70 A.D. would have been designated as the "last days."
- c. In view of other references, including the present passage (Acts 2:16-17), it is clear that the *last days* is a reference to the last dispensation of time, the Christian Age (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:1-2; Jude 3). It is during this last age that Christ reigns on his throne at God's right hand (Acts 2:33-36; Zech. 6:12-13).
- 1) John 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."
 - 2) John 16:7-8: "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."
 - 3) John 16:12-16: "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. 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."
 - 4) Luke 24:44-49: "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - 5) Acts 1:4-8: "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - 6) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - 7) Acts 2:14-19: "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they
-

shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke.”

- 8) Acts 2:29-33: “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell [*hades*], neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”
 - d. Many of our good brethren honestly believe that when a penitent believer is baptized into Christ that the Holy Spirit, directly and personally, takes up residence in the body of that individual. It appears that the majority (or nearly so) of brethren view this gift as an ordinary indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Most of these do not claim that this benefit does anything for the Christian apart from the word of God. In the conviction and conversion of alien sinners, these brethren faithfully maintain that the word of God is the instrument. The gift is said to be something that automatically comes to each person who obeys the gospel. Passages cited include:
 - 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Acts 5:32: "And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."
 - 3) Romans 8:9,11,16,26,27: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his....But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you....The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God....Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
 - 5) Galatians 4:6: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."
 - 6) 2 Corinthians 1:22: "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."
 - 7) Ephesians 1:13-14: "In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."
 - e. Many of these brethren think that the Spirit personally indwells us, that the gift received is the Holy Spirit as a person. They have difficulty in identifying what the Spirit does for them if, anything, as he remains in their body. Franklin Camp's remarks listed earlier provide the clearest and best description of John 7:38-39. Examine carefully these powerful passages:
 - 1) Ephesians 5:18: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”
 - 2) Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
-

- 3) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
- 4) Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

F. John 7:40-44: Is He the Prophet or the Christ?

1. Verse 40: “Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.”
 - a. From what the audience had seen and heard, many of them affirmed that Jesus was the Prophet who was to come, spoken of prominently in the Old Testament.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 18:15-19: “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; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”
 - 2) We have the declaration that Jesus is that Prophet in Acts 3:22-23: “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”
 - 3) Acts 4:11-12: “This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
 - b. A genuine prophet of God [*i.e.* a true spokesman for God] was a teacher of God’s will; that message might relate to something from the past, or to a current situation, or to reveal certain future events. He could do these things because he was inspired to relate Heaven’s truth. Accompanying their prophetic work was the ability to bring about supernatural activities. [John the Baptizer was a prophet but he did no miracles].
 - 1) Matthew 11:7-11 And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.
 - 2) John 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.”
 - 3) Matthew 21:11: “And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.”
 - c. It seems that some thought that the coming Prophet and anticipated Messiah were different persons. This first group identified Jesus as being the Prophet; the second group thought he was the Messiah.
 2. Verse 41-42: “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?”
-

- a. The second group thought Jesus was the Messiah [the Christ, the Anointed One of God]. They did not then perceive that Jesus of Nazareth is both the Prophet and the Messiah; and further, that he is also the Son of God.
 - b. Another group countered by asking whether the Scriptures spoke of Christ coming out of Galilee? They expected a negative reply. They asked if the Scriptures said he would be of the seed of David and would come from Bethlehem? The answer they anticipated was positive.
 - c. Coffman: "Galilee ... was indeed the residence of Jesus, but the people seemed ignorant of the fact that he was born in Bethlehem as the prophet had foretold (Micah 5:2). It seems that they merely assumed that since he lived in Galilee he had also been born there. Also, added to the difficulty of the people was the slander of the Pharisees that no prophet had ever come out of Galilee; but they were wrong about that also, Jonah, the first of the prophets, having come from Galilee (2 Kings 14:25)."
 - d. Johnson: Jesus, reared at Nazareth, coming to Jerusalem from Galilee, was supposed by the Jews to have been born there, and they were well aware of the fact that Christ was to be born at Bethlehem. Even the Talmud explains Micah 5: 2, as declaring that Bethlehem should be Christ's birthplace. The wise men who came to Jerusalem seeking the young Babe heard the same thing from the priests. Nor was anything more clearly predicted than that he should be of the seed of David. [p.128].
 - 1) Isaiah 11:1: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."
 - 2) Jeremiah 23:5: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."
 - 3) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Beth-lehem 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."
3. Verse 43: "So there was a division among the people because of him."
- a. The groups of Jews involved in this dissension could not come to an agreement. The truth is, Jesus was indeed born in Bethlehem and was from the seed of David; it is also true that he grew up in Nazareth of Galilee.
 - b. The word in Greek translated "division" denotes a schism, a deep and contention split. This dissension could have been solved if knowledgeable and calm minds had prevailed.
 - c. A calm discussion conducted without anger or rancor, can often lead to agreement. Such discussions led to much good in:
 - 1) The case of Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3).
 - 2) The case of Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (John 4).
 - 3) In the case of Peter and Cornelius and his family and friends (Acts 10, 11).
 - 4) In cases where the participants are all honestly seeking the truth.
4. Verse 44: "And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him."
- a. Johnson: In the heat and bitter animosity of the dispute some were eager to lay violent hands on him. For a year and a half the Jewish leaders had been looking for a pretext to seize him, and when he appeared at this feast they sought to carry out their purposes. Though officers were sent to apprehend him, and a mob was ready to seize him, yet "no man laid bands on him," "for his hour was not yet come."
 - b. Some in that audience were minded to seize the Lord and deliver him to the authorities or, as a mob, to assault him themselves. Perhaps they lacked the courage to take the action, or there was no one in their midst willing to take the leadership. When everyone is in charge, no one is in charge. There was a man in the military many years ago who decided to get out and try civilian life, after serving twelve years in the service. Before long, he re-enlisted in his old outfit, because "there ain't nobody in charge out there!"
-

- c. The Father would not allow his Son to be executed until the proper time and circumstances had come. His entrance into the world was timed ["But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4)]. Doubtless, an innumerable amount of details had to be met. God dispatched his Son into the world when the time was ripe. There are definite indicators that the timing of the first advent was perfect.
- 1) Sin had been fully identified as the transgression of God's will. Universal rebellion against God had brought universal suffering and condemnation, with no hope of escape without Christ.
 - a) Psalms 14:1-4: "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God. They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people *as* they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD."
 - b) Ecclesiastes 7:20: "For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."
 - c) Ecclesiastes 7:29: "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."
 - 2) Both Jew and Gentile had perceived that they could not save themselves: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).
 - 3) God had shown man that he could not be saved by the law of Moses, and that the natural religions of the Gentiles were likewise without any saving power.
 - 4) Thinking men had learned that they needed the services of a special Savior.
 - 5) Rome had given the world an orderly system of civil law, constructed a network of roads which facilitated travel, established an empire that enabled men to travel without encountering closed borders, and ruled over a world that was presently at peace.
 - 6) The Greeks had provided a language that was able uniquely to express the message of God's word to human minds clearly and accurately.
 - 7) Morality was at a low ebb in all lands, even among the Jews. Mankind was ripe for the high standard of the gospel.
 - 8) Religion was at an extremely low point; every kind of perverted belief and practice had been invented. Many were able to see the foolishness of idolatry, and wanted something better.
- d. God was providentially guiding the affairs of the world to bring the Messiah into the world at exactly the right time; and his hand was controlling various developments to the precise time when Christ was to be arrested, tried and crucified.
- e. Today, religion is at an extremely low point again. Every kind of perverted belief and practice is in public view for all to perceive, and to cause the knowledgeable hearts to grieve! Many are beginning to see the foolishness of our current dilemma, but are not able to locate the solution. That answer is and always will be the pure Gospel of Christ!
- 1) John 12:32-33: "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."
 - 2) Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
 - 3) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 4) Luke 24:46-47: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
 - 5) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
-

- 6) Acts 2:36-39: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."
- 7) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
- 8) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
- 9) Romans 10:8-18: "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 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! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."

G. John 7:45-53: Never Man Spake Like This Man.

1. Verses 45-46: "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."
 - a. Woods: The "officers" were minor officials empowered with the responsibility of keeping order in the temple area They had been instructed by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus, and to bring him before the Sanhedrin, the high court of the Jews. It was the sabbath yet the court was in session and apparently continued so from the time the order went out to arrest Jesus. The long session of the tribunal evidences the intensity of feeling against Jesus. When the officers returned without having accomplished their mission their superiors demanded an explanation. [pp.158f].
 - b. Earlier in verse 32, the Lord's enemies had dispatched the temple police to arrest Jesus. Predictably, they had returned empty-handed, for verse 30 declared that the time for the Lord's great sacrifice had not yet come. There were various other times during his public ministry when Jesus was able to avoid the evil schemes of his enemies and thus evade their hatred.
 - c. These officers were called before their superiors who demanded why they had not brought Jesus. The best and only answer they could give was: *No man ever spoke like this man speaks!* The Samaritan woman made a similar statement to the other Samaritans about the Lord: "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" (John 4:28-30).
 - d. But these Jewish leaders had no interest in learning from Jesus; they wanted to get rid of him, even by violence. "In verse 32 we are told that the chief priests, instigated by the Pharisees, had sent the

- officers to arrest him. This was the act of the Sanhedrin, and was the first official attempt to arrest him, the beginning of the course that resulted, six months later, in the final arrest, trial and crucifixion. These officers returned without the expected prisoner, and the reason was demanded by the Sanhedrin which was in session, apparently waiting for their return” [See Johnson, p.129].
- e. Woods:
- 1) It would be difficult to find an incident in our Lord's life involving a stronger testimony to the power of his personality and the deep impression his teaching made on honest hearts. These men, without the malevolent disposition of their superiors and thus able impartially to appraise the Lord's words, were simply overawed by them and by him who uttered them.
 - 2) Conviction came to their hearts by his remarkable speech and personality. No one ever spoke as he did because (1) he spoke with divine authority; (2) his words were more applicable to man's needs than any other was able to speak; (3) he addressed the heart and conscience; (4) he spoke for the Father as well as for himself; and (5) his manner of speaking was fully in keeping with his momentous theme. [p.159].
2. Verses 47-49: “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.”
- a. The bias of the Pharisees is sadly displayed. These men had closed their minds to perceive Jesus in his true light; they were prejudiced against him and were welded to their own opinions and traditions. Nothing could sway them to the truth.
 - b. Their response to the report of the officers was one of ridicule and wrath. They accused them of being deceived, as were all the other Jews who did not know the law. When the officers made their report, they were met with this ridicule: “None of the rulers have believed on him; the Pharisees have not believed on him; only those ignorant people who do not know the law have allowed themselves to be deceived by this man. Those deceived people are all cursed!”
 - c. If these leaders had accurately known the Law, they could have seen how Jesus was fulfilling the truth of the Law. A few months later, these leaders must have been filled with great terror when Jesus made his Triumphant Entry into the city of Jerusalem.
 - d. Matthew 21:8-9 "And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strowed *them* in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."
3. Verses 50-51: “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?”
- a. Nicodemus was also among the rulers of the Jews: “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews” (John 3:10. His sincerity is indicated by his first encounter with the Lord, in John 3. Although he may not have been an open disciple of Jesus, his devotion to the Lord is obvious.
 - b. This good man asked his fellow-rulers whether their Law condemned anyone without first hearing his testimony. First a charge must be brought against a man, with proper evidence of the alleged crime; the accused was then given an opportunity to answer the charges. No formal charges had been given and no proof of guilt could be forthcoming.
 - c. The statement by Nicodemus indicates a reproof toward the rest of the court. They should not have been pursuing a case against Jesus; they were premature and prejudiced.
4. Verses 52-53: “They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went unto his own house.”
- a. Johnson: Are you a follower of the Galilean? Then they assert, "Out of Galilee hath arisen no prophet"; a false statement. Jonah was of Galilee (1 Kings 14:25); Elijah probably also (1 Kings 17:1), and Nahum, also (Nahum 1:1). In their scorn of Galilee they held it impossible that a man of God could come out of that province. With such recrimination the session of the Sanhedrin broke up.[p,130].
-

-
- b. There were some prophets connected with Galilee:
 - 1) 2 Kings 14:25: “He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher.”
 - 2) 1 Kings 17:1: “And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.” There is a possibility that Elijah was from that province.
 - 3) Nahum 1:1: “The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.”
 - c. Woods: “The court disbanded in a confused and disorderly manner. Thwarted in their plans to seize Jesus and in disagreement regarding him among themselves there was nothing else they could do and they adjourned and went home.” [p.161].
-

John Chapter 8

- A. What about the woman taken in adultery? Many do not think John 7:53—John 8:11 is inspired.
1. Barclay offers these comments:
 - a. To many this is one of the loveliest and the most precious stories in the gospels; and yet it has great difficulties attaching to it. The older the manuscripts of the New Testament are, the more valuable they are [*This is an assumption!*—Bob Winton]. They were all copied by hand, and obviously the nearer they are to the original writings the more likely they are to be correct [*another assumption*—bw]. We call these very early manuscripts the Uncial manuscripts, because they are written in capital letters; and we base the text of the, New Testament on the earliest ones, which date from the fourth to the sixth century. The fact is that of all these early manuscripts this story occurs only in one, and that is not one of the best. Six of them omit it completely. Two leave a blank space where it should come. It is not till we come to the late Greek manuscripts and the medieval manuscripts that we find this story, and even then it is often marked to show that it is doubtful.
 - b. Another source of our knowledge of the text of the New Testament is what are called the versions; that is, the translations into languages other than Greek. This story is not included in the early Syriac version, nor in the Coptic or Egyptian version, nor in some of the early Latin versions.
 - c. Again, none of the early fathers seems to know anything about it. Certainly they never mention it or comment on it. Origen, Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Cyril of Alexandria on the Greek side do not mention it. The first Greek commentator to remark on it is Euthymius Zigabenus whose date is A.D. 1118, and even he says that it is not in the best manuscripts.
 - d. Where, then, did this incident come from? Jerome certainly knew it in the fourth century, for he included it in the Vulgate. We know that Augustine and Ambrose both knew it, for they comment on it. We know that it is in all the later manuscripts. It is to be noted that its position varies a great deal. In some manuscripts it is put at the end of the fourth gospel; and in some it is inserted after Lk.21:38.
 - e. But we can trace it even further back. It is quoted in a third century book called The Apostolic Constitutions, where it is given as a warning to bishops who are too strict. Eusebius, the Church historian, says that Papias tells a story "of a woman who was accused of many sins before the Lord," and Papias lived not very long after A.D. 100.
 - f. Here, then, are the facts. This story can be traced as far back as very early in the second century. When Jerome produced the Vulgate he, without question, included it. The later manuscripts and the medieval manuscripts all have it. And yet none of the great manuscripts includes it. None of the great Greek fathers of the Church ever mentions it. But some of the great Latin fathers did know it, and speak of it. What is the explanation? We need not be afraid that we shall have to let this lovely story go; for it is guarantee enough of its genuineness that we can trace it back to almost A.D. 100. But we do need some explanation of the fact that none of the great manuscripts includes it. Moffatt, Weymouth and Rieu print it in brackets; and the Revised Standard Version prints it in small type at the foot of the page.
 - g. Augustine gives us a hint. He says that this story was removed from the text of the gospel because "some were of slight faith," and "to avoid scandal." We cannot tell for certain, but it would seem that in the very early days the people who edited the text of the New Testament thought that this was a dangerous story, a justification for a light view of adultery, and therefore omitted it. After all, the Christian Church was a little island in a sea of paganism. Its members were so apt to relapse into a way of life where chastity was unknown; and were for ever open to pagan infection. But as time went on the danger grew less, or was less feared, and the story, which had always circulated by word of mouth and which one manuscript retained, came back. It is not likely that it is now in the place where it ought to be. It was probably inserted here to illustrate Jesus' saying in Jn. 8:15:
-

"I judge no man." In spite of the doubt that the modern translations cast on it, and in spite of the fact that the early manuscripts do not include it, we may be sure that this is a real story about Jesus, although one so gracious that for long men were afraid to tell it.

2. Burgon:

- a. If I do not here insist that the absence of the famous *pericopa de adulterâ* (S. John vii. 53-viii. 11,) from so many MSS., is to be explained in precisely the same way, it is only because the genuineness of that portion of the Gospel is generally denied; and I propose, in this enumeration of instances, not to set foot on disputed ground. I am convinced, nevertheless, that the first occasion of the omission of those memorable verses was the lectionary practice of the primitive Church, which, on Whitsunday, read from S. John vii. 37 to viii. 12, leaving out the twelve verses in question.
 - b. Those verses, from the nature of their contents, (as Augustine declares,) easily came to be viewed with dislike or suspicion. The passage, however, is as old as the second century, for it is found in certain copies of the old Latin. Moreover Jerome deliberately gave it a place in the Vulgate.
3. Fourfold Gospel: This section is wanting in nearly all older manuscripts, but Jerome (A.D. 346-420) says that in his time it was contained in "many Greek and Latin manuscripts," and these must have been as good or better than the best manuscripts we now possess. But whether we regard it as part of John's narrative or not, scholars very generally accept it as a genuine piece of history.

B. John 8:1-11: The Case of the Woman Taken in Adultery.

1. Verses 1-2: "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."
 - a. The last verse of Chap. VII. says that "every man went to his own house." Those who disputed with him had homes in Jerusalem to which they retired, but "Jesus went to the Mount of Olives," perhaps to the shades of Gethsemane where he rested under a leafy olive tree, possibly to the bower of some of his Galilean friends, constructed of branches as was the custom at this feast, possibly to the loved home of Lazarus and his sisters which was situated on the farther slope of the mount, about two miles from the city. This is somewhat remarkable as the only place where John mentions by name this hallowed mount, although it soon acquires a striking prominence in his history from its relation to the scenes of Bethany, Gethsemane and the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It was separated from the city by the valley of Jehoshaphat, through which flowed the brook Kedron, and overlooked Jerusalem from the east. The road to Jericho, the Jordan, and Perea lay across, or rather around its brow. On its eastern slope were the sacred localities of Bethphage and Bethany. [See Johnson].
 - b. Our Lord was an early riser. There were occasions also when we are told that he prayed all night. The pressing nature of his work required proper use of his limited time.
 - 1) John 9:4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
 - 2) John 7:33: "Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me."
 - c. Arriving early at the temple, Christ found a crowd of people already assembled. Perhaps they sensed that something very important was in the offing and they wanted to be there to see. As soon as they recognized Jesus, they gathered around him. He sat down in order to teach them; evidently this was his usual stance (cf. Matt. 5; John 4). We are not told that he was sitting on the ground; there may have been some low object or wall.
 2. Verses 3-5: "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?"
 - a. False religionists can also be zealous and prompt to spread their error or attack someone they think is an enemy. The foes of the Lord often dogged his steps. They had already set the stage, having caught the woman in sin. They may have learned of her lifestyle and broke in to catch her.
-

- b. We have good reason to accept the report as good Scripture.
 - 1) Both Christ and the Pharisees are in character: what each did is what we would expect.
 - 2) The passage gives an excellent demonstration of the Lord's mercy.
 3. Verses 6-7: "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."
 - a. "Stooped ... and wrote ... on the ground ... The Saviour reacted to such a grotesque and embarrassing situation with silence and by stooping and writing on the ground. This is the only instance of Jesus writing; and the fact of his writing being quickly trampled under foot strongly suggests the only other instance of deity's writing, namely, that of God's inscribing the tables of stone. The decalogue too was quickly trampled under foot (spiritually), and Moses smashed the tables of stone (Exodus 32:19). If this passage is really spurious, it is difficult to explain such overtones as this" (Coffman).
 - b. The Scribes and Pharisees schemed to catch him in some fault; here, they tried to place him in an impossible situation (John 8:1-6).
 - c. If Jesus responded that they put the woman to death, he would have been violating Roman Law: "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**" (John 18:31). If Jesus had said to turn the woman loose, they would have accused him before the people as violating a requirement of the Mosaic Law.
 - d. Jesus' response:
 - 1) He stooped down, wrote something on the ground (no one knows what). This action was likely done slowly, to give the audience time to reflect.
 - 2) Then standing up again, he told those who were themselves without sin to cast the first stone. He put the onus on the witnesses, who were obligated to throw the first rock. "Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you" (Deut. 17:5-7).
 - 3) The witnesses were unwilling to act. They were not ready to proclaim that they themselves were without sin. Their conscience still had some degree of life.
 4. Verses 9-10: "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?"
 - a. Johnson:
 - 1) Resuming his former attitude he left them to ponder what he had said and to act upon it. There, for a little while, stood the silent scene; the stooping Lord slowly tracing characters with his fingers upon the earth; the crouching and weeping woman held by her accusers, and the haughty Scribes and Pharisees with shame upon their countenances, perplexed faces and eyes cast upon the earth; a scene worthy of a painter. They had forgotten that the Mosaic law provided that the witnesses on whose testimony the accused was condemned should cast the first stone (Deut. 17: 5-7), and also that a guilty husband could not demand punishment upon a guilty wife, according to their Rabbinical law. Before the judgment of the law of Moses could be carried out, therefore, they must settle the question of their own innocence, yet his language reveals a knowledge of their guilt.
-

- 2) Being convicted by their own conscience, they went out. As he wrote and left them to their own thoughts, conscience began to do its work. "The word of the Lord was quick and powerful." In the presence of one who read their hearts they were helpless, and, one by one, they began to go quietly out, the eldest and guiltiest leading the way, and in a little while the only figures left of the group were Jesus, still writing, and the woman whom they had left behind. She might have followed, but I trust that she remained because her heart yearned for forgiveness and a new life in the presence of the Sinless One before her.
 - b. His wicked enemies were defeated (8:9). The Lord sometimes called the Pharisees and their companions in crime a wicked and adulterous generation (Matt. 16:4). They hated Jesus and sought to ensnare him (John 8:6). They had no regard for the truth. They would have brought the man if they were sincere in their charge against the woman. They could have brought the man and the woman before the proper civil authorities. Jesus never exercised civil authority over the Jews; that was not in his purview. Of course, they merely used the woman as weapon against Christ.
 - c. The problem presented to the Lord was intended to get him into trouble: with the Romans or the Jews. If he said she should be stoned, the Romans would be involved (John 18:31). If he said turn her loose, the Jews would be enraged.
 - 1) They often tried to get the Lord into trouble (See Matt. 22:23-33; 22:34-40; 19:3).
 - 2) They had no compassion or mercy for woman (John 8:3-5). Compare: "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" (Matt. 23:23).
 - d. They made her as public an example as possible; they exposed her in the temple where the Lord was engaged in teaching eternal principles to the crowd which had assembled. It is tragic to fall into hands of unscrupulous sinners.
 - 1) David was exposed to the hatred and jealousy of King Saul.
 - 2) Paul was greatly endangered by the hostile mob of Jews who would have killed him on the spot (Acts 23:17-30; 24:1-35).
 - e. The right attitude to have:
 - 1) Matthew 5:7: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."
 - 2) 1 Peter 3:8: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."
 - 3) Ephesians 4:32: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
 - f. They were scrupulous but guilty themselves (John 8:9).
 - 1) They claimed to be keepers of the law (Matt. 23:23-28).
 - 2) But they did not bring the man, who was as guilty as the woman (cf. Rom. 2:17-24).
 - g. God was their judge; he judges us as we judge others:
 - 1) Matthew 7:1-2: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."
 - 2) John 7:24: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."
 - 3) 1 Samuel 16:7: "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."
 - h. They fell into own trap:
 - 1) Proverbs 26:7: "The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools."
 - 2) Proverbs 26:27: "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him."
 - 3) Ecclesiastes 10:8: "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him."
-

- 4) Esther 7:10: "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified."
 - 5) 2 Samuel 12:1-7: "And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul."
 - i. Lord directed the woman to amend her ways: "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" (John 8:10-11). Our Lord did not condone her adultery, but he was willing to forgive her when her penitence became obvious. Without repentance, there can be no forgiveness:
 - 1) Luke 13:5: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
 - 2) Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 - 3) Our Lord condemns the guilty who remain in rebellion: (Rev 21:8). His law is stronger and stricter than Moses' law:
 - a) Matthew 19:8-9: "He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:8-9).
 - b) Matthew 5:28-29: "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." He even forbids the sinful lust that lies behind this act of sin.
 - 4) Christ hates sin, but is the friend of sinners (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Matt. 1:21; 1 John 2:1-3; Acts 3:26).
 5. Verse 9: "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."
 - a. Those who had brought the woman and leveled the charge against her were moved by their conscience. All of these accusers left the immediate scene; but we remember that the rest of the great group was still present. There seems to have been at least some slim hope of their becoming followers of the Lord. To have continued pressing the issue, they would be implying they were guiltless of any sin. The conscience would allow them to do this.
 6. Verses 10-11: "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."
 - a. At this point, Jesus stood up and viewed the changed scene. He asked where her accusers were, and whether any man was present to press the charge against her. By leaving, the men who brought her, in effect, withdrew their accusation; their charge was now moot.
-

- b. She admitted that no accuser was there. The Lord stated that he did not accuse her either; although he was empowered to know anything he wished to know, any charge he might levy against her would have been hearsay, thus inadmissible.
- c. He did not condemn her to death, which implies that he forgave her, with the strong admonition to sin no more. Only a divine being can forgive sin. Compare: "When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house" (Mark 2:5-11).
- d. Woods: No one from among her accusers had chosen to condemn her to death by stoning. Neither would Jesus. It was not his work to execute but to save. He condemned the sin and he showed compassion for the sinner. He would neither suspend the law of Moses by superior edict at this time, nor would he usurp the functions of civil authorities. (p.165).

B. John 8:12-20: The Father Who Sent Me Bears Witness of Me.

1. Verse 12: "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."
 - a. Once again, Jesus began to speak to the crowd that had gathered when he entered the temple a little while earlier. When he had first arrived, a group of scribes and Pharisees had accosted him their efforts to put him in jeopardy with the Romans or with the Jews. Now he addresses the multitude as though nothing had just passed. The incident involving the woman would have taken only a short time.
 - b. Our Lord here declared to the audience that he is the light of the world. "Light" is used as a figure for truth and darkness denotes ignorance of truth. He is referring to the truth of God's will; he is the purveyor of God's truth; he revealed and caused to be revealed the fullness of that truth." He would later tell the apostles:
 - 1) John 14:25-26: "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."
 - 2) John 16:12-14: "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."
 - c. Being the light for the world, those who follow his directions will not walk in darkness, but in light. His light will so-illuminate the way that there will be no need for them to stumble. They can see obstacles in time to avoid them.
 - 1) Psalm 119:1-4: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently."
 - 2) Psalm 119:104-105: "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
 - 3) 1 John 1:5-10: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If

we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

- d. The word of the gospel gives illumination; it shows us the way to Christ, the way to serve God acceptably, the way to worship God properly, the way to live, and the way to heaven (cf. Ps. 119:105; 1 John 1:5-10). If Satan, acting through his agents (2 Cor. 11:13-15), can convince us that the Bible is not accurate, or that it is not the final authority in religious affairs, or that it may be correctly followed by merely keeping the spirit of its teachings, he will have very effectively blinded our minds to the truth. Those teachers who affirm that there are many ways to heaven, or who maintain that absolute truth is unattainable, or that sincerity alone is sufficient, blind the minds of many.
2. Verse 13: “The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.”
 - a. The Pharisees in the crowd accused Jesus of bearing false testimony, that alleging he is the light of the world, does not make that allegation true. Their mere denial does not disprove the fact either.
 - b. But the Lord did not rely on a simple statement of fact. His miracles were more than sufficient to prove his messages.
 - 1) Mark 16:17-20: “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”
 - 2) 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.”
 - 3) Hebrews 2:1-4: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”
 - 4) Romans 1:4: “And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”
 3. Verse 14: “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.”
 - a. The inventors of human religions likely presumed that they were doing a good work, maybe even thought they were being guided by God. But no mortal man is able to guide himself infallibly (cf. Jer. 10:23). Our Lord was not a fallible human; his life was perfectly clear of any wrong-doing; he did not sin and deceit never emerged from his mouth (cf. 1 Pet. 2:22). His teachings were all from God, none bore the frailty that is common to mortals. His memory reached back into eternity; he knew perfectly his surrounding and activities from before time began. Humans have no conscious memory of the time they were in their mother’s womb; our first memories go only back to our early childhood.
 - b. Therefore, his witness of himself was perfectly true. No descendant of Adam is able to be perfectly certain of his own evaluation of himself without the evidence of that perfect standard, the inspired word of God.
 - c. Our Lord had always been; he had no beginning of life, nor will he experience the end of his life. His activities have been on-going from eternity:
-

- 1) John 1:1-3: "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. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
- 2) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Beth-lehem 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." His entrance into this world was made at Bethlehem when his was born of Mary; the generation of his physical body was a miraculous work of Deity, with no man being involved.
- d. The Lord knew precisely where he came from and where he was going; his foes knew nothing of this matter. He came from Heaven to earth to accomplish the great plan that had been designed before the beginning of time. No mortal could know this about Christ apart from divine revelation.
 - 1) John 6:38: "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."
 - 2) Galatians 4:4-5: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."
 - 3) Hebrews 10:6-10: "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."
4. Verses 15-16: "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."
 - a. The Lord's foes made judgments of others by fleshly standards, and out of worldly prejudices. Their judgments were according to outward appearances (John 7:24), and not by divine truth. Christ did not make such shallow judgments; neither did he come to earth to become a civil ruler among men: "And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:13-14).
 - b. Christ did not come to earth to condemn men but to bring them salvation.
 - 1) John 3:17: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."
 - 2) Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
 - c. He knew the sinful condition, words and motives of his contemporaries; but he did not pronounce final condemnation upon them.
 - 1) John 2:24-25: "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."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 1:15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."
 - d. He condemned their sins, but desired and worked toward their repentance and salvation.
 - 1) Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
 - 2) John 5:40: "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."
 - 3) Matthew 23:37: "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!"
 - 4) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

- e. The judging the Lord's enemies passed was "after the flesh." Their standards of judging grew out of human ideas. Infallible judgments cannot result from worldly measurements of spiritual matters. They were largely ignorant of the Mosaic Law, else they would have been keeping its demands better; and they were unwilling to listen to the infinity truths Christ was teaching.
 - f. Our Lord strongly condemned the sinful conduct of the scribes and Pharisees [and others] because they did not keep God's Law (Matt. 23). Their wicked conduct in this life would ultimately lead to their being eternally condemned—at the Judgment. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).
 - g. Righteousness is the doing of God's will.
 - 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
 - 2) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 3) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - 4) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
 - h. When Christ condemned someone's evil deeds, he used the infinite standard of God's word as the basis of that judgment. His judgments were identical to the judgments of the Father. The Godhead is always in full agreement in everything they do. They do not use earthly standards of judgment; they did not do so while Jesus was on earth; and they will not do so in the Judgment. The basis of the verdict will be God's word.
 - 1) John 12:48: "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."
 - 2) Revelation 20:12: "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."
 - i. The destiny given each one will be eternal in its scope, and thus unchangeable: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46; cf. Luke 16:19-31). The determining difference will be the "works" of the individuals.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: "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."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:10: "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."
5. Verses 17-18: "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."
- a. The Lord referred to the Mosaic Law as *your law*, it was the law that they publicly acknowledged as the standard by which they ordered their lives. This very law affirmed that the testimony of two men to the truth of a certain matter was judged to be true. "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established" (Deut. 19:15). One witness might lie against a man for some selfish end; two witnesses were much less likely to do so. This principle has been practiced by countless societies through the ages.
-

- b. Using this highly important and reliable standard, Jesus stated that there were sufficient witnesses to his true identity.
 - c. The Father had borne testimony to him directly from Heaven on certain occasions:
 - 1) Matthew 3:16-17: “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.”
 - 2) Matthew 17:5: “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”
 - 3) John 12:27-31: “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.”
 - 4) John 5:37: “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.
 - d. The Son bore witness of himself:
 - 1) “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”(John 5:25-29).
 - 2) The miracles he performed proved to every unprejudiced mind that he is the Son of God.
 - a) John 3:2: “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.” The conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus sets forth a strong argument that Jesus is the Messiah. This highly important man, a member of the Jewish high court, here acknowledges that Jesus truly was a teacher who had been sent by the Almighty, because no mere man could do the miracles that he was doing. Nicodemus stated this as a fact that he and others knew to be so. The apostle uses this exchange as part of his effort to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
 - b) John 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.”
 - 3) The commotion that arose during his presence at the temple on this occasion was due to the miracle he had wrought on the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda in John 5. That super-natural event was more than enough to establish his identity; but because he did it on the sabbath day. In chapter seven, he demolished their argument, but many were too stubborn to accept the obvious truth.
 - e. Another witness to our Lord is the testimony of the Old Testament prophets who frequently spoke and wrote about him. Study Isaiah 11.
 - 1) Micah 5:2: “But thou, Beth-lehem 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.”
-

- 2) Genesis 49:10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."
 - 3) Isaiah 9:5-6: "For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."
 - 4) Isaiah 11:1: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."
 - 5) Zechariah 6:12-13: "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
 - f. John the Baptizer had introduced Jesus as the Lamb of God.
 - 1) John 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."
 - 2) Matthew 3:11-12: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."
 6. Verse 19: "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."
 - a. The Lord had identified his Father and himself as witnesses of his own true identity. They were not willing to accept his testimony, and demanded that he produce his father [they did not have in mind the Almighty, but his human father). "We have heard your claim to be the one who was to come, but we have not heard any testimony from your father; produce him!" Later in this chapter, they would accuse him of being illegitimate: "... Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God" (John 8:41).
 - b. Although they had not heard the literal voice of God, they should have been very familiar to what he has recorded in the Old Testament, regarding the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of his spiritual kingdom. They could have easily recognized the Anointed One, by his miracles and by his message. But they had closed their minds! "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:14-15).
 - c. The statements cited here are from Isaiah 6:9-10, and are also used by Paul (Acts 28:23-29) to describe the rebellious Jews who rejected Christ and his word. The Lord acted in full accordance with the ancient predictions concerning his work.
 - d. "... As Isaiah had written concerning his own generation (Isa. 6:9,10), this people's heart had 'waxed gross;' that is, it has become filled with earthly and sensual desires, and especially so with reference to the expected kingdom of the Messiah. This state of heart made their ears dull of hearing; that is, it made them indisposed to hear with favor the words of Jesus. It led them also to
-

- close their eyes; that is, to refuse to see the evidences of his divinity. This closing of their eyes is treated (15) as the fatal act The evil state of the heart might have the result of having voluntarily closed their eyes against the light which had come into the world, causing parables and dark sayings to be as intelligible to them as the simplest lessons which Jesus taught; their ears were equally closed against both” (McGarvey, p.118).
- e. The Jewish nation was usually characterized by this obstinate attitude. “The strong inference from the application that Jesus makes of it is that, no matter what he would do or say, they would not obey him or receive what he said. It was like casting the pearls of truth before swine to present his teachings to their sensual and prejudiced minds” (Boles, p.289).
 - f. Their heart was gross (fat: encased in fat); thus was insensitive to his words; his truth could not penetrate. Their ears were dull (deaf; unable to hear). They had closed their eyes (an individual, conscious action). This passage destroys the Calvinistic claims which assert that man came into this dreadful condition by inheriting it from his parents. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20).
 - g. Johnson: Had they known Christ this would have led them to a knowledge of the Father, for it is thus we learn to know God, by beholding him manifest in the flesh. The mighty Jehovah, clothed in majesty and sitting on his throne in the heavens, may be above our comprehension, but the Savior, weeping with tenderness and beaming with love, we can comprehend. On the other hand, it is a demonstration that men know not God who do not recognize Christ ... " [p.139].
 - 1) John 14:8-11: “Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew 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, Shew 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.”
 - 2) Colossians 2:9: “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”
7. Verse 20: “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.”
- a. The previous verse ended the discussion Jesus had been having with those Jews who chose not to believe in him. Verse twenty reports that the following confrontation would take place in the treasury, which was located in the “Court of the Women,” the most public part of the temple.
 - b. “The Mention of the locality shows the boldness of the Lord's teaching. The Sanhedrin held its sessions, usually, in the hall Gazith, which was situated in the wall between the court of women and the inner court. Jesus was teaching within hearing of the very headquarters of his enemies, from whence had issued the orders, shortly before (Chap. VII. 32,45), for his arrest” (*ibid*).
 - c. Jesus was not foolhardy in speaking so boldly and closely to those who hated him the most, the ones who had the power to bring charges against him before the Roman authorities. Six months later, they were to do that very thing. But at present, his time had not yet come; other teachings must be done, and more circumstances must arise before he was to be arrested, tried and executed. The events were being closely controlled by God and Christ, to perfectly time the greatest events of the ages, the death, burial and resurrection of the Son of God.
 - d. The area called “the treasure” was the site where chests were places for the offerings of the Jews.
 - 1) Mark 12:41-43: ” And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury.”
-

- 2) Luke 21:1-4: “And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.”

C. John 8:21-24: The Fate of the Disobedient.

1. Verse 21: “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.”
 - a. It may be that the Lord and the Pharisees had parted, and that the present exchange is between Jesus and various other Jews of the common people. It is obvious that these individuals did not believe in Christ, since he announced that they would continue in their unbelief and die while still living in sin.
 - b. Jesus would leave the earth [in a few months] and return to Heaven. These disobedient ones would be barred from entering that exalted place, for no sin can be there.
 - 1) Revelation 21:27: “And there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life.” [ASV].
 - 2) Revelation 22:14: “Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.” [ASV].
 - c. At his final visit to Jerusalem during his personal mission to earth, he would be arrested, tried, scourged, condemned to death, and crucified. But he would rise from the tomb on the third day, and after spending some time with his disciples, would ascend back to his eternal home.
 - 1) John 14:1-3: “Let not your heart be troubled: 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; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”
2. Verse 22: “Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.”
 - a. Some in this audience speculated (perhaps making fun of Jesus), wondered if he would commit suicide. No thoughtful Jew considered taking his own life; they properly viewed this act as a very grave wickedness. There were cases in their history when large numbers did kill themselves.
 - b. A similar exchange took place between Jesus and certain Jews in John 7:34-35: “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?”
 - c. “Masada (Hebrew, ‘fortress’), ancient ruins on a mountaintop in the desert about 48.3 km (about 30 mi) southeast of Jerusalem, the scene of the last stand made by the Jewish Zealots in their revolt against Roman rule (ad 66-73). Two fortified palaces were built there in the 1st century bc by the Judean king Herod the Great. After Herod's death, Masada was occupied by a Roman garrison until the Zealots captured it in ad66. When Jerusalem was taken by the Romans in 70, the last remaining rebels—about 1000 men, women, and children—withdrew to the remote mountaintop. Under their leader, Eleazar ben Jair, they withstood a 2-year siege by the Roman Tenth Legion. All but seven killed themselves rather than surrender when the besiegers finally captured the fortress in 73. Excavated by the Israeli archaeologist Yigael Yadin in 1963-65, Masada is both a popular tourist attraction and an Israeli national shrine” [© 1993-2003 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved].
 - d. “Ahithophel, in the Old Testament, friend and adviser to David, king of the Jews. According to the biblical story, he counseled Absalom, the son of David, to rebel against his father. After

Absalom was killed in battle, Ahithophel committed suicide (see 2 Samuel 15:12, 16:20-17:23)” [ibid.].

3. Verses 23-24: “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.”
 - a. The ultimate distinction between Jesus and the unbelieving Jews is the focal point of their origin and interests. They were from beneath (living in the world and seeking earthly matters). But the Lord is from above and was not of this world.
 - b. From eternity, Christ had lived with God in Heaven. In order to accomplish the great mission of saving as many of mankind as possible, he took upon himself a human body; he lived and worked on earth among men for about 33 years. He ascended back to glory following the completion of his mission. “It is remarkable that these Jews sought to make an imagined sin of Jesus (suicide) the grounds of their separation from him! So great is the perversity of depraved human nature it can actually attempt to impute sin to the One wholly sinless in an effort to cover its own sin. Wicked though they were, the Lord graciously held out to these tormentors the possibility of salvation by showing them that by accepting him as the Saviour of the world they could escape the consequences of their previous and present state” (Woods, p.170).
 - c. If any accountable person does not or will not believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, he will die in his sins. He did not mean, however, that faith only will save his soul. Many times the Bible shows that repentance is essential for salvation (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31). Baptism is not named in the statement, but since immersion in water in obedience to Christ results in our being saved (Acts 22:16; 2:38; 18:8), it is also included in the Lord’s comment just as repentance is included.
 - d. Believing in Christ provides the person the right (the privilege; the power) to become a child of God. “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” (John 1:11-12).
 - e. Several times in John, our Lord used the term “I Am” in reference to himself.
 - 1) John 6:35: “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.”
 - 2) John 8:12: “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.”
 - 3) John 8:24: “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.”
 - 4) John 8:58: “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”
 - 5) John 10:9: “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”
 - 6) John 10:11: “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”
 - 7) 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.”
 - 8) John 14:6: “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
 - 9) John 15:1: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.”

D. John 8:25-30: Jesus Speaks of the Father.

1. Verses 25-27: “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.”
 - a. The audience asked, “Who are you?” They already knew whom he claimed to be, but they had utterly rejected this truth. This subject was at the center of their confrontation with him. Having

- told them that they would die in their sins if they did not believe is the one he claimed to be, their attitude was, “Who do you think you are to make such a judgment against us?”
- b. Jesus replied that he had identified himself to them on various occasions, yet they are still asking. Some of the writers of ancient times gave this sense to the Lord’s statement here: “Why am I even speaking to you at all?”
 - c. There remained many truths which he needed to teach them; their knowledge and wisdom were not nearly complete. Some of these things would doubtless upset them, because of their ignorance. Those who love the truth are always open to learning more of it and to grasp more of its meaning.
 - 1) Acts 18:24-26: “And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”
 - 2) Psalm 19:7-14: “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: “And with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (NKJV).
2. Verses 28-29: “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.”
- a. About two and a half years earlier, Jesus had told Nicodemus: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14). The meaning of this action is clear: the brazen serpent was lifted up on a pole; Jesus would be lifted up on a cross.
 - b. In the preceding part of this conversation, when the Lord spoke to them about the Father, they did not comprehend that it was of the God of Abraham that he was speaking (verse 27). Only after they had lifted up Jesus [*i.e.*, crucified him] that they and others would begin to fully understand that Jesus is truly the Son of God, the Messiah. It would not be this cruel means of execution only, but his burial and resurrection from the dead that would prove for all time that he is from God.
 - c. To lift up: *hupsōo* (NT:5312), "to lift or raise up" (akin to *hupsos*, "height"), is rendered by the verb "to lift up" in John 3:14, of the brazen serpent; of Christ in crucifixion (*id.*), and 8:28; 12:32,34; metaphorically, "to exalt, lift up," e. g., James 4:10, KJV, "shall lift... up," RV, "shall exalt." [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, BibleSoft].
 - d. Jesus affirmed that he did not operate by his own designs, but that all that he taught and said was in accord with what his Father had taught him. He, therefore, was only doing and saying what God had prescribed—nothing more and nothing less. “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (John 6:38).
-

- e. Being always true to the guidance of the Father, Jesus always did only those things that pleased God. Therefore, the Father was always with him. There was some sense however, in which God had forsaken Jesus as he suffered on the cross for the sins of mankind: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).
- f. Barnes offered the following thoughts on *My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me*:
- 1) This expression is one denoting intense suffering. It has been difficult to understand in what sense Jesus was "forsaken by God." It is certain that God APPROVED his work. It is certain that he was innocent. He had done nothing to forfeit the favor of God. As his own Son—holy, harmless, undefiled, and obedient—God still loved him. In either of these senses God could not have forsaken him. But the expression was probably used in reference to the following circumstances, namely: His great bodily sufferings on the cross, greatly aggravated by his previous scourging, and by the want of sympathy, and by the revilings of his enemies on the cross. A person suffering thus might address God as if he was forsaken, or given up to extreme anguish.
 - 2) He himself said that this was "the power of darkness," Luke 22:53. It was the time when his enemies, including the Jews and Satan, were suffered to do their utmost. It was said of the serpent that he should bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, Gen 3:15. By that has been commonly understood to be meant that, though the Messiah would finally crush and destroy the power of Satan, yet he should himself suffer "through the power of the devil."
 - 3) ...Yet we have reason to think that there was still something more than all this that produced this exclamation. Had there been no deeper and more awful sufferings, it would be difficult to see why Jesus should have shrunk from these sorrows and used such a remarkable expression. Isaiah tells us (Isa 53:4-5) that "he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; that he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; that the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him; that by his stripes we are healed." He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Gal 3:13); he was made a sin-offering (2 Cor 5:21); he died in our place, on OUR account, that he might bring us near to God. It was this, doubtless, which caused his intense sufferings. It was the manifestation of God's hatred of sin, in some way which he has not explained, that he experienced in that dread hour. It was suffering endured by HIM that was due to US, and suffering by which, and by which alone, we can be saved from eternal death. [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved].
- g. "Christ as the Beloved Son in Whom God Was Well Pleas'd Could Not Be Really Deserted by God.The vision of God is one thing, and his presence is another. We may miss the first without losing the second. Our real state before God does not rest on the shifting sands of our moods of feeling. In the hour of darkness Jesus prayed. This is enough to show that he knew that he was not really and utterly abandoned by his Father. In spiritual deadness, when it is hard to pray at all, the one remedy is in prayer. Our cry can reach God through the darkness, and the darkness will not last forever; often it is the gate to a glorious light. - W.F.A." [Pulpit Commentary].
- h. Johnson:
- 1) He taught in these and other passages that his "lifting up" would be the means of breaking down unbelief and leading men to "know him." The prediction was realized. His disciples were few in number until after he died, but the very act that his enemies fondly hoped would blot his name from history was the means of filling the world with believers. Fifty days after his crucifixion thousands of those who had "crucified and slain" him, cried, Men and brethren, what shall we do (A few weeks after thousands more of those concerning whom Peter said, "I know that through ignorance you crucified the Lord of life and glory," became believers.
-

- 2) Thus the work went on until the cross became a badge of honor, instead of a symbol of shame. The Lord, and indeed the whole Scripture, points to the death of Jesus as the central act of the Christian religion. It is his death that gives life to the world.
3. Verse 30: “As he spake these words, many believed on him.”
 - a. Despite the deadly opposition of his enemies, there were many in the audience who believed on him. These were the ones who had open minds and honest hearts. They examined the evidence he presented and accepted the proof therein contained.
 - b. The miracle he had earlier performed on the man at the pool of Siloam (John 5) was not lost on them. This man’s condition had been widely known by many in Jerusalem. The Lord’s enemies sought to over throw the impact of that supernatural work by alleging that it was sinful since it had been done on the Sabbath. Jesus destroyed that argument by showing that the Jews performed the action of circumcision on the Sabbath; this surgery was required to be done on the eighth day after birth, which would many times fall on Saturday.
 - c. “So frail was their faith, however, as subsequent verses show, when the Lord explained more in detail his mission and Messiahship in an effort to strengthen and make more robust their faith, they reverted to their former state of doubt and questioning and finally to opposition, to him, and to his teaching” (Woods, p.171).
 - d. Fourfold Gospel: “The tender manner in which Jesus spoke these words convinced many that he was filled with the spirit of loving good will, and they believed him. Among these converts were some of the Jewish hierarchy, which had been but even now opposing him. The succeeding verses shows how Jesus tried to correct their false views of his Messiahship, and to raise their faith to a higher level, and how their faith utterly broke down under the test.”

E. John 8:31-47: Continue In My Word.

1. Verses 31-32: “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.” “Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (ASV).
 - a. Jesus placed a condition on those who believed on him: They must continue [abide] in his word. If they continued in his word, they would be his disciples indeed. They would know the truth. The truth would make them free. To continue [abide] in his word means to continue believing it and remain obedient to its requirements. To believe for a time is not enough. A runner must complete the course before he can win the prize.
 - 1) Matthew 13:20-21: “But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”
 - 2) Luke 8:13: “They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.”
 - b. By maintaining their faith, they would come to know the truth. The more we study the Bible, the more we grasp its meaning and the greater our faith becomes. A Christian who does not study the Bible personally, will not grow as he could. Much can be learned by attending Bible classes and listening carefully to gospel sermons—but one must put his mind on the study.
 - 1) 1 Timothy 4:13-16: “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”
 - 2) 2 Timothy 2:15: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” The word “study” is from the Greek word *spoudazo* which means “to hasten to do a thing, to exert oneself, endeavour, give diligence”

- (Vine, Vol. 1, p.311). The point for which it is used in the verse is that Timothy was to hasten (give diligence; be zealous) to present himself in an approved condition in God's sight.
- c. Everything essential to obtain God's approval is included in the word. The word itself does not have the idea of studying, but it is impossible to know one's duty and the will of God without studying God's word (1 Tim. 4:13,15-16; 2 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 5:12-14). Continue in his word and you are my disciples indeed.
- 1) A disciple is a student, a learner—one who is in the process of obtaining more information. One must be a disciple before he can become a Christian. A Christian continues to study, thus always remains a disciple.
 - 2) They "believed on him," but their faith was not yet made perfect by obedience. Hence he adds the conditions of discipleship. They must do more than believe; their belief must move them to accept his word and obey it. There is a condition, continue in my word; a promise, shall be my disciples. To abide in the word, is the condition of being Christ's disciples. This harmonizes with the entire gospel. The New Testament nowhere teaches justification by a faith that does not lead to obedience. [See Johnson, p.142].
- d. Consider these passages:
- 1) John 7:17: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself."
 - 2) John 14:21: "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 unto him."
 - 3) 1 John 2:4-5: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him."
 - 4) 1 John 3:24: "And he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us."
 - 5) 2 John 6-9: "And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward. Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 6) James 2:20-26: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead."
- e. The truth shall me you free. This thought is frequently loosely quoted by people in the world, and applied to situations that pertain to earthly things. The freedom of which Jesus speaks pertains to our immortal souls!
- 1) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."
 - 2) Galatians 1:4: "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father."
 - 3) Ephesians 2:1-3: "And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of
-

- the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”
- 4) Romans 8:1-2: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.”
 - 5) Acts 13:38-39: “Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”
 - 6) Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- f. “Freedom from sin, Jesus taught, is obtainable only through the truth because through it alone are we enabled to obtain deliverance from the bondage of sin. People of the world, though they often boast of their freedom to do as they please, are really the pitiable objects of the most advanced slavery being bound by their passions, desires and fleshly weaknesses from which they are helpless to escape. Only faithful children of God are truly free, being neither in bondage to the world, nor the flesh, nor the devil; free also from an evil conscience, the cares and anxieties of the world, and death, itself” (Woods, p.172).
2. Verse 33: “They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?”
 - a. The Jews traced their history back through the generations to Abraham; they correctly considered him to be the first of their lineage. To be a descendant of this great man of faith was a fine honor, but they did not inherit his spiritual strength and his high standing with God.
 - 1) Matthew 3:9: “And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” The Jews relied on their relationship with Abraham as a ticket into the kingdom.
 - 2) John 8:39: "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."
 - 3) Romans 9:7: "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called."
 - b. They thought the kingdom would be as earthly as David's was. Nicodemus made these mistakes, also (John 3:1ff).
 - 1) Romans 2:28-29: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”
 - 2) Galatians 6:16: “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.”
 - c. God could easily create fleshly descendants of Abraham. "The point in this remark is to show that it is the mere creative power of God that makes men children of Abraham, and that, therefore, there is no spiritual virtue in the connection" (McGarvey, p.36).
 - d. They made the faulty claim that they had never been under bondage to anyone. During the time of the Judges, they were in subjection to various invaders. Since then, they had been subdued by the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and at that very time, the Romans. Their meaning was a national bondage since they alleged that no man had ever conquered and controlled them.
 3. Verses 34-36: “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.”
 - a. Their claim never to have been under bondage to any man is demolished by the facts of history. But our Lord brought up another kind of bondage from which only Christ could make them free. Sin is a harsh slavery. Anyone who practices sin is under bondage to sin.
-

- 1) Hebrews 3:3: "For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house." Paying Moses a quiet and fitting tribute of respect, the inspired writer exalts that great man, which he does in order to more highly exalt Christ. Moses, he says, was worthy of honor, but Christ is deserving of even greater honor.
 - 2) Moses was the head of the Old Testament nation for a period of time; Christ is head of God's New Testament spiritual nation for all time. "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6).
 - b. Christ was also in Heaven, with the Father, and knew perfectly the will of the Almighty. The words he delivered expressed the requirements of God; they are incumbent upon mankind; they are for the eternal good of those who gladly accept the truth. Moses was a servant in God's house, but Christ is over his own house. "And Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after" (Heb. 3:5).
 - c. The author further points out that the builder of a house has greater honor than the house, since the Creator is greater than the creation. Barnes observed that "it is *always* true that the architect is worthy of more respect than the house which he makes. He exhibits intellect and skill. The house, however splendid, has neither. The plan of the house was drawn by him; its beauty, its proportions, its ornaments, are what he had made them, and but for him they would not have existed....Galileo is worthy of more praise than the telescope, and Fulton more than the steam-engine....[Christ] was the originator of the Jewish dispensation over which Moses presided. Whatever beauty or excellence there might have been, therefore, in that system, was to be traced to him; and whatever ability even Moses displayed was imparted by him" (p.80).
 - d. Hebrews five and our present text show that Christ is greater than the house of Israel—the entire Mosaic system. While the Law of Moses was perfect for all that God intended for it to accomplish, it was unable to remove the guilt of a single act of sin.
 - 1) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - 2) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - 3) Hebrews 9:12-15: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."
 - e. Johnson:
 - 1) According to his custom, Christ makes no direct argument in reply, but states a truth and leaves them to apply it. The sinner is the slave of sin. Action forms habit, and habit is a second nature. We say of the drunkard, the tobacco chewer, the opium eater, the swearer, or the gambler, that he is the slave of habit. The same principle is involved in all evil doing, which tends to fasten evil habits upon the soul, Whoever sins is binding upon himself the chains of slavery. This is
-

- a law of our being. How many there are who become conscious of their weak, sinful condition and sigh for deliverance. See Rom. 7: 9-24.
- 2) The servant abideth not in the house forever. The servant has no claim to remain continually in the same family, but may be changed at will. The son can remain because he is a son. Hagar, the bondwoman, was sent forth from the home of Abraham. The Jews, bondsmen instead of children, who claimed that they dwelt in the house of God and enjoyed his favor, would soon be expelled; only those who were made free by the Son and thus become children would continue to abide in the Lord's house.
- f. Sin is the violation of God's will: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:40).
- 1) Romans 6:16-20: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness."
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:19: "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."
- g. God's Son can make us completely free from the guilt of all sin:
- 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-22: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
 - 3) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - 4) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
4. Verses 37-38: "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."
- a. Jesus stated that the Jewish people were physical descendants of Abraham, but that condition by itself matters little. "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his
-

- hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matt. 3:8-12).
- b. In James 2:23, Abraham was called *the Friend of God*. The meaning is not that he regarded God as his friend, but that God regarded Abraham as his friend (this is the significance of the subjective genitive).
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 20:7: "*Art* not thou our God, *who* didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?" God called Abraham his friend because he was faithful, he submitted to his will.
 - 2) John 14:15: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (ASV).
 - 3) John 15:14: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."
 - 4) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - c. Abraham is described as "the father of all them that believe." "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also" Rom. 4:11).
 - d. Abraham was not justified by circumcision, but by faith; his faith began when he left Ur of the Chaldees; it was perfected when he committed himself to offer Isaac. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham: "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you" (Gen. 17:11). His justification grew out of his faith (which led him to obey God).
 - e. "Their obdurate and hard hearts would not suffer the word to enter and to influence their lives. The truth, which would have turned them to the Messiah, they rejected, even though the things which Jesus spoke were from the Father. They, too, followed their father and thus exhibited the nature they received from him. Their father is named in verse 44" (Woods, p.174).
5. Verse 39: "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."
 - a. At that time, the Jews could trace their lineage back through the generations back through Jacob and Isaac to Abraham. Their genes were from that the father of the faithful, but they did not inherit his great faith. The enemies of the Lord were too hardhearted to open their minds to examine his words, and find them to be truth. His miracles established his identity and his message fulfilled inspired prophecies of the Old Testament.
 - b. Jesus told them directly that if they followed the ways of Abraham, they would live in faithful obedience as did their progenitor. Abraham's great question was, what is it that God wants me to do. This should have been their disposition, also.
 6. Verse 40: "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."
 - a. No right-thinking person would ever conceive of the notion that Abraham would oppose Christ. He will tell the Jews in verse 56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3:8).
 - b. Proof of his proposition is found in the Scriptures. The written word had foretold plainly that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, thus fleshly kinship with Abraham was not the essential element. If any in the world are to be justified, this must be accomplished by faith.
 - c. The specific promise stated: "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (see Gen. 12:1-3). The blessings God envisioned included more than the physical descendants of Abraham; they extended to all humanity, and are given to all on the same basis (obedient faith).
 7. Verses 41-43: "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.”

- a. Jesus accused them of doing the works of *their* father. They alleged that God was their father, but our Lord will soon identify their real father—the devil. It is commonly the case that children in a family reflect the personality and works of their father. He here declares that have taken on themselves the nature and deeds of their father.
 - b. They quickly responded to his first point in this verse that were not born by fornication, they claim that they had one father who is God.
 - c. “The people still professed not to understand him; and since Jesus had denied that they were the children of Abraham, they affected to suppose that he meant they were a mixed, spurious race; that they had no right to the covenant privileges of the Jews; that they were not worshippers of the true God. Hence, they said, We are not thus descended. We have the evidence of our genealogy. We are worshippers of the true God, descended from those who acknowledged him, and we acknowledge no other God and Father than him. To be children of fornication is an expression denoting in the Scriptures idolatry, or the worship of other gods than the true God, Isa. 1:21; Isa. 57:3; Heb. 1:2; Heb. 2:4. This they denied. They affirmed that they acknowledged no God for their Father but the true God.” (Barnes).
 - d. Cambridge Bible: “We be not born of fornication]. The meaning of this is very much disputed. The following are the chief explanations: (1) Thou hast denied that we are the children of Abraham, then we must be the children of some one sinning with Sarah: which is false.’ But this would be adultery, not fornication. (2) ‘We are the children of Sarah, not of Hagar.’ But this was lawful concubinage, not fornication. (3) ‘We are not a mongrel race, like the Samaritans; we are pure Jews.’ This is far-fetched, and does not suit the context. (4) ‘We **were** not born of fornication, as Thou art.’ But His miraculous birth was not yet commonly known, and this foul Jewish lie, perpetuated from the second century onwards (Origen, c. Celsum i. xxxii.), was not yet in existence. (5) ‘We **were** not born of spiritual fornication; our sonship has not been polluted with idolatry. If thou art speaking of spiritual parentage, ‘we have one Father, even God.’ This last seems the best. Idolatry is so constantly spoken of as whoredom and fornication throughout the whole of the O.T., that in a discussion about spiritual fatherhood this image would be perfectly natural in the mouth of a Jew. Exo. 34:15-16; Lev. 17:7; Jdg. 2:17; 2Ki. 9:22; Psa. 73:27; Isa. 1:21; Jer. 3:1; Jer. 3:9; Eze. 16:15; &c. &c. See esp. Hos. 2:4. There is a proud emphasis on ‘we;’—‘we are not idolaters, like Thy friends the Gentiles’ (comp. Joh. 7:35).
 - e. Despite the foregoing comment, it appears possible that these Jewish unbelievers would very likely have thought of this false charge about the birth of Jesus.
 - f. Barclay:
 - 1) In the Old Testament one of the loveliest descriptions of the nation of Israel is that which sees in her the Bride of God. Because of that when Israel forsook God, she was said to go awhoring after strange gods; her infidelity was spiritual adultery. When the nation was thus faithless, the apostate people were said to be "children of harlotry" (Hos.2:4). So when the Jews said to Jesus that they were not the children of any adulterous union, they meant that they did not belong to a nation of idolaters but they had always worshipped the true God. It was a claim that they had never gone astray from God—a claim that only a people steeped in self-righteousness would ever have dared make.
 - 2) But when the Jews spoke like this, there may have been something much more personal in it. It is certainly true in later times that the Jews spread abroad a most malicious slander against Jesus. The Christians very early preached the miraculous birth of Jesus. The Jews put it about that Mary had been unfaithful to Joseph; that her paramour had been a Roman soldier called Panthers; and that Jesus was the child of that adulterous union. It is just possible that the Jews
-

were flinging at Jesus even then an insult over his birth, as if to say: "What right have you to speak to the like of us as you do?"

- g. These Jews made the claim that God was their Father. If they were truly the offspring of God, they would have been faithful to his inspired revelation. The Pharisees were more interested in following the dictates of their traditions, which originated within the minds of their uninspired teachers over many years.
 - 1) Mark 7:6-13: "He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."
 - 2) It was commonly held that God gave a written revelation through Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy), and that he provided also an oral message which was passed on by tradition, from mouth-to-mouth. An oral tradition is subject to corruption with every telling; it is unreliable. But also, there is no evidence that God authored any such tradition; the written word was more than sufficient to guide each generation.
 - h. Christ responded to their allegation that they were the children of God by affirming that if that were true, they would love Jesus. Faithful people of God will know and follow his will; if these folks had known the Old Testament well, and had examined the teachings and miracles of Jesus, they would have recognized him as the Messiah. That being the case, they would have loved him sincerely. All they had to offer was their unsupported claim that they were the faithful children of God.
 - 1) These purveyors and practitioners of false doctrine rejected the deity of Jesus, denying that he is the Messiah. Our Lord declared that he came from God to the earth; he did not originate his own mission, but the Father sent him, giving him a great work to do among men.
 - 2) Why did they denounce Jesus? They had preconceived ideas about the Messiah; Jesus did not measure up to their faulty notions. Matthew 13:14-15: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
 - 3) The statements cited here are from Isaiah 6:9-10, and are also used by Paul (Acts 28:23-29) to describe the rebellious Jews who rejected Christ and his word. The Lord acted in full accordance with the ancient predictions concerning his work.
 - 4) "As Isaiah had written concerning his own generation (Isa. 6:9,10), this people's heart had 'waxed gross;' that is, it has become filled with earthly and sensual desires, and especially so with reference to the expected kingdom of the Messiah. This state of heart made their ears dull of hearing; that is, it made them indisposed to hear with favor the words of Jesus. It led them also to close their eyes; that is, to refuse to see the evidences of his divinity. This closing of their eyes is treated (15) as the fatal act....The evil state of the heart might have the result of having voluntarily closed their eyes against the light which had come into the world, causing
-

- parables and dark sayings to be as intelligible to them as the simplest lessons which Jesus taught; their ears were equally closed against both” (McGarvey, p.118).
- i. The Jewish nation was usually characterized by this obstinate attitude. “The strong inference from the application that Jesus makes of it is that, no matter what he would do or say, they would not obey him or receive what he said. It was like casting the pearls of truth before swine to present his teachings to their sensual and prejudiced minds” (Boles, p.289).
 - j. Their heart was gross (fat: encased in fat); thus was insensitive to his words; his truth could not penetrate. Their ears were dull (deaf; unable to hear). They had closed their eyes (an individual, conscious action). This passage destroys the Calvinistic claims which assert that man came into this dreadful condition by inheriting it from his parents. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20).
 - 1) Matthew 13:16-17: “But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.”
 - 2) We remember what some of his erstwhile disciples said about something the Lord taught which they were unwilling to receive: “Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” (John 6:60). It was difficult for these disciples to accept the various doctrines Jesus had presented. They had not accepted the full truth that is is the Messiah, the Son of God. They were not fully convinced that his doctrine was superior to the Law of Moses. The idea of literally eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus was not only hard to accept, but repulsive to consider. It appears that their thinking was basically materialistic.
8. Verse 44: “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.”
- a. Jesus was utterly free from any sinful act, word or motive. Therefore, the hard statement was without any hint of evil. Yet, there are weak ones among us today who tell us we must not be negative! They had constructed a law: “Thou shalt not be negative!” But our Lord is the pattern, not some faulty human.
 - 1) Hebrews 4:15: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:22: “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”
 - b. Christ spoke the truth when he told them directly that they were the children of the devil. Perhaps there were some good thing that could be said about these people, but nothing good they might have said, done or taught could make up for their rejection of the Messiah: “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” (John 8:24).
 - 1) Matthew 4:4: “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”
 - 2) Colossians 3:17: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
 - 3) 2 John 9: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”
 - c. They were children of Satan because they made conscious decisions to become such. They were not born in that condition; they were not forced into that manner of life. There is only once
-

- condition that can result when one rejects the Bible, Christ as the Savior, or God—a state of condemnation. There only three possible spiritual conditions that can pertain to a soul:
- 1) One is in a state of purity, having never yet violated God word (Ezek. 28:15; Matt. 18:3-4).
 - 2) One is in the Kingdom of Christ, thus his sins have been washed away by the blood of the Lord (Col. 1:13-14; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5; Rom. 8:1ff).
 - 3) One is the kingdom of Satan (still guilty of, involved it, and practicing sin). Such a one has Satan as his father.
 - 4) The lusts which are advocated by the devil are followed by his people. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17).
- d. Eve fell victim to the temptation and violated God's law. The same avenues of temptations the devil used against Jesus—but he resisted them (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). She was tempted in three basic avenues and faltered (Gen. 3:6):
- 1) Through the lust of the flesh: she saw that the fruit was good for food; she had to have it (she thought) to satisfy the craving she had for it. The fact that God had prohibited her from eating it should have kept her well-away from it.
 - 2) Through the lust of the eyes: she saw that it was pleasant to the sight. There is often a pleasant appeal that sinful activities or items have. Beer commercials on TV are very appealing; liquor ads picture handsome men and beautiful women in most pleasant scenes. Sin can be very deceptive!
 - 3) Through the pride or vainglory of life: she saw it was a fruit to be desired to make one wise. She thought that she would become equal with God if she would but eat.
- e. From the beginning, Satan did not abide in the truth. His first direct involvement with the human race is reported in Genesis 3:1-6: “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” His statements to the woman were lies.
- f. There was no truth to be found in him. Even when he cited scriptures in enticing Christ, he perverted their true meaning. Of course, our Lord saw through his evil purpose. Through his agents today, he twists the scriptures to deceive the unsuspecting victims.
- 1) 2 Peter 3:15-17: “And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”
 - 2) Philippians 3:17-19: “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)”
-

- 3) Satan is the author of his own lies; he did not derive any of his falsehoods from Heaven. He is a liar and the father of lies. The unbelieving Jews with whom the Lord was talking partook of their father's wicked ways; they believed and followed religious error; they deceived and pressured their followers to accept their evil doctrines.
 - g. Eve was convinced that the devil's lies were acceptable; in fact, she had a strong urge to eat the prohibited fruit; her own foolish desires set her up to violate God's Law. The sincerity with which mislead people today to accept false doctrine and other sinful thoughts and acts does not turn evil into good. "And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful: who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them" (Rom. 1:28-32).
 - h. Johnson: He was a murderer from the beginning. Not merely because he inspired Cain's murder of Abel, but because he seduced the human race into disobedience and sought to destroy it. The temptation in Eden was a case of attempted murder, and has resulted in all the murders of earth, and the spiritual death of myriads. They (the Jews) were the children of a murderer; hence they sought to kill Christ (see verse 40) [pp.144f].
 - i. Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 9. Verses 45-47: "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."
 - a. Jesus had exposed their true parentage and their unwillingness to accept the truth. He had spoken to them the truth, but they chose not to accept it. They exhibited to same disposition that multitudes display today—they refused to examine their current notions in the light of the truth. The Lord demanded of them whether they could convict him of sin.
 - b. Barclay: We must try to see this scene happening before our eyes. There is drama here, and it is not only in the words, but in the pauses between them. Jesus began with a tremendous claim. "Is there anyone here," he demanded, "who can point the finger at any evil in my life?" Then must have followed a silence during which the eyes of Jesus ranged round the crowd waiting for anyone to accept the extraordinary challenge that he had thrown down. The silence went on. Search as they like, none could formulate a charge against him. When he had given them their chance, Jesus spoke again. "You admit," he said, "that you can find no charge against me. Then why do you not accept what I say?" Again there was an uncomfortable silence. Then Jesus answered his own question. "You do not accept my words," he said, "because you are not from God."
 - c. If Jesus was as corrupt in teaching as his foes alleged, surely they would be able to discover some overt act of sin his life. He asked them to examine his life to uncover such an act. They were unable to produce a single case of sin; if one was there, they would have exposed it.
 - d. Woods: There was no ground for their disbelief; antagonistic though they were and anxious always to find something with which to accuse Jesus, not one of them had been able to convict him of one single sinful act. He spoke only the truth. Were they of God, they would gladly receive his words; this, they would not do; therefore, they were not of God. His argument was an irresistible one. It ran thus: If I am a mere man, a pretender, since no man is perfect, there must be imperfections in me; find them, and thus expose my claims. On the other hand, if you cannot find any fault in me,
-

it is because I am divine and therefore you ought to believe my words. But, you will not do so; therefore, you are not of God." [p.176].

- e. These enemies of truth demonstrated that they were not of God, else they would have recognized the words of the Lord as truth and their acceptance of them would quickly ensue. They shunned the truth and showed they were not akin to God.

F. John 8:48-59: The Father Honors the Son.

1. Verse 48: "Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"
 - a. From a Jew to another Jew, there could be scarcely be a more scurrilous charge. A demon-possessed individual was under the direct control of Beelzebub, the prince of demons. Only a Samaritan was beneath a Gentile, in the view of Jews. These enemies were showing the deepest and vilest contempt they could muster against our Lord.
 - b. It may be that they had heard of his earlier experiences in Samaria, where virtually the entire of city of Sychar became believers in Jesus (John 4). These Samaritans were open-minded enough to see that Jesus was the Messiah; indeed stated that fact plainly: "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" (John 4:25-26).
 - c. Earlier, his foes had tried to explain away the Lord's miraculous work by alleging that he cast out demons by the power of Beelzebub. Jesus quickly exposed their argument as foolish: "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" (Matt. 12:24-26).
 - d. It is evident that demons could enter into the bodies of certain individuals during the first century. A case of this is found in Matthew 17:14-18: "And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour."
 2. Verses 49-51: "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."
 - a. It would be obvious to all that Jesus was a Jew, a descendant of Abraham through David; this was to be seen in the extensive genealogical tables preserved in the temple. The charge that he was a Samaritan was an empty allegation; it was merely a crude epithet. Jesus did not stoop to the level of responding to their reviling words with a similar reply: "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23).
 - b. The second of their harsh statement to the Lord needed a response. Nicodemus recognized that Jesus operated by the power of God, not through some influence of a demon: "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" (John 3:2). This man could easily see that the only way to explain the miracles Jesus did was to connect those supernatural works to God.
 - c. Christ declared that he honored the Father; no demon would or could do so. While he brought honor to the Almighty, they heaped dishonor upon Jesus. His miracles proved that he was from
-

- the Father. By being scornful of Jesus, they were demonstrating that wicked disposition toward the Father.
- d. Christ always sought the glory of God; he did not try to exalt himself above the Father. That being the case, he could not be possessed by a demon. Although the demons recognized Jesus as the Son of God, they had no love for him; they did fear him, however. Matthew 8:28-29: "And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"
 - e. The demons, speaking through their hosts' mouths, cried out to Jesus, asking if he had come to torment them prematurely; in Mark's account they also implored him not to torment them at all. The time of their torture was not to begin, according to their thoughts, until the day of Judgment.
 - f. We learn from 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 that sinful angels were cast down to Tartarus, and delivered "into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment." This Tartarus is undoubtedly the same place to which the sinful rich man of Luke 16 was consigned and is being punished in the dreadful fire of that awful place. Thus, if these angels which sinned are identified with these demons, they are likewise even now being tormented, and will continue in that state subsequent to the "judgment of the great day."
 - g. These demons knew the identity of Jesus, and thus called him the "Son of God." "Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24).
 - 1) Acts 16:17: "The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation."
 - 2) James 2:19: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."
 - h. Wisely the Lord inserted here the truth that those who keep his word will never experience death. Since it is the case that death is appointed to men once to die (Heb. 9:27), he did not here speak of physical death, the occasion when the spirit departs from the body of an individual: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26). Neither Enoch nor Elijah experienced death, since they both were translated directly from earth into the eternal realm. Those who are alive at the second coming of Jesus will not experience death, but will be instantly changed into immortal spiritual bodies [cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:50ff).
 - i. His reference is to the Second Death, the eternal separation of the lost who will be consigned to Gehenna, the place prepared for Satan and his cohorts: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).
 - 1) Revelation 2:11: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."
 - 2) Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
 - 3) Revelation 20:14: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."
 - 4) Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - 5) Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
3. Verses 52-53: "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?"

- a. These Jews showed their ignorance or their willful blindness in this response to the Lord. We wonder whether they knew the case of Enoch (Gen. 5:24). It is obvious that Jesus did not mean that those who keep his word will never die physically. Certainly, he knew that Abraham [and the faithful prophets] had died, along with Isaac and Jacob. Being infinite in his knowledge, nothing was hidden from his awareness if he wished to know it.
 - b. Their argument would appear to have merit only to those who were ignorant of spiritual death. Did they not know what Isaiah had written? "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2). Spiritual death is separation from God.
 - c. Christ was speaking about eternal death—everlasting separation from God, Heaven, and all that is good and holy.
 - d. Woods: Their purpose was obvious; they would lead him to a conclusion which the crowd would regard as absurd and thus prompt the people to dismiss him as a visionary and demented man. They would convict him of self-exaltation on the one hand and the teaching of an impossible doctrine on the other. The difficulties were theirs, not his; and they resulted from the blindness and prejudice which kept them from realizing the truth regarding his Messiahship. He was greater than Abraham; he could do that which neither that illustrious father nor the prophets could do, because he was the Son of God; but this truth they stubbornly refused even to consider. With their state of mind no amount of evidence would have changed their position regarding Jesus. So hard of heart were they the appeal of truth no longer influenced them. [p.179]
4. Verses 54-55: "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."
- a. Jesus would not honor himself; that honor would be vain. It was his Father that bestowed honor upon the Son. From eternity Christ had been with the Father. He knew God well!
 - b. If he had denied knowing the Father, that falsehood would have made him to a liar, just like the enemies were.
 - c. Woods: It is significant also that two different Greek words are used here to indicate knowing God. One of these (*ginosko*), means to know through observation and study; the other (*oida*), to know intuitively; the former is used to indicate that these Jews had never truly learned God; the latter is used to describe the knowledge Jesus had of him through direct, personal contact. Moreover, the tenses of these verbs differ; the Jews never had known God; Jesus knew (present tense) him because he always had. [p.180].
 - d. We can know the Father only if we keep on following his word. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (1 John 2:3-5).
5. Verse 56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."
- a. Barnes: The testimony of Abraham is adduced by Jesus because the Jews considered it to be a signal honor to be his descendants, Joh 8:39. As they regarded the sayings and deeds of Abraham as especially illustrious and worthy of their imitation, so they were bound, in consistency, to listen to what he had said of the Messiah.
 - b. With this truth in mind, Jesus declared that Abraham rejoiced to the day when God's Son would enter into his great earthly ministry, which would culminate in the salvation of countless souls. Abraham was long gone from the earth when the Lord came to fulfill his work. That great men, by faith saw his day, and was glad!
-

- 1) Genesis 15:4-6: “And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”
 - 2) Genesis 22:16-18: “And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”
 - 3) Genesis 12:1-3: “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”
 - 4) Hebrews 11:10-13: “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. **These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them,** and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”
 6. Verses 57-58: “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.”
 - a. These enemies perverted the Lord's statement to have him say he had seen Abraham, that he had been alive on earth while this progenitor of the Israelite race was extant. “You are not even fifty years old, so how could you have been living during the lifetime of Abraham?” Abraham had been dead for about two thousand years.
 - b. Jesus did not say he had been on earth to see Abraham in the flesh. His statement was that Abraham had rejoiced to see my day and was glad to have seen it. As noted above, that great man of God saw the “day” of Christ and was filled with gladness. He did not live on earth to actually see and partake of those great blessings, but he saw them in promise and by faith. There was no question in his mind that God would fulfill these promises!
 - c. We remember, of course, that the benefits of the shed blood of Christ extended backward in time to cover the sins of those faithful ones who had lived and died in past ages. Those same benefits flow forward in time to apply to those souls of the obedient ones who lived after his death on the cross. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:25-26).
 - d. The Father set Christ forth to be the expiation of our sins, and thus declared his righteousness. The death of Christ for the sins of the world was God's plan for the solution to the great problem. God wanted to save his fallen offspring; but he must not compromise his holiness or his justice; but by allowing his only begotten Son to die in our place, he was able to satisfy justice, maintain his own holiness, and show mercy to man. God did not vent his wrath for men against Christ, to appease his anger; it was God himself who put forth the propitiatory offering for man.
 - e. God's plan for making men righteous extends backwards in time to benefit those who lived in the past, but were dead when Christ died (Heb. 9:15,22). *Remission* is from a Greek word which means "passing over" (see margin). Hebrews 9:15 gives an inspired commentary on the thought,
-

- and shows that the idea is that of forgiving, not ignoring the guilt of the offenders. But upon what basis did God forgive their sins? The only possible basis was their faithfulness to the law under which they lived.
- f. Whiteside: To ignore sins, or to treat them with indifference, would wreck his moral government. He must be just and the majesty of his law upheld. Justice demands that the guilty be punished, and the majesty of the law requires that the penalties of the law be inflicted on the guilty. How, then, could God be just in passing over the sins of the former dispensation and in justifying sinners in the present, time? Only because Jesus died for us. He suffered the penalties of the violated law. Even though he paid the penalty for our redemption from sin and death, he forces no one to accept the freedom he purchased. The plan arranges only that those who now believe in Jesus may be justified. In the light of the foregoing comments re-read [Rom. 3] verses 25, 26. The death of Christ made it possible for God to be righteous in passing over the sins committed before the coming of Christ, for the sacrifices they offered pointed to Christ; the death of Christ made it possible also for God to be just while justifying sinners now, who believe in Christ. [*Commentary on Romans*, pp.81f].
7. Verse 59: "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."
 - a. Johnson: They regarded his language blasphemy. If he had been only a man it would have been. Hence, in a sudden rage, without waiting for a trial, they sought to inflict the penalty of blasphemy by mob violence. Stoning was the legal penalty of blasphemy, but could not be inflicted without a trial and judgment. But Jesus hid himself. Quietly disappeared in the crowd and departed from the temple, while they were raging around to gather stones. It is not probable there was a miracle, as he never worked one for his own benefit. [p.147].
 - b. I AM—The word "I am" in Hebrew is equivalent in meaning to Jehovah, and differs from it very slightly in form. This is much obscured by our substitution of Lord for Jehovah. The name, which Moses was thus commissioned to use, was at once new and old: old in its connection with previous revelations; new in its full interpretation and in its bearing upon the covenant of which Moses was the destined mediator.—Cook. And here we cannot but be reminded of the remarkable word of our Savior (John 8: 58), "Before Abraham was, I am." The expression is so strikingly parallel that we know not how to resist the conclusion that there was a real, though mysterious identity in the essential nature of the two speakers; so that whatever was meant by Jehovah in saying to Moses, "I am hath sent me to you," the same was meant by the saying of Jesus, "Before Abraham was, I am."—Bush. [See Johnson, pp.147f].

Names of the Devil

1. Satan— "Adversary"
 2. Devil— "Accuser, Slanderer"
 3. Tempter— "For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain" (1 Thess. 3:5).
 4. Beelzebub— "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (Matt. 12:24).
-

5. Enemy— “The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels” (Matt. 13:39).

6. Wicked One—

a. “When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side” (Matt. 13:19).

b. “The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one” (Matt. 13:38).

c. “I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one” (1 John 2:13-14).

7. Belial— “And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” (2 Cor. 6:15).

8. Deceiver— “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” Rev. 12:9).

9. Great Dragon— “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads” (Rev. 12:3).

10. Father of Lies— “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” (John 8:44).

11. Murderer— “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” (John 8:44).

12. Sinner— “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).



John Chapter 9

The Man Born Blind

A. John 9:1-7: The Man Born Blind.

1. Verse 1: And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.”
 - a. The preceding verse tells of Jesus strolling away from those enemies who had in mind to stone him. As he was moving from that scene of hatred and violence, he saw a blind man who was in need of his assistance.
 - b. This man had been blind from birth; he had never seen the light of day. He had not seen any of the beauties of nature; he had not beheld the beauty of his mother’s face. I read a story many years ago of a sightless little boy. His mother had taken him, at considerable time and expense, to specialists who were able to provide him with sight. As they were making their way back home, the son asked his mother why she had not described to him the grand beauties of nature, and of the loveliness of her face. Words are unable to picture what personal eyesight can instantly reveal.
 - c. An experience was related by a Confederate officer as he was making his way from the east to his home in Texas on a train. At the war’s end, the south had been left devastated and poverty-stricken; the victors had carried northward the bounties that had been taken from the victims. Across the isle from the Confederate officer sat an old woman, dressed in a faded and worn calico dress. She was holding the hand of her son, who had been so wounded in battle that he no longer had a mind; he was also sightless. His mother had traveled alone back east to bring her son home. The love for her son led her to make the hard and long journey. The concern the Savior had for the sightless man of our text was such that he brought sight to the afflicted man of this chapter.
2. Verses 2-3: “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.”
 - a. Verse eight reports that this blind man earned a living by begging. He likely was widely recognized by his public status as a beggar. In the course of his life he much have spoken with thousands of people in his search for alms. His case would have been parallel with that of the lame man who asked alms from Peter and John—in Acts 3.
 - b. The two apostles in Acts three used the healing they brought to the lame man as an occasion for teaching the gospel to crowd which quickly assembled. Christ used the situation with the blind man of the present study as a means to instruct many people.
 - c. First, the disciples with Jesus asked the cause of this man’s being born blind. They wanted to know whether the man’s parents had sinned so that this affliction was given to the unborn child. The Lord quickly pointed out that the blindness was not due to any sin done by the parents. Since the blindness was on the man at the time of his birth, it is certain that he had not committed any sin at that time. The cause of his blindness was not due to sin on the man’s part or on the part of his parents.
 - d. The Lord did not subscribe to the man-made theory of original sin. If infants are born into this world already guilty of sin, from whom did they acquire this taint?
 - 1) It certainly was not from God! Divine beings (God, Christ and the Holy Spirit) are absolutely free from any kind or degree of sin.
 - a) Revelation 1:8: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”
 - b) Revelation 1:18 : “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”
 - c) James 1:13: “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man.”

- d) Luke 13:1-5: "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
- 2) It is just as obvious that an infant cannot be tainted by any sins pertaining to the parents. We are expressly told that such is impossible.
- a) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
- b) Ezekiel 18:1-4: "The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."
- c) Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
- d) Ezekiel 28:15: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."
- e) Matthew 18:4: "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."
- f) Matthew 19:14: "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
- e. Brother Woods has an excellent comment: Their question, "Who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind," resulted from the view that all difficulties, troubles, misfortunes, illnesses, and the like, are the result of some special sin. This view the disciples held; yet, they were unable to see how such could be so in this case. Blindness began before this man was born; how could his own sin have occasioned it? If it were not because of his own sin, was it because of the sin of his parents? They seemed not to have considered that neither conclusion was true and that there was an alternative they had not contemplated. The view they expressed is a persistent one and is held by many today even though the book of Job is a clear refutation of it and Jesus also taught that it rested on a false premise. (Luke 13:1-5.) [p.183].
- f. There are some troubles that come upon individuals as a consequence of another's sin; but guilt cannot be passed from one person to another; neither can goodness [spiritual strength] be transferred from one to another. Just because someone is suffering immense ailments does not mean that he is being punished for his iniquities (although that can be true in some cases).
- 1) Job's friends thought that that great patriarch must have done some awful thing to have incurred affliction which had come upon him. They were wrong! "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Job's situation was used by Jehovah as a great test, and as an object lesson for all who read of his tribulations.
- 2) 2 Corinthians 12:8-10: "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."
-

- 3) James 1:2-4: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:6-9: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."
 - g. The trials and afflictions of the Messiah were not due to any personal sin, for he was without sin. In God's great plan, it was necessary for Jesus to suffer for our sins.
 - 1) 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. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53:10-12).
 - 2) Luke 24:46: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."
 - 3) Hebrews 2:17: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."
 - h. "Why was this man born blind? Jesus taught them that instead of wrestling with the age-old problem of the relationship of sin and suffering they should see in this case the marvelous blessing which the love and grace of God would produce. The blindness of the man would thus afford an opportunity for God to bring to him, and to all who witnessed the results of the miracle, the privilege and blessing of salvation. They would be enabled to realize that he who could give physical light to the blind could also provide spiritual light to those groping in the darkness of sin and death. There is nothing here nor elsewhere in the scriptures to support the view, often advanced, that God occasions evil in order to demonstrate his powers by removing it or that people are sometimes made to suffer affliction by arbitrary divine decrees" (Woods, *ibid.*).
 - i. Christ here shows that there may be other reasons for sorrow than personal or family sins. By his miraculous cure the work of God shall be made manifest. It is the work of God to believe on Christ (John 6: 29), and the blindness of this man was the occasion of faith being produced not only in him, but others. Thus Christ shows a nobler use of suffering. It is often a means of grace, and the saints are often called upon to suffer, that they may themselves be purified, or to show God's grace to others. [See Johnson].
3. Verses 4-5: "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."
 - a. Christ was given work to be done during his personal ministry on earth. We all know that when the end of life comes, we can no longer work. The hands that were so strong and skillful in life, lie folded in death, unable to do anything else in this world. When the Lord stated on the cross, "It is finished," he spoke of his earthly mission.
 - b. Giving sight to this blind man was a work that he must accomplish. It was a work the Father gave him to do.
 - c. From the Ascension until the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), was there any communication from Jesus to anyone on earth?
-

4. Verses 6-7: "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.)"
- a. After making the preceding statement for the benefit of the apostles, the Lord spat upon the ground and by mixing the moisture with the dust, formed a small amount of clay. With this clay, he anointed the eyes of the blind man.
 - 1) The afflicted man was then told to wash in the Pool of Siloam. From this we might take it that he was to wash his eyes; that area of his body was afflicted and had been covered with clay. It does not matter whether he bathed his whole body or just the eyes.
 - 2) Being blind, how was he to locate the Pool of Siloam? The same way that he ordinarily navigated. He might have been fairly near the pool; certainly he could have asked someone to guide him; there may have been someone who remained near him as a guide.
 - 3) This man had been born blind; medical science could not have given him eyesight. The sorcerers and other fake healers could not have done so. That a powerful miracle had taken place when he received sight, was beyond successful denial. Can modern medical science provide sight to one who has been born blind? Some claims have been made concerning a bionic eye, but we are told that we must wait.
 - b. Divine wisdom determined the method to be used in this miracle. Christ knew that an act of faith was necessary in this case, no overt action was required of the man healed by Peter and John in Acts Three. In that case, faith was essential on the part of the apostles.
 - c. The episode with this blind man would carry with it a huge amount of influence on the people. As we proceed through the chapter, strong evidence of the Lord's identity and power is supplied by the various statements put forth. The man was widely known as one who had been born blind. Those who knew him could verify that condition, as well as his parents and the man himself.
 - d. Despite any nebulous notion that saliva contains some healing agent, this man's reception of sight was entirely miraculous. To go and was in Siloam was the condition given by the Lord to test his faith. He went, he washed, and came away seeing!
 - e. Woods:
 - 1) It [the clay] could have had no more direct power in the miracle than did bathing in the pool of Siloam, the power being in the command of Jesus, though the healing would not have occurred had the man not complied with the command to wash. Sometimes the Lord's healing powers were exercised at a distance, at other times by a touch, or by a word; we can conclude that in every instance the medium chosen was the proper one for the person involved and those whose faith would be quickened by the act.
 - 2) The command to go wash in the pool of Siloam was a test of the man's faith. Had he not responded, though his eyes had been anointed, no healing would have occurred. Where conditions are prescribed, they must be met, before blessings are bestowed. It is strange that with so many instances of this in the scriptures it is denied by so many today who, notwithstanding the Lord's command to be baptized "unto" the remission of sins, yet reject it as essential thereto. By this unwarranted and presumptuous act, they deprive themselves of the blessing of salvation just as the blind man would have lost his opportunity to see had he not acted in full obedience to the Lord's command.
 - f. SILOAM: Probably the exit of the water at Gihon was entirely covered up and the water flowed through the 1,700 ft. of tunnel and merged in the pool made for it (now known as the Birket Silwan) near the mouth of the Tyropceon valley. This extraordinary winding aqueduct along which the waters of the "Virgin's Fount" still flow is described in JERUSALEM , VII, 4 (which see). The lower end of this tunnel which now emerges under a modern arch has long been known as 'Ain Silwan, the "Fountain of Siloam," and indeed, until the rediscovery of the tunnel connecting this with the Virgin's Fount (a fact known to some in the 13 th century, but by no means generally
-

known until the last century), it was thought this was simply a spring. So many springs all over Palestine issue from artificial tunnels—it is indeed the rule in Judaea that the mistake is natural. Josephus gives no hint that he knew of so great a work as this of Hezekiah's [ISBE].

B. John 9:8-12: Blind Man's Neighbors Learn About His Healing.

1. Verse 8: "He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."
 - a. No delay is indicated in his proceeding to Silaom and washing; he went, he washed and he began to see. His eyesight was not merely partially done; it was complete.
 - b. Another case of sight given to a blind man is reported in Mark 8:22-26: "And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town."
 - c. The two episodes show that the Lord could give sight instantly or by stages. There is no support for the modern "healers" who allege that it sometimes take longer for them to produce a healing miracle. No miracle of any sort can be produced by these false teachers.
 - d. Barnes on Mark 8:22-26:
 - 1) The healing of the blind man of Bethsaida is recorded only by Mark. [Besought him to touch him] That is, to heal him, for they believed that his touch would restore his sight. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.
 - 2) [Led him out of the town] Why this was done the sacred writers have not told us. It MIGHT have been to avoid the collecting of a multitude, and thus to have escaped the designs of the Pharisees who were attempting to take his life, and chiefly on a charge of sedition and of exciting the people. On this account Jesus chose to perform the miracle alone, thus showing that while he did good, he desired to do it in such a way as to avoid the "appearance" of evil, and to prevent, at the same time, ostentation and the malice of his enemies.
 - 3) [Spit on his eyes] Why this was done is not known. It was evidently not intended to perform the cure by any natural effect of the spittle. It was to the man a "sign," an evidence that it was the power of Jesus. The eyes were probably closed. They were perhaps "gummed" or united together by a secretion that had become hard. To apply spittle to them—to wet them—would be a "sign," a natural expression of removing the obstruction and opening them. The power was not in the spittle, but it attended the application of it.
 - 4) [Saw aught] Saw anything. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. [I see men, as trees, walking] I see men walking, but see them so indistinctly that, but for their "motion," I could not distinguish them from trees. I cannot distinctly see their shapes and features. Probably our Lord did not "at once" restore him fully to sight, that he might strengthen his faith. Seeing that Jesus had partially restored him, it was evidence that he could "wholly," and it led him to exercise faith anew in him, and to feel more strikingly his dependence on him.
 - 5) After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. Could see their form and features. His sight was completely restored Yet at first he sees indistinctly
 - 6) And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town. [The town] The town of Bethsaida. [Nor tell it ...] Lest it excite the jealousy of the Pharisees, and produce commotion and danger.
 2. Verse 9: "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."
-

- a. His neighbors scrutinized him carefully to see whether this truly was the man they had long known as having been born blind. Some were quickly aware that this was the man; others merely admitted that he resembled their friend.
 - b. The man provided his own undeniable testimony: “I am he!” From that statement, those who knew him could question him about many things that both he and they could know.
 - c. They now recognized the man as the blind beggar they had long known, but they did not as yet know how he had obtained eyesight.
 - d. The man later declared that his eyesight was provided by miraculous means: “Since the world began it has not been heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind” (John 9:32).
3. Verses 10-12: “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.”
- a. Being convinced that the man had received eyesight, they demanded to know how this had happened. His only reply could only be what he now said: *A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: I went and washed, and I received sight.*
 - b. His report was factual, concise, and accurate. His being able to see would be all the confirmation that anyone should need. His report has been made of the unending and unchangeable record of the Bible and still carries sufficient weight to convince modern readers.
 - c. Notice that he did not know who Jesus was, even though he had learned his name. Most everyone in the same condition the blind man was in would have followed the instructions of Jesus. He had nothing to lose by washing in the pool. He might have heard something about Jesus, without really knowing who Jesus was. Also take note that the blind man referred to Jesus as a man; it appears that his understanding of the nature of Jesus was lacking.
 - d. The question by his neighbors quickly and naturally followed: “Where is he?” Woods: “Sadly; their desire to find him did not result from deep feelings of love and appreciation for one who could bestow such a bountiful blessing but from malice and hate and a desire to destroy him. Not having had any contact with Jesus since leaving his presence to go to the pool of Siloam, the healed man did not know where Jesus was” (p.188).
- C. John 9:13-23: The Parents Identify Their Son as He Who Was Blind.
1. Verses 13-15: “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.”
 - a. The pronoun “they” identifies those who brought the former blind man to the Pharisees. The word “they” traces back to the preceding noun, “the neighbors” (verse 8). The aim of these neighbors was not *neighborly*. Doubtless, they were aware that the Pharisees were enemies of Jesus, and brought the man in order to direct their attention on the Lord again.
 - b. We are told in this passage that the miracle was wrought on the Sabbath Day. The Jews knew it was a violation of Sabbatical rules to perform work on that day. Did these people think the blind man violated the Sabbath by washing on that day [even if he only washed his eyes]? Did they think Jesus was also in violation by making clay and putting that material on the blind man’s eyes? Was he in violation by the supernatural act? A supernatural action is beyond a natural action, thus could not violate the law of the Sabbath—the miracle was outside the realm of the world.
 - c. If an animal belonging to a Jewish farmer got into a dangerous situation on the Sabbath, the owner would certainly take the necessary action to save his animal. How much greater it is for a man to be healed on the Sabbath without blame!
 - 1) Luke 13:14-17: “And the ruler of the synagogue, being moved with indignation because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, answered and said to the multitude, There are six days in which men
-

ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the day of the sabbath. But the Lord answered him, and said, Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath? And as he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame: and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.”

- 2) Luke 14:1-6: “And it came to pass, when he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching him. And behold, there was before him a certain man that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not? But they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on a sabbath day? And they could not answer again unto these things.”
 - d. Woods: “They, too, show interest only in how the opening of eyes occurred. That which should have prompted the greatest interest, the miracle itself, they ignored. The answer was straightforward and true to the facts and the details given were those which the man sensed. He did not mention the spittle nor the formation of the clay, either because he felt that his questioners were seeking something whereby to charge him who had blessed him so greatly and wished to protect him; or, because the omitted matters were now to him of far less importance than the act of healing” [*ibid.*].
 - e. How you ever wondered what a hide-bound Pharisee would have done if a snake or stinging insect came into his house on the Sabbath and began biting or stinging the inhabitants?
2. Verses 16-18: “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. 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.”
 - a. The formerly blind man reported to the Pharisees what Jesus had done for him. The Pharisees would not believe his report, for, as they claimed, Jesus is not a man of God, because he does not keep the Sabbath. They assumed correctly that only Deity could give sight to a man born blind, but since Jesus was not a man of God, he had nothing to do with the miracle. They alleged incorrectly that what the Lord did was a violation of the Sabbath.
 - b. Woods: “It should be noted that Jesus had violated no valid sabbath law in the healing of the blind man. He was indeed in conflict with Jewish regulations touching the sabbath but these rules, which the Pharisees and scribes had come to regard as more binding than the law of Moses itself, were not valid and were therefore properly disregarded by the Lord. The questioning thus far had gained them nothing. Their next move was to retrench and to deny that which they had formerly conceded: the miracle itself!” (pp.190f).
 - c. There were others present who demurred, asking how a sinful man could do such miracles? These men knew, just as Nicodemus knew, that *no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him* (John 3:2).
 - d. This caused a division among the people present. They then asked the blind man what he thought of Jesus. He replied boldly, “He is a prophet.” Those who were conducting this inquisition rejected the man’s plain statement of fact. He never wavered in his report; indeed, his convictions grew much deeper when the conversed with the Lord a little while later.
 - e. The Pharisees did not believe him; they doubted that the man had even been blind. If there was no ailment, there could have been no miracle. Their next move was to ask the man’s parents whether the man had been born blind.
-

3. Verses 19-21: “ 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.”
 - a. The unbelieving Jews, still not satisfied that the man had been blind, called for his parents. They would know if anyone knew—they had known him all his life! Is this your son that you claim was born blind? How did he receive sight?
 - b. These enemies of the Lord were twisting and turning, trying to find some logical way to repudiate the reality of the miracle. They demanded from the parents a declaration, first, whether this man was their son, and second, had he been born blind.
 - c. The parents openly affirmed that this man was truly their son and that he had indeed been born blind. These two fundamental facts they knew beyond any doubt.
 - d. However, they did not have personal knowledge of how his sight was produced. They replied truthfully and accurately, but, as the next section will show, they were cautious in giving their answer.
4. Verses 22-23: “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.”
 - a. He added to their answer, that their son was of age, and could give an answer from his own knowledge. Their reply was the best they could have given under the present circumstances, but they “passed the buck” to the son.
 - b. The Jewish leaders had made it known that if anyone should confess faith in Jesus, that person would be cast out of the synagogue. This excommunication was very serious to a Jew. The victim would be cut off from worship in the synagogue. The term might be for a limited period of time but it could be indefinitely.
 - c. Matthew 10:17: “But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you.” The Lord had forewarned the disciples of the opposition and persecutions which the Jews would bring upon them.
 - d. Johnson:
 - 1) Though Jesus had not openly proclaimed himself as the Christ this decision of the rulers shows that the people were considering that very question and that the opinion that he was the Christ was gaining credence. The terror of the parents shows that to be "put out of the synagogue" was a punishment of great severity to a Jew. There were, according to Rabbinical writers, various degrees of excommunication, the mildest of thirty days duration.
 - 2) The effect of even the mildest grade was to render the offender a heathen, to cut him off from religious privileges, from association with his Jewish friends and neighbors, and even from his own family. If, at the end of thirty days, the offence was not repented of, a severer punishment was administered. This resolution to expel all confessors of Christ from the synagogue became a fixed rule after the crucifixion, when the gospel began to be preached with such success. [pp,152f).

D. John 9:24-33: The Pharisees Confront the Former Blind Man.

1. Verses 24:25: “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.”
 - a. The Pharisees again called the man before them, giving him a second chance to deny his previous testimony. They gave him an “out” by encouraging him to give God the credit for his healing, and leave Jesus out of the operation. This might have been easy for him to do without incurring blame.

- b. He enemies allege that Jesus was a sinner and could not possibly have performed a miracle. The man replied that he did not know the spiritual condition of Jesus, but he knew that he had before been blind, and now he could see!
 - c. These inquisitionists were now back to where they started. The miracle was every evident and could not be denied. Every effort they had tried was debunked by the facts.
 2. Verses 26-27: “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?”
 - a. They asked him once more how Jesus had opened his eyes. Their question appears to accept the fact that the man could now see. They were not ready for that sensible decision.
 - b. He told them that he had already answered this question in the earlier interview. Were they not able to hear him? Why should I repeat the story? Do you want to become his disciples?
 - c. These men were well-versed in verbal controversy, but they could not shake this man from the truth he was reporting. He stayed with his truthful story; they could not shake him from it by their various schemes.
 3. Verses 28-29: “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.”
 - a. When an errorist cannot answer a logical and truthful argument, their natural bent is to attack the opponent. The Jewish false teacher often did this, and their modern counterparts do the same. The people reviled the man.
 - b. Later, as Jesus hanged in agony on the cross, his vicious foes sauntered by, not with any compassion, but with vile allegations: “And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God. And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach” (Matt. 27:38-44).
 - c. The accusers stated the once blind man was a disciple of Jesus, while they claimed to be disciples of Moses. They knew that God had spoken to Moses (who taught the truth in the Old Testament), but “we do not know where the fellow came from.”
 4. Verses 30-33: “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.”
 - a. The former blind man was shocked that the Pharisees did not know where Jesus came from, since that same Jesus had miraculously given eyesight to one who had been born blind! “Surely, you should have perceived he was from Heaven, or at least had access to the powers of the Almighty!”
 - b. He then reminded the Lord’s enemies that it was known by all the Jews that God does not hear those who are sinners. Therefore, since God does not hear the prayers of sinful men, it ought to be obvious that he will not provide supernatural powers to a man who is a sinner!
 - c. Fourfold Gospel:
 - 1) The man answers contempt with contempt; with biting irony he declares that the miracle of his healing is no wonder at all when compared with the fact that such wonderfully learned men should be totally ignorant of so great a miracle-worker as Jesus. Thus he scorned their superlative claim to infallible knowledge, expressed in verses 24 and 29.]
 - 2) We know [he takes up their style of speech] that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth.

- d. This man could know that God does not hear the prayers of sinners because of plain Old Testaments declarations:
- 1) Proverbs 15:29: "Jehovah is far from the wicked; But he heareth the prayer of the righteous."
 - 2) Isaiah 1:15: "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."
 - 3) Micah 3:4: "Then shall they cry unto Jehovah, but he will not answer them; yea, he will hide his face from them at that time, according as they have wrought evil in their doings."
 - 4) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."
 - 5) Psalm 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."
 - 6) James 5:16-17: "Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working. Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months."
- e. Woods:
- 1) Here, incidentally, is a wonderful demonstration of the power of truth and of the strength an awareness of possessing it provides. This man, only a few hours earlier, was a pitiful beggar, dependent on the charity of others for his livelihood and without any influence whatsoever; now, he has successfully challenged and refuted the most skilled theologians of the Jews by appeal to principles derived from the scriptures themselves. He who has truth on his side need fear no man.
 - 2) It was this which sustained the Psalmist and prompted him to pen these wonderful words: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty... He will cover thee with his pinions, and under his wings shalt thou take refuge: his truth is a shield and a buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror of the night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee" (Psalm 91:1, 4-7.) [p.196].
- f. Alien sinners are provided with everything they need to obtain salvation (in the Gospel), but prayer is never named as one of the means. No where in the New Testament is an alien sinner told to pray for salvation. The alms and prayers of Cornelius came up before God as a memorial (Acts 10:3-5), but his prayers were not the means of his salvation. He was told to send for Peter, from whom he would learn words by which salvation was possible:
- 1) Acts 10:6: "He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."
 - 2) Acts 11:13-14: "And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."
 - 3) "In no instance, in the scriptures, was an alien sinner ever instructed to pray for salvation from past, or alien, sins, and in the only instance in which such a sinner was found praying he was told to terminate it and to complete his obedience: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22:16.) Cornelius is not an exception to this rule; inasmuch as the gospel had never been extended to include the Gentiles he was obviously still answerable to God under the same arrangement which had been operative for those not Jews since Eden" (Woods, p.198).
- g. It is more than of passing notice that this man who was only an average Jew in knowledge of the Old Testament and common sense, could speak such powerful thoughts to these "learned leaders" that they were unable to answer!
-

- 1) There is a story from the frontier days of an unlettered farmer successfully debating the purpose of baptism with a “learned” sectarian preacher. The farmer stood before the audience and read Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” The no-so-learned opponent arose and spoke at length in support of his position. The country gentleman stood up and read Mark 16:15-16, and declared, “It’s still there!”
- 2) The hero of our text in John nine stated to the enemy the succinct truth at God will neither the prayers nor the worship of sinful men; yet I stand before you today with full eyesight, which this Jesus provided for me! From the beginning the world, no case of one having been born blind ever received sight. If the Pharisees could have challenged his statement by revealing a case, they would have done so. He ended his defense by the unanswerable argument: “If this man were not of God, he could do nothing” (John 9:33).

E. John 9:34-41: The Formerly Blind Man Believes on Jesus.

1. Verse 34: “They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.”
 - a. False teachers who are met with truths they cannot answer, usually do what these errorists did: They directed a vicious unproved charge against their protagonist. They alleged the man had altogether been born in sins. Yet here was an “ignorant, un-lettered and sinful man” who was able logically to back them into a corner with undeniable truth, and put them to silence. Their haughtiness is overtly in display! “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18).
 - b. Before, they had claimed the man was not even blind, or if he had been blind, then Jesus did not heal him. Now, tacitly, they are admitting that he was born blind, consequently they are acceding to the miracle that gave him sight. But to do that, they take the unsupportable stand that this man was born guilty of sins! But from whom did he acquire those sins?
 - 1) Certainly he did not obtain guilt from God! “The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and **formeth the spirit of man within him**” (Zech. 12:1).
 - 2) We are also plainly told that no one can be contaminated by sin from his parents: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezek. 18:20). Neither sin nor righteousness can be passed from one individual directly to another.
 - a) Isaiah 6:1-5: “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”
 - b) 1 Peter 1:15-16: “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”
 - c. “They cast him out.” These Pharisaic leaders had issued a warning earlier (verse 22) that anyone who confessed Jesus would be put out of the synagogue. [The man had in an indirect way already acknowledged Jesus as a prophet, something the Pharisees utterly rejected]. The natural import of this man being cast out seems to be his removal from membership in the synagogue. Chasing him out of the present hall, porch or room would have little significance to the man.
 - d. Johnson offers some excellent information about testing the miracles of Jesus:
 - 1) Tholuck remarks: "The narrative of this miracle has a special value in apologetics. How often do we hear the wish expressed that Christ's miracles had been put on documentary record; and had been subjected to a thorough judicial examination. Here we have the very thing desired;

judicial personages, and these too, the avowed enemies of Christ, investigate a miracle of Christ in repeated hearings and they can find no flaw."

- 2) If the reader will observe he will find that the people refer the case to a great religious order composed of enemies of Christ ; that members of this order first examine the facts; then the case is referred to a higher tribunal, the official representatives of the nation, who cross-examine the parents, as well as the subject of the miracle. This judicial investigation shows by the testimony of both that the young man was born blind, that he now saw, and his own testimony was given that he was healed by Jesus. The attempt to disprove the miracle was an utter failure and the court sought to discredit it by excommunicating the chief witness. [pp.154f].
2. Verses 35-36: "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?"
 - a. Word soon came to the Lord that the enemy had cast out the former blind man. He was now a man without a formal religion. Jesus sought out this man and asked him whether he believed on the Son of God.
 - b. The dealings he had had with the man called Jesus had convinced him of the special nature of the one who had given him sight. He knew that this man must be a prophet, but did not have enough information to recognize him as the Son of God.
 - c. He was fully prepared to believe on God's Son—all he needed was to meet him. There have been many honest and sincere people through the years who had studied the Bible for a long time. Some of these knew that the Lord only established one church, but which one was it?
 - d. Great confusion reigned in the religious world, with such a mass of conflicting claims that the honest seeker wonders if the true church even exists. When he meets the right person, the confusion can be quickly cleared away and the truth shines brightly! The underbrush must be removed.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 4:3-5: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 10:3-5: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 3. Verses 37-38: "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."
 - a. Christ plainly declared to him that he had seen and heard the Son of God—He is the very one with whom the man was presently talking! Our Lord also revealed his identity to the woman of Samaria: "Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:26).
 - b. Instantly, faith flooded through this sincere man! "Lord, I believe." But going to wash at Siloam he had shown a degree of trust in what he was told to do; when he defended the man called Jesus against the assaults of the Pharisees, he grew in his conviction that Jesus was a prophet, at that he was endowed with miraculous powers which could only come from God. Now he was utterly convinced that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God!
 - c. By calling him Lord, this new believer grasped the truth that here stood talking with him, was truly a divine being! This believer confessed his faith in the Lord and followed that with an act of obeisance.
 - 1) Worshiped: "NT:4352 (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore)" [Vincent].
-

- 2) Vincent adds in commenting on Acts 10:25: Worshipped [*prosekuneesen*]. An unfortunate translation, according to modern English usage, but justified by the usage of earlier English, according to which "to worship" meant simply "to honor." Worship is worthship, or honor paid to dignity or worth.
 - 3) Vine: *proskuneo* (*proskune/w*, NT:4352), "to make obeisance, do reverence to" (from *pros*, "towards," and *kuneo*, "to kiss"), is the most frequent word rendered "to worship."
4. Verses 39: "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."
- a. It is evident that the preceding words of Jesus identifying himself to the once blind man were directed only to that man. There is a subtle change in the setting, for there were some Pharisees present when the Lord made the remarks of this verse. They took serious umbrage at it. Truth often offends those who do not love it.
 - b. Christ is drawing a lesson from his given sight to the blind man. He came into the world to judge those in sin. Before he could save a lost soul, that soul must recognize its condemned condition. He exposed sin and error so that people could see their true status. The color of a garment cannot be seen unless there is sufficient light. A shirt that looks dark blue in semi-darkness, may indeed be green.
 - c. The purpose of the gospel system is to reveal to those who are spiritually blind their situation so as to provide spiritual sight to them.
 - 1) Proverbs 16:25: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."
 - 2) Jeremiah 6:16: "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein*."
 - 3) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 4) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 5) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 6) Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."
 - d. At the same time, those who think they can see spiritually, are shown that they are really blind.
 - 1) The Pharisees of the first century thought that their attention to the outward compliance with the Law was good; that their strict adherence to the traditions of the rabbis was excellent. But the Lord denounced their religion (Matt. 23). Although it contained many practices and principles ordained in the Law, they had corrupted it to the point that the resulting religion was not of God, but from their own concepts.
 - 2) The Sadducees took a loose approach to religion. What did not measure up to their human views was rejected. Hence, they refused to believe in angels, the human soul, and the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:8). This seemed proper to them, but it was repudiated by the Lord.
-

- 3) There are many today who follow the example of the Pharisees, binding where the Lord did not bind; a greater number of others do as the Sadducees, and loose where the Lord has bound. Such seems right to the participants, but is denounced as error by the Lord.
 - e. The reaction that each individual has toward the gospel depends on the present disposition of his heart and mind. The Parable of the Sower illustrates these conditions. "To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. 2:16-17).
 - 1) The apostle describes himself (and the other apostles and prophets) as manifesting the *sweet savour of Christ*. This is God's view of their work. Gospel preaching and gospel preachers are not held in high esteem by the majority in our society, but if we preach the same great message as did Paul and the Twelve, God holds our work in the highest regard! "...As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:15).
 - 2) It is not the apostles as men who are so highly praised here; rather, it is the glorious message that they proclaimed. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Cor. 4:7). This treasure is the gospel!
 - 3) What was the result when they preached to sinful men the good news of God's grace, only to have those men to utterly reject the message? It was preached to men who were dead in sin, and their condition was only worsened by their repudiation of the gospel!
 5. Verses 40-41: "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."
 - a. The Pharisees who heard what the Lord say demanded to know if he thought they were blind, too. They were speaking about being spiritually blind. In fact, these people were very haughty in their view of themselves. An example of this is found in a story the Lord told: "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:9-14).
 - b. Christ told these unbelievers that if they were blind [spiritually], they could have been as willing to believe on the Son of God as readily as had this once blind man. In that case, they would have no sin. With an open and believing mind, they would have accepted the Messiah on his terms, and salvation would be theirs.
 - c. But because they claimed that they were full of spiritual sight, were in perfect standing with God, they were still in their sins. Compare: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke 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" (John 15:22-24).
-

John Chapter 10

A. John 10:1-6: The Parable of the Good Shepherd.

1. Verse 1: “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.”
 - a. The ancient sheepfolds were open enclosures, consisting of rock walls with a door or gate through which the sheep and the shepherd could enter. The top of the walls were often covered with briars to discourage the entrance of wild animals or thieves.
 - 1) The porter was the gate keeper who watched the sheep at night; the shepherd returned the next morning to take the flock to pasture and water. If anyone tried to enter the sheepfold by climbing over the wall, his intentions were evil—to steal or kill.
 - 2) There was only one proper way to enter—through the door. The nature of one who tried to climb in over the wall would be obvious—he had evil intentions.
 - 3) There were beasts of prey in Palestine, thus there was the need for an enclosure to protect them from these wolves, lions and other predators, including sheep-stealers.
 - b. As the previous chapter closes, the Lord was speaking to certain Pharisees, giving them warning to open their minds to comprehend his truth. There is nothing in the close context to tell us the setting has changed. It appears, therefore, that Christ is still addressing the same audience, including certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees. They were still oblivious to the truth, hence their sin remained (9:41), and they still did not understand what he spoke to them (10:6). There is none so blind as the one who will not see!
 - c. Coffman: Chapter nine ended on a theme of judgment (John 9:39); and here the deserved judgment of the evil shepherds is uttered. "Jesus swiftly turned the tables on his judges and sentenced them. The controversy that erupted over the miracle dominates the first 21 verses, as evidenced by "Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" (John 10:21). The expression, "Verily, verily," is one which is not used at the commencement of a discourse"; and Robertson said, "The words do not ever introduce a fresh topic. Further evidence for the unity of the two chapters (John 9-10) is in Jesus' presentation of himself as the divine Messiah under the metaphor of the "Good Shepherd," contrasting with the evil shepherds who had cast out the blind man.
 - d. Fourfold Gospel: “In this section Jesus proceeds to contrast his own care for humanity with that manifested by the Pharisees, who had just cast out the beggar. Old Testament prophecies were full of declarations that false shepherds would arise to the injury of God's flock (Ezek 34:1-6; Jer 23:1-6; Zech 11:4-11). But other prophecies spoke of the true shepherding of God and his Messiah.”
 - 1) Psalm 80:1: “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.”
 - 2) Psalm 95:7: “For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice.”
 - 3) Jeremiah 31:10: “Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.”
 - 4) Ezekiel 34:31: “And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD.”
 - 5) Micah 7:14: “Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.”
 - 6) Isaiah 43:11: “I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.”
 - e. The scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and other errorists among the first century Jews had led most of the nation away from the true Law of Moses. They had entered the sheepfold and corrupted the hearts and minds of the sheep! “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:38).

- f. Barclay has some interesting comments:
- 1) The picture of the shepherd is woven into the language and imagery of the Bible. It could not be otherwise. The main part of Judaea was a central plateau, stretching from Bethel to Hebron for a distance of about 35 miles and varying from 14 to 17 miles across. The ground, for most part, was rough and stony. Judaea was, much more a pastoral than an agricultural country and was, therefore, inevitable that the most familiar figure of the Judaeian uplands was the shepherd.
 - 2) His life was very hard. No flock ever grazed without a shepherd, and he was never off duty. There being little grass, the sheep were bound to wander, and since there were no protecting walls, the sheep had constantly to be watched. On either side of the narrow plateau the ground dipped sharply down to the craggy deserts and the sheep were always liable to stray away and get lost. The shepherd's task was not only constant but dangerous, for, in addition, he had to guard the flock against wild animals, especially against wolves, and there were always thieves and robbers ready to steal the sheep.
 - 3) Sir George Adam Smith, who travelled in Palestine, writes: "On some high moor, across which at night the hyaenas howl, when you meet him, sleepless, far-sighted, weather-beaten, leaning on his staff, and looking out over his scattered sheep, every one of them on his heart, you understand why the shepherd of Judaea sprang to the front in his people's history; why they gave his name to their king, and made him the symbol of providence; why Christ took him as the type of self-sacrifice." Constant vigilance, fearless courage, patient love for his flock, were the necessary characteristics of the shepherd.
2. Verses 2-3: "To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."
- a. The shepherd of the flock is known by the porter [the doorkeeper] and by the sheep. The sheep know the voice of the shepherd. The Following Story Comes From a Writer Unknown to Me:
 - 1) "A gentleman traveling in Syria, relates how he stopped to watch three shepherds who were at a well watering their flocks. The three flocks were all mingled together at the watering place. The traveler could see no difference between them, and he wondered how they would get them separated again without great trouble.
 - 2) But presently one of the shepherds stood forth and called out, "*Menah*," the Arabic for "*Follow me*." Thirty sheep immediately separated themselves from the indiscriminate mass and began to follow the shepherd up the hill.
 - 3) A second shepherd called out, "*Menah*," and a second flock separated and followed him, while the rest of the sheep remained as unconcerned as if no one had spoken at all.
 - 4) The traveler was so astonished that as he saw the third shepherd preparing to depart, laying his hand to his crook and beginning to gather a few dates fallen from a palm beneath which he had been resting, he stepped up to him and asked: "*Would your sheep follow me if I called them?*" The man shook his head. "*Give me your shepherd's cloak and crook and let me try.*" the traveler said. He even wound the shepherds turban round his head and standing forth began to cry, "*Menah, Menah!*" but no sheep stirred. They only blinked at him lazily in the sunshine.
 - 5) "Do they never follow any one but you?" asked the traveler. "*Only when a sheep is sick; then the silly creature follows any one,*" the shepherd said. [This excellent illustration came through Glann Lee, a great gospel preacher and long-time friend, who slipped into eternity in 2016].
 - b. The Lord, in this parable, is speaking of his church, which he had promised to construct: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on
-

- earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:16-19).
- c. The figure of the shepherd and his sheep is always a favorite one in the Scriptures. Abraham, the founder of the Jewish race, and the father of whom all Christians are children by faith, was a shepherd, as were Isaac, Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, and all the Jewish race up to the time of their settlement in Canaan. Upon the hills of Canaan the shepherd's vocation was always a favorite employment, and David, the great king, was called from his flocks to the throne. It was David who sang, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want," and all through the Scriptures the Lord is presented in the position of the shepherd of his people. It is Christ who is the Good Shepherd. [Johnson, p.157].
 - d. The Lord Jesus is the good shepherd. To him the sheep listen. They know his voice and he knows their names—each one! *The Lord knoweth them that are his* (2 Tim. 2:19). He has full access into the sheepfold—his church, which is also his body.
 - e. Anyone who tries to enter into the sheepfold by some other way demonstrates his true nature (verse 1). He does not have proper access, he cannot enter through the one door, for the doorkeeper blocks his entrance. He must endeavor to enter by climbing over the wall. His purpose is not to tend to the sheep but to steal or kill them—destroy them in some way. Paul spoke of some who had been brought in improperly.
 - 1) Galatians 2:4-5: “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”
 - 2) Some have been brought in today without the right. Suppose some person convinces a local member that he has obeyed the gospel in some other location. With his own personal claim and with the local member's mistaken belief, this outsider is considered a faithful Christian. Perhaps the local member connives with several other outsiders and these are “brought in unawares.”
 - 3) Unsuspecting local congregations have been taken over by an influx of outsiders who may not even be Christians or who may be unfaithful, misguided or who may be outright false teachers. When such a case occurs, the truth of the gospel has not continued but a mixture of truth and error, which is of course full error. How much poison is necessary to make a sparkling glass of water deadly? How much poisonous doctrine does it take to make a message ruinous to the soul?
 - f. Woods: "They are so tame and so trained that they follow their keeper with the utmost docility. He leads them forth from the fold, or from their houses in the villages just where he pleases. As there are many flocks in such a place as this, each one takes a different path, and it is his business to find pasture for them. It is necessary, therefore, that they should be taught to follow, and not to stray away into the unfenced fields of corn which lie so temptingly on either side. Any one that thus wanders is sure to get into trouble. The shepherd calls sharply from time to time to remind them of his presence. They know his voice and follow on; but if a stranger calls, they stop short, lift up their heads in alarm, and, if it is repeated, they turn and flee, because they know not the voice of a stranger. This is not the fanciful costume of a parable; it is simple fact. I have made the experiment repeatedly." —Thompson's *The Land and the Book*.
3. Verses 4-5: “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.”
 - a. The shepherd has entrance into the sheepfold where his flock is sheltered; when he exits, all the sheep faithfully follow him; they know his voice and fully trust him to lead them safely. This the way it is with a real shepherd as he tends to those sheep which belong to him.
-

- b. But in the parable, the Lord knows all of this sheep and all of them know him. They know what he tells them to do and they faithfully follow every instruction. They fully trust him. Compare:
 - 1) Hebrews 13:5-6: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."
 - 2) John 10:27-29: "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."
 - c. Faithful, mature Christians recognize error because they know the truth. When some strange doctrine or practice is presented to us, we quickly perceive that something is wrong with it. There is a foul smell or taste; and with a little study, we can see the error for what it is. We know too much truth to allow ourselves to be deceived by false teaching.
4. Verse 6: "This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them."
- a. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. The word here translated "parable" is not the word "parabole," which John never uses, but the word "paroimia," which the Synoptists never use. *Paroimia means*, literally, "beside the way," that is, speech not of the common or direct form, that is, a similitude or allegory. The idea of loving care was so foreign to the nature of the Pharisees that they could not comprehend the figures which clothed such a thought. [Cf. Fourfold Gospel].
 - b. The word thus rendered here is [Greek: *paroimia*], sometimes translated "proverb"; but it may be logically viewed as an extended metaphor, or comparison. The Pharisees whom Jesus had already called "blind" (John 9:39-40) did not have the slightest idea about what Jesus meant by these teachings. Two months later (John 10:24) they seem to have caught on to at least a part of what Jesus meant; but in this scene they remained oblivious to his meaning, even after he repeated the metaphor and embellished it. [See Coffman].
 - c. The Jewish opponents would not allow themselves to understand what the Lord had previously said, remaining in their willful blindness. They were spiritually blind and led others who were likewise unwilling or unable to see:
 - 1) Matthew 15:14: "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."
 - 2) Luke 6:39: "And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

B. John 10:7-18: Jesus is the Door to the Sheep.

- 1. Verses 7-8: "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."
 - a. Of course the Lord was using a metaphor when he described himself as "the door of the sheep." As D.R. Dungan observed, "This metaphor is not difficult of interpretation. He is the bread from heaven, the vine, the door of the sheep; and the bread and wine of the supper were His body and His blood. Christians should be filled with wisdom and spiritual understanding; should speak of spiritual things by spiritual words, for they receive spiritual blessings, and are built up into a spiritual house, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. The city in which the witnesses lay for three days and a half was denominated spiritually Sodom and Egypt. In spirit it would be like these places. But this says nothing about spiritual interpretation, but uses the figures most common in the presentation of such thought" (*Hermaneutics*, p.64).
 - b. We would be in error if we should understand that the bread and fruit of the vine of the Lord's Supper were literally the body and blood of Jesus. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he
-

took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:26-29).

- c. Several figures of speech are used to identify the importance of Christ, including these:
 - 1) He is the head of the church.
 - 2) He is the king of the kingdom.
 - 3) He is the elder brother in the spiritual family.
 - 4) He is Savior of the body.
 - 5) He is the High Priest in the priesthood.
 - 6) He is the Master Teacher.
 - 7) He is the Door for his sheep to enter into the one sheepfold.
 - 8) His is the only name by which we may be saved.
 - d. Who are those who came *before* Jesus? It is clear that his reference is not to Abraham, Moses, the prophets, John the Baptizer and others whom God had appointed to work with his people. It seems to this scribe that the Lord is describing those who put themselves *before* him—those who took upon themselves the authority that rightly belonged to Christ.
 - 1) John 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."
 - 2) In the context, Christ is exposing the false teachers among the Jews who had set themselves as his enemies—thus were opposing God. For generations, they and their forebears had developed and forced upon Israel the traditions and opinions they had invented.
 - 3) There was, however, the body of Jewish religious teachers, the Scribes, the doctors and the Pharisees, who had claimed for centuries before to be the spiritual shepherds but were "blind leaders of the blind," "devourers of widows' houses," and these also in their pride turned away from Christ as too lowly to receive their deference. In point of spiritual precedence they placed themselves "before" him. The underlying principle is that all who claim to be religious and moral leaders and who turn away from Christ as their teacher are not real shepherds whose aim is to save the flock, but "robbers" who wish to prey upon it. This view includes the Jewish rabbis, the Greek philosophers, the pretended prophets, and the "Infallible Pope." These all refuse to bow to his authority. But the sheep did not hear them. The true sheep. It was the goats that wandered oft after such leaders. [Johnson, p.160].
 - e. To the rulers who fattened themselves at the expense of the flock, the Sadducean high priests, and Pharisaic doctors, the Herods and the Roman procurators—all these wicked shepherds (in the sense of Ezekiel 34) had climbed into their place of domination over the flock by illegitimate means; and it was they who conspired against the Divine Shepherd, who would lay down his life for the sheep and who would gather together into one flock the scattered children of God. [See Coffman].
2. Verses 9-10: "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."
 - a. Christ depicts himself as the door through which the sheep must enter if they wish to be part of his flock. He is the door, he is also the shepherd and the pasture. Using other figures. The Lord speaks of being the source of life giving water (John 4:13-14) and everlasting food (John 6:58).
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
-

- 2) 1 John 1:7-10: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”
- b. The illustrative language Christ uses in this context is allegorical in nature and must not be pushed to an illogical degree. When he speaks of his sheep going in and out of the fold, he does not mean that one can enter and exit Christ at will. One is baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27) and the unfaithful will be *spewed* from him (Rev. 3:15-18). Obviously, his point in describing his sheep as going in and out of the sheepfold is a picture of their being protected in his fold and fed in his green pastures; they are under the protection and care of the Good Shepherd in any and all situations.
- c. The Good Shepherd has only the good of the sheep in mind; the thief comes to steal, kill and destroy the sheep. He is not merely speaking of sheep-stealers here! As the context has shown, his reference is to the false teachers who had usurped authority over the Jewish sheep, led them astray from God’s Law, filled their minds with false doctrines and evil practices, thus has brought spiritual destruction to their souls. It was essential for these fallen Jews to repent toward God and believe the Gospel of Christ.
 - 1) Mark 1:15: “...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”
 - a) “Jesus was preaching to persons who already believed in the true God, and in the revelation which God had already made, and his object, at this stage of his ministry, like that of John, was to bring them to repentance at a preparation for faith in himself and his kingdom. This accounts for the order in which repentance and faith are here mentioned. To repent toward the God in whom they already believed, but whose revealed will they were violating, naturally and properly took precedence over believing in him whom God was about to reveal. It was not a necessary order, for some who had not repented toward God, might have been induced to believe in Jesus; but it was the more practicable order, and it enabled Jesus to begin his argument on common ground with his hearers. At the same time, a penitent state of heart was the best possible preparation for considering favorably the claims of Jesus, and for ready faith in him” (*Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, McGarvey, pp.267f).
 - b) Compare: “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).
 - 2) False teachers may honestly be deceived themselves, but anyone who values his own soul should honestly search the scriptures with an open mind to make sure he truly understands the truth. If one ignores those verses which belie his faulty interpretations, he ceases to be an honest person. We must always maintain an honest and open mind as we continue to study the Bible.
 - 3) But many false teachers are unconcerned about the truth, having already rejected all those truths which expose their erroneous doctrines and practices, and selfishly and knowingly deceive gullible people. If we honestly and with open minds listen to learn, we must also verify whether what we are hearing is truth!
 - a) Acts 17:10-11: “And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”
 - b) 2 Timothy 2:15: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” The word “study” is from the Greek word

spoudazo which means “to hasten to do a thing, to exert oneself, endeavour, give diligence” (Vine, Vol. 1, p.311). The point for which it is used in the verse is that Timothy was to hasten (give diligence; be zealous) to present himself in an approved condition in God’s sight. Everything essential to obtain God’s approval is included in the word. The word itself does not have the idea of studying, but it is impossible to know one’s duty and the will of God without studying God’s word (1 Tim. 4:13,15-16; 2 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 5:12-14).

- 4) Anyone who, knowingly or unknowingly, teaches false doctrine is guiding precious souls away from the truth and from God. The dupes who accept false doctrine may be fully persuaded that they are in perfect fellowship with the Almighty. One who is honestly deceived is still deceived; one who has been misled from the truth is still following error and not the truth. How sad!
- d. It is only by the truth of God that any soul can be saved. A message comprised of part truth and part error is still all error. How much poison mixed in water is required to turn that otherwise pure water into a deadly concoction?
- 1) Matthew 7:15-21: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”
 - 2) 1 John 4:1: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”
 - 3) Mark 7:6-13: “He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.”
 - 4) John 8:32: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
 - 5) John 17:17: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”
 - 6) James 2:10: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” [This describes one who accepts and follows every part of God’s Word but willingly denies or repudiates one part of that Word, has shown his real attitude toward all the Word. He agrees with God in many things, but in the case of something in which he disagrees, he does what he wants, and not what God says].
- e. Woods: The word "abundantly," means bountiful blessings overflowing in extent—the rich supply only deity can give. (Psalm 33:1ff.) The Greek term used suggests the idea of a continuous overflowing—a never-ceasing supply of life for every faithful soul. All of this the thief would take away. We must not lose sight of the fact that the "thief" in this narrative is the person who teaches that the way of salvation is some other than that Jesus gave. These specifically described here were selfishly motivated but the ones who are misled are lost whatever the motivation may be. The sheep which follow a stranger's voice are destroyed though themselves unaware of the motives of

- the false shepherd; their honesty and sincerity will be of no avail to them at the last great day.
3. Verse 11: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."
 - a. False teachers (the thieves and robbers of the context) have no genuine concern for the sheep; the good shepherd was willing to sacrifice his life for the sheep. Indeed, that is precisely what he did for all lost souls! "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). The benefits are available to all lost souls but those spiritual blessings are actually obtained by those honest folks who obey from the heart the pure gospel of Christ.
 - 1) Romans 6:1-6: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."
 - 2) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but **ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine** which was delivered you. **Being then made free from sin**, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - b. The form [or pattern] of teaching of the context is baptism for the remission of sins. When the one who believes and has repented of past sins obeys the gospel in baptism, he is added to the church, the body of Christ, where pardon is located.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."
 - 2) Acts 2:36-38: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
 - 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name."
 - 4) 1 Peter 3:18-21: "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
 - c. In the literal case, the shepherd in the field is willing to risk his life against wolves or thieves who threaten the sheep under his supervision. We remember that David stood up against a lion and a bear which attacked his father's sheep. "And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote

- him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God” (1 Sam. 17:32-36).
- d. The Savior was willing to go to the cross and suffer for lost humanity.
- 1) John 10:17-18: “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.”
 - 2) John 12:30-33: “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.”
4. Verses 12-13: “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.”
- a. A hireling is a worker who tends to the flock of sheep only because of the wages he is paid. The kind of person Christ describes has little interest in the well-being of the flock. His loyalty is primarily to himself.
- 1) Doubtless, there are highly paid workers today who do not have the best interest of their employer in mind; some might do shoddy work; some might steal from the business; some might be slackers while they are expected to be working. We suppose that these would be in the minority.
 - 2) No doubt also there are employers who would take advantage of the workers, if an occasion arose. Because such mistreatment was extant, labor unions became necessary.
 - 3) The best possible arrangement in the world of work would be if the employer is a faithful Christian and the workers are likewise loyal saints.
 - 4) In the first century, slavery was predominant. It would seem that the masters of the slaves would want to take good interest in the welfare of their slaves; the healthier they were, the longer and better they could serve. Onesimus was a runaway slave; Paul met and converted him to Christ in Rome. He sent Onesimus back to his legal master, Philemon: “For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?” (Phile. 1:15-16). The relationship had changed from that only of master and slave, but now they were brothers in Christ.
- b. A mere hireling who watches the sheep mainly for pay will not be apt to put himself at risk for the flock; but when some danger approaches, he protect himself first. But the Lord is not talking merely about a literal flock of sheep and the one who is in charge of them. He is using figurative language.
- 1) Earlier in the chapter, he spoke of thieves and robbers who aim it was to ravage the flock for their own purposes. These evil people denote false teachers; they were the unbelievers among the Pharisees, with whom he was presently struggling.
 - 2) The Pharisees were the largest sect in Judaism at the time, and had a powerful effect on the people. But these “shepherds” were mere hirelings, who loved their position of influence and financial advantage they held. The Lord had exposed their false doctrines and practices but they would not accept his corrections. They hated him for opposing them. Consider:
 - a) John 11:47-48: “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.”
 - b) John 11:53: “Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.”
- c. “Individuals and organizations abound which prey on people in the name of religion whose sole purpose is the personal profit they derive. And, the church today is not without those who feel no
-

obligation to defend the truth against false teachers and godless philosophies and who flee at the first approach of such in their congregations because they love the ‘peace’ and tranquility they enjoy, being in perfect harmony with denominational bodies round about. All who thus do, whether elders, preachers, prominent members or obscure ones, are hirelings in the sense our Lord used the word in this allegory” (Woods, p.210).

5. Verses 14-15: “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.”
 - a. To emphasize a great truth and to draw a strong contrast between himself and the hirelings (false teachers), Jesus repeated here what he had stated in verse eleven. Unlike the false shepherds, Christ is the good shepherd; he knows them; and they know him. There is a close relationship between him and his followers.
 - b. 2 Timothy 2:19: “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, **The Lord knoweth them that are his**. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” There may be scores of faithful Christians who have the name *John Smith*, but our Lord knows each of them as individuals; we might get those who have the same name confused, but our Savior knows all of the details about each of them!
 - c. God the Father knows Christ the Son of God; there is nothing unknown between the two. What lies between the two is infinite in every way. Each is eternal in being, in knowledge, in compassion, in wisdom [as also is the Holy Spirit]. There is perfect fellowship between the members of the Godhead.
 - d. There is an unstated implication in this passage that there is a grand fellowship between Christ and his sheep. So much so that he is willing to lay down his life for the sheep. The love of God, of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit is focused upon the faithful saints. Compare:
 - 1) John 6:32: “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.”
 - 2) John 15:1: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.”
 6. Verse 16: “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.”
 - a. It was never God’s will for the Law of Moses to continue forever.
 - 1) Galatians 3:19: “Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, **till the seed should come** to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.”
 - 2) A new covenant was an inevitable part of God’s eternal plan: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Heb. 31:31-33; cf. Heb. 8).
 - 3) Our Lord’s comments also pointed to the universal nature of the New Covenant he came to deliver:
 - a) 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.”
 - b) Matthew 8:11: “And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”
 - c) Luke 13:28: “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.”
-

- d) Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
- 4) This plan was fulfilled:
- a) Mark 16:15-20: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and **preach the gospel to every creature**. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”
- b) Acts 8:1, 4: “And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”
- c) Acts 11:19-26: “Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”
- b. Jesus spoke of **other sheep** which would be combined with **this fold**. Then there would be only one fold and one shepherd. He would be the Shepherd and his sheep would be his followers. The other sheep could only be the Gentiles. **This fold** was obviously the believing Jews. The Lord sent his disciples during his personal ministry only to the Jews. Compare:
- 1) Matthew 10:5-6: “These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”
- 2) Matthew 15:21-28: “Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”
- 3) Matthew 12:14-21: “Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; And charged them that they should not make
-

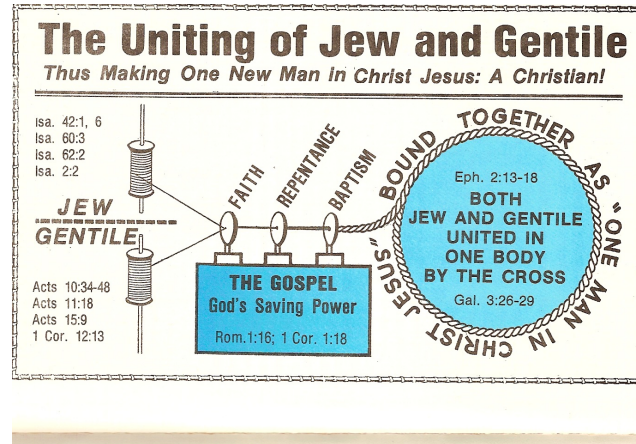
him known: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.”

- 4) Acts 13:44-49: “And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.”
- c. Those honest folks from Judaism and from the Gentiles who obeyed the gospel, became the one flock under the One Shepherd.
- 1) Ephesians 2:11-22: “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”
 - 2) Acts 2:39: “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” [Neither Peter nor the Jewish believers at the time had a proper knowledge of this central truth of the Gospel. The events surrounding the conversion of Cornelius and his house were necessary to convince fully the Jewish saints that the Gentiles had as much right to the gospel as did the Jews (Acts 10:1 — Acts 11:18)].
- d. Compare the above with Ephesians 5:16: "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."
- 1) The Lord was able to establish the means by which the enmity that existed between Jew and Gentile could be dissolved. The previous passage shows the death of Christ on the cross caused the Law of Moses to be replaced by the Gospel of Christ. Both Jew and Gentile have access to the gospel, which is the means of reconciliation: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19).
 - 2) Reconciliation between the individual and God is essential. It was the individual's sin that alienated him from God, and the reconciliation between the two must be sought by the offending party. Despite this, it was the Almighty who initiated the procedures by which
-

reconciliation could be possible. "And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

- 3) There must also be a reconciliation between men who are estranged. In the body of Christ, by the gospel of Christ, they are reconciled to each other. This was true of the Jews and Gentiles who obeyed the gospel and entered the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:38-9; 10:47-48). This is true of individuals today who are from warring factions, nations, or races. In Christ, each is required to love his neighbor as he loves himself (Mark 12:31; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Cor. 13:1-8). Having the same Master, the same work, the same rule of life, and seeking the same hope, all earthly barriers are removed, and we accept each other on the same basis: each is a child of God; each is a Christian.
 - 4) Those who are in the body of Christ are reconciled to God and to each other. If a man is reconciled to God, he will become reconciled to one who was his enemy when they both were in the world. One cannot be reconciled with God while maintaining an estrangement with his brother in Christ. To remain alienated from a brother willingly is to violate God's will, which alienates the individual from God.
 - 5) Reconciliation takes place in the body of Christ, which is the church of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The death of Christ made reconciliation possible. It is by the gospel of Christ that we learn about the need for reconciliation with God and our fellowman; it is by this same gospel that we learn how the reconciliation is accomplished.
 - 6) In Christ, all class distinctions are removed; each saint is on the same level of worth; the artificial barriers erected by human methods are obliterated. All conflict should cease (cf. Isa. 2:4).
- e. Great comments by brother Woods:
- 1) So persistent is man to maintain the denominational concept that attempts have been made even here to find justification for it. The word translated "fold" in the text is *aulee*, that for "flock" is *poimne*, whence, the conclusion: "There may be many folds of the one flock." This view, and variations of it, appear in most denominational commentaries. It is difficult to see how otherwise scholarly men could miss the import of the Lord's words more. "Fold" (*aulee*) appears in verse 1, because the analogy requires it; since there is but one door; obviously, there can be but one fold; "flock" (*poimnee*) is the word in verse 16 because of its use with the word "shepherd," following it. There is only one Great Shepherd—Christ Jesus our Lord—and there is only one flock—the church—that he shepherds. *Poimne* derives from *poimeen*, shepherd.
 - 2) Both "fold" and "flock" are used figuratively; both refer to the people of God; both describe the corporate nature of this people; and these, whether contemplated as a flock or fold, are one. Is reference to the fold, the place of safety for the sheep? There is but one with Christ its door. Is reference made to the sheep within this fold as a flock? Then there is but one with Christ its Shepherd. This one fold or one flock, as the case may be, is the one body, the church of which Paul was later to write: "There is one body." (Eph. 4:4-6.) "The church, which is his body" (Eph. 1:19-21); there being but one body and the one body being the church, there is but one New Testament church. How strange that even the brilliant and scholarly Westcott should write, "Nothing is said of one 'fold' under the New dispensation." (Commentary on John.)
 - 3) Even the astute Reynolds in the Pulpit Commentary says that Jesus was "careful to speak of himself as the Door of the sheep and not as the Door into the fold." In their zeal to oppose the pretensions of the church of Rome that it is the one and only true church dozens of commentators resort to sophistry unworthy of great scholars. Jesus is the "door of the sheep"
-

because his is the only way the sheep can get into the fold. [p.213].



[The Above Chart is From *Gospel Minutes Charts*]

7. Verses 17-18: “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.”
- a. Our Lord gave as one reason why the Father loved him was because he was willing to lay down his life. He freely made the choice. God loved him the more [if more love could have been possible]. He willingly lay down his life for the sheep: “Even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:15, ASV).
 - b. Why was it necessary for his life to be sacrificed for the sheep? What benefit did this do for the sheep? That is the question that spans the ages! God wanted fellowship with his offspring, which had been broken when Adam and Eve sinned. But this communion could not be restored if God ignored the rebellion of mankind. That would have declared to man that sin is of little consequence. The wages of sin is death [eternal separation from God—Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8].
 - 1) Isaiah 59:1-2: “Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”
 - 2) Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”
 - 3) Romans 3:9: “What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.”
 - 4) Romans 5:6-11: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”
 - 5) Hebrews 9:22: “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”
 - 6) Hebrews 10:1-4: “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that

the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

- 7) 1 Peter 1:18-22: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.”
- c. There have been many cases in carnal warfare where one soldier would throw himself on a grenade to protect his comrades. He gave his life for the benefit of those he loved. The one sacrificing his own life for his buddies may have been a Christian or he may not have been a Christian. Their physical lives were spared for the time, but his action could not of itself deliver their souls.
- d. Our Lord gave his life in order to make salvation possible for lost sinners. He had the duty to sacrifice himself; he would die a heinous death; but he had the promise that after three days he would be raised to life again. “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:9-10, NKJ).
- e. To an uninterested bystander, the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus might have appeared to have been far beyond his power to resist or avoid. It was obvious that he was under the overpowering might of the ruling authority, and that there was nothing he could do to free himself.
 - 1) But the Lord stated bluntly in this passage that no man could take his life from him against his will; he had power to lay down his life and he had power to take it up again. Of his own free will he would allow the evil authorities to put him to death.
 - 2) He also affirmed that he had this commandment from the Father. Woods: He was not forced to leave heaven, to come to the earth, to suffer at the hands of wicked men; all of this he did voluntarily in order that the will of the Father in making possible the salvation of the world might be achieved. The words, "This commandment received I from my Father," must be understood in the light of the foregoing premises. Though our Lord freely offered himself up, he did it in harmony with the expressed will of the Father, and in this sense it was a command. The meaning is, the Father's will involving Christ was that if the salvation of men is to be accomplished it is to be done by atonement; Jesus would freely decide whether to submit; because of his great love for his Father, and his Father's love for him, he gladly did so. (p.214).
 - 3) He could have been delivered from the mob which came to arrest him. Peter tried to defend Jesus with a sword, but was rebuked for this feeble effort. “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” (Matt. 26:53-54). One angel had the power to slay 185,000 pagan enemies of God’s people: “Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses” (Isa. 37:36). How much more could twelve legions of angels have done!

C. John 10:19-30: Tell Us Plainly.

1. Verses 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?”

- a. There were several occasions when various groups of Jews had divided notions about Jesus. In this context the Lord had been discussing matters with religious leaders of the nation. Prominent men of the group declared that Jesus had a demon and was insane, and yet there were some among them who listened to him. Their wicked efforts were designed to ruin the influence of Jesus.
 - b. But others who had clearer thinking knew and stated that a demon could not open the eyes of a blind man (as in chapter nine). They concluded rightly that what he said were not the words of one who is controlled by a demon or who is insane.
 - c. The consequences of accepting Jesus by believing what he said could be momentous especially to one of the Jewish leaders. He could be cast out of membership in the synagogue, have his citizenship revoked, lose his business or job, and become an outcast from the population.
 - d. “This senseless, irrational charge (that Jesus was possessed of a demon) was uttered only to revile; even the Lord's hearers knew that his words were not those of a madman. The effort was an adroit one, however; it served both to reflect on the sanity of Jesus and also to explain the miracle of the healing of the blind man since the Jews of that day believed that demons were able to exercise miraculous powers. (Matt. 12:24)” [Woods, p.215].
 - e. Matthew 12:22-30 reports another case where Jesus was accused of casting out demons by Beelzebub. The Lord gave them an unanswerable argument: “And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges” (Matt. 12:25-27).
2. Verses 22-24: “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.” “It was winter; and Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch. The Jews therefore came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly” (ASV).
 - a. The Feast of Dedication originated during the time between the Old and New Testaments. Judas Maccabaeus, a famous Jewish military leader, recaptured and cleansed the Temple after it had been desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, a Grecian invader. “After the death of Epiphanes, the temple at Jerusalem was cleansed, and the ancient services were reestablished, although Jerusalem was in shambles. The temple had been disfigured, the temple court was overgrown with shrubs, and the beautiful gate burned. They believed the altar was too defiled to be used again, so they built a new one. The cleansed temple was rededicated in 165 B.C. This began the celebration of ‘The Feast of Dedication.’ The next three years were dedicated to the cleansing and rebuilding of Jerusalem. [Via the Internet; Kirkpatrick].
 - b. This feast was a national holiday, somewhat like our Independence Day. It was celebrated at Jerusalem, but also at other locations. This period of feasting and celebration lasted eight days, beginning on the 25th of their month of Chisleu which corresponded with part of our December.
 - c. The text reports that it was in wintertime when these events of this section occurred; Christ was in the temple complex in the part called “Solomon’s Porch.” It might have been a little warmer here, perhaps sheltered from any cold wind that might have been blowing. This porch was covered, offering protection when rain was falling. “A long, covered colonnade, or veranda, with the roof resting on pillars. It is generally supposed to have been in the southeast part of the temple inclosure, overlooking the valley of the Kedron. Josephus describes it as a stadium, or furlong, in length, and as having three parts, two of them thirty feet wide each, and the middle one forty-five feet. Its height varied from fifty to one hundred in different parts” (Johnson, p.164). A furlong is about 600 feet.
 - d. The Jews came about him [i.e., surrounded him]. Evidently, he was more-or-less hemmed-in, and would have some little difficulty removing himself from a pressing crowd. Many people have been
-

- trampled to death when in the midst of an unruly mob. We frequently hear news reports of this happening in such places as Mecca, where great throngs assemble, and get excited about something. This could have been a dangerous situation for our Lord.
- e. These people demanded that Jesus directly and plainly tell them whether he is the Christ. If he had done so right then, doubtless a riotous condition could have been incited by his enemies. Notice that the occasion was on a national holiday, with countless people present, emotions were at a high level with patriotism and religious fervor. If he had openly and clearly declared that he is the Christ, the emotional excitement of the Jewish crowd could have exploded into great violence. Such a thing happened later when Stephen was murdered by an overwrought mob: "But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:57-60, ASV).
 - f. For the most part, the Jews had already made up their mind about him; in verse thirty-one, they again took up stones to kill him. This was an extremely threatening setting.
3. Verses 25-26: "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."
- a. The Lord's reply was superb! He was always able to say the right thing. His statement here was to remind them that he had already told them, but they would not believe it. He had revealed his identity by the miraculous works he had wrought. They knew about these supernatural actions but closed their minds to the proof which the miracles declared.
 - b. We read in Matthew 12 about some scribes and Pharisees demanding Jesus to produce a sign to prove his words were true (12:38). A miracle had already been done (12:9-12). There was no need for another sign; they had not even accepted the first one given here. He rebuked them for pre-emptorily demanding a sign. The only sign he was give them was that of the prophet Jonah: "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (12:40).
 - c. "Indeed the profoundest evidence of his divinity is not his word, but his superhuman life, teachings and works, especially the work that he has continued to do in the world. Even if he had said he was the Christ they would not have understood him, as their idea of the Christ differed as far as the poles from the real Christ" (Johnson, p.165).
4. Verses 27-29: "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."
- a. The Jews who stood around him were not his sheep; those sheep which belong to the Good Shepherd are those who hear and follow his instructions. This crowd was comprised largely of those who had already rejected him as the Messiah.
 - b. The Lord's sheep hear the voice (the instructions) of Christ; they follow him in all that he directs them to do. He knows (and approves of them) because they heed his word. It is not the case that his sheep merely listen to his voice; they hear what he says and accept it. Believing his words, they follow what he says.
 - c. They hear and they follow. They continue to follow; they remain in companionship with Christ. The blessing of eternal life pertains only to those Christians who continue to hear and follow the will of Heaven. If they cease to hear and follow, they cut themselves loose from the promise of the passage.
 - 1) Follow: To be an *akolouthos*, "a follower," or "companion" (from the prefix *a*, here expressing "union, likeness," and *keleuthos*, "a way"; hence, "one going in the same way"), is used (a) frequently in the literal sense, e. g., Matt 4:25; (b) metaphorically, of "discipleship," e. g., Mark
-

8:34; 9:38; 10:21. It is used 77 times in the Gospels, of "following" Christ. [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].

- 2) Hear: To attend to and understand what is taught. One fails to understand, believe and follow the gospel only if he makes the choice to do so. Christ taught some things in John six which many who heard him would not accept: "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60). Anyone who had ears could hear what he said; their problem was that they refused to learn and believe it.
- d. Eternal Life: The expression "occurs forty-four times in the New Testament, and of these occurrences seventeen are in the Fourth Gospel and six in the First Epistle of John, making twenty-three instances of its use by this single author. It never means simply endless existence, but always implies a blessed immortality. In Matt. 25: 46, it is opposed to everlasting punishment, which is endless existence in a state of punishment, while eternal life is endless existence in a state of bliss. The word rendered life (*zoe*) means, in its primary sense, 'existence' as opposed to non-existence or annihilation" (Johnson, p.165).
- e. Eternal life is promised only to those who obey the gospel and remain faithful:
 - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have
 - 3) Romans 2:7: "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life."
 - 4) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
- f. Great thoughts from Johnson, p.166):
 - 1) All humanity are endowed with existence (*zoe*), nor is there any indication that this existence ever comes to an end. At death man yields up the—soul (*psuchee*, in classic Greek "the breath"), the spirit (*pneuma*) returns to God who gave it, but there is no indication that the existence (*zoe*) closes. When Christ said, "I lay down my life," he used *psuchee* instead of *zoe*. The same is true when he says, "He that loseth his life shall find it." Much confusion has arisen from not distinguishing these two Greek words of different meaning in the translation. The *zoe* (life, existence) is never said to end, or perish, It is the *psuchee* (breath, or animal life), that is laid down, or perishes. Death and destruction are not used in the sense of non-existence.
 - 2) Life, in the sense of spiritual being, spiritual life, is the gift of Christ, and in its origin differs from the natural life. Those only have the spiritual life who are in union with Christ. He is the Bread of Life, the Water of Life, and came in order to bestow life (spiritual life, not mere existence) upon the world.
 - 3) Eternal life is the inheritance of all who have been born of water and the Spirit, who have the spiritual life, and who, "by a patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honor and immortality." It is the gift of Jesus Christ. It is a blessed immortality, and the phrase is never applied to an existence in a state of condemnation. The deathless angels that sinned do not have eternal life, but only those who have been freed from sin and delivered from the dominion of the grave by our Lord. It cannot be made too clear that eternal life is different from and higher than eternal existence and that therefore the fact that it is a gift does not imply that all who do not receive this gift are annihilated beyond the grave.

- g. Woods:
- 1) Some assume that because Jesus "gives" eternal life to those who follow him [that] this supports the doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy. It should be noted, however, that such a view necessitates the conclusion that eternal life is equal to, and is bestowed on one at the moment of salvation. These were already sheep; these sheep were faithfully following the Lord; to these the Lord gives eternal life, the actual possession being in the life to come, and not here. (Titus 1:2; Mark 10:30; 1 John 2:25.)
 - 2) This is demonstrated by a look at the parallelism Jesus uses. Those who follow him shall never perish; that is, they shall by no means lose their souls in the world to come. The converse is that those who do not hear his voice, who do not follow him shall perish—hereafter in the eternal fires for ever. Thus, the life he gives is eternal; the destruction awaiting these who will not follow is eternal and the two states are contemporaneous. (Matt. 25:46.)
 - 3) Sheep, in the scriptures, metaphorically represent the saved; goats, those who have never obeyed the gospel. To support the Calvinistic hypothesis of the impossibility of apostasy the passage should read: Jesus takes goats and turns them into sheep by giving them eternal life! It is not possible to be given that which one already has received. If one receives eternal life at the moment of forgiveness, the process by which one received salvation and eternal life is in the same moment; the text, however, shows that to those already in possession of salvation (being sheep), the Lord gives eternal life. For a detailed discussion of eternal life and when it is actually received see the comments on John 5:24.
- h. No one, not even Satan himself, can tear a faithful Christian from the securing hand of the Father. Our great enemy is unable to overpower a loyal saint. Each individual Christian is able to resist the power of the devil.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 2:11: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - 4) James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - 5) Ephesians 6:11: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."
 - 6) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
 - 7) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
5. Verse 30: "I and my Father are one."
- a. Both the Father and the Son are one [united] in providing salvation and hope of eternal life to their faithful sheep. The plan that originated in the eternity before the beginning of time specified that
-

the Second Person in the Godhead should come to the earth, enter the human family by the virgin birth, and that he should accomplish his God-given mission. The Third Person was involved in this plan, continually working with the Son in its accomplishment. The Spirit continued his work with and through the apostles of Christ in revealing and confirming the revealed New Testament. There was complete unity in carrying out this plan of the ages.

- b. John's current statement does not, of course, suggest that God and Christ are the same single person. They are perfectly united in all that they say or so. Indeed, our only way to approach the Father is through the agency of Christ. All prayers must be addressed to the Father, through the name of Christ.
- c. Jesus stated in our text that the Father is greater than Christ is. Not in longevity for each member of the Godhead is eternal; neither had a beginning and neither will ever have an end. The Father is shown to be greater in power than either Christ or the Holy Spirit, as we will show below.
- d. Consider the following biblical truths:
 - 1) John 17:1-4: "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." God and Christ are distinct and different individuals.
 - 2) John 17:20-24: "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."
- e. God, Christ and the Holy Spirit comprise the three-fold membership of the Godhead. The Father has the greatest authority. The one who sends is greater in authority than he who is sent: "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" (John 13:16).
 - 1) The Father sent the Son to fulfill his earthly mission: "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" (John 4:44-45).
 - 2) The Son sent the Spirit to complete that mission through the apostles: "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" (John 15:26).
- f. What our Lord had just stated enraged the crowd. They would not accept the fact that the Father and the Son are equals. They would have slain him immediately if they had been able.

D. John 10:31-38: The Jews Sought to Stone Jesus.

1. Verses 31-32: "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?"
 - a. They had earlier sought to kill Jesus:
 - 1) John 8:59: "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."
 - 2) John 5:18: "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."
 - 3) John 8:20: "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.”
- b. The temple was still under construction, thus many stones would have been handy. Would they have been willing to contaminate the temple grounds with the blood of Jesus? That certainly was their intention—to stone him on the spot.
 - 1) In the case of Stephen, he was cast out of the city before he was stoned: “And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul” (Acts 7:58).
 - 2) Johnson: “It had been forty-six years since Herod the Great had begun his work [of rebuilding the temple]. At this time the work was not fully completed and workmen were still engaged on some of its parts. It was eighty years from the time it was begun before it was fully completed by Herod Agrippa II. A. D. 64” [p.55]. It is interesting to notice that the completed temple only lasted for about six years, when the Romans destroyed it.
 - c. Their rage was caused by his claim to be one with God. Under the Law of Moses, such a claim was a blasphemy (Lev. 24). But Jesus made a true declaration by his statement; he proved his words by appealing to the miraculous works he had wrought. He asked them whether they were going to stone him for the good works he had done—if so, which?
 - d. The works he referenced were the miraculous wonders and signs. They could not deny that Lazarus had been resurrected: “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles” (John 11:47). This was later when they admitted this truth, but they had never been able to explain away any of his miracles.
2. Verse 33: “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.”
 - a. Their response to Jesus here was to allege they were not stoning him for any good work that he had done, but for his having blasphemed, by exalting himself to equality with God. They never learned not to enter a dispute with Jesus—they always lost!
 - b. Only their stubborn blindness kept them from seeing that the miraculous works of our Lord proved that he is the Messiah. He had also shown how he fulfilled certain Old Testament prophecies, which should have been more than enough proof of his identity. As wise people have said for countless generations, “No one is as blind as one who **will not** see!
 3. Verses 34-36: “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?”
 - a. Jesus further responded to their accusation against him of making himself equal with God by calling their attention to an Old Testament statement: “I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High” (Ps. 82:6).
 - 1) Woods: In Psalm 82:6, civil authorities, because of their high position and official capacity, are referred to as "gods," in keeping with the concept that those who are God's representatives are gods, i.e., persons of great dignity. Other instances of this usage will be seen in Ex. 7:1; 4:16. The conclusion the Lord drew from this, known in logic as a *minori ad majus* [from the lesser to the greater], is that in keeping with this rare, but occasional usage in the law, he might properly call himself God's Son without being blasphemous; if this concept was permissible for magistrates and other civil authorities, he, being far greater than they, ought not so to be charged. Even so, he had not made himself God, as they had charged, but had affirmed himself simply to be the Son of God. Their accusation was thus not properly grounded in either fact or law! [p.223].
 - 2) Since it was the case that certain prominent people in the Mosaic System could be denoted as “gods” [in view of their lofty positions of responsibility], it was proper for Christ to identify himself as the Son of God.
-

- 3) Notice also that Jesus referred to the old law as “your law.” This was the very law that they sought information to bring an accusation against him. From the very law from which they tried to condemn him, he produced another statement from that law which supported his claims.
- b. Since the Father had referred to certain old testament worthies as “gods,” and the scripture cannot be broken, how could they correctly charge Jesus with blasphemy? He did not blaspheme the Father by denoting himself as the Son of God.
- c. Adding strength to his response, Christ affirmed that the Father had sanctified [set apart] the Son to perform a great mission for which he had been selected to accomplish on earth. The supernatural works he had regularly done in the presence of witnesses proved that his authority had Heaven as its source. He was far more than a mere man. Isaiah had foretold the nature of the Messiah:
 - 1) Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and **shall call his name Immanuel.**”
 - 2) Matthew 1:21-23: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **God with us.**”
- d. Our Lord’s response to these enemies was more than enough to destroy their false arguments. They were reduced to an attempt at violence when they perceived their contentions were wrecked.
- e. The Scripture Cannot Be Broken. The following is from Coffman:
 - 1) What does this mean? It means that the Bible is inspired. It identifies the Old Testament as Scripture in the fullest sense. It means that Jesus believed the Bible. It means that the Bible is an infallible book, the one judge and jury before which all men and their deeds shall at last be tried. It means that the sacred Scriptures are as immutable as God's other laws, such as those of gravity, etc.
 - 2) Many have not believed this text. Those who sought here to stone Jesus did not believe it. The rulers of this world's darkness, such as Herod Agrippa, Felix, Festus, Nero, Caligula, and countless others, did not believe it. The apostate church did not believe it. Faithless Christians of all ages have not believed it. So-called "modernists" who explain away the Scriptures do not believe it.
 - 3) The world does not believe it (John 3:19). And yet the text is true. For generations, men believed the earth was flat, but their belief did not alter the truth; and so it is with the unbreakable word of God. If every man on earth disbelieved and repudiated the Bible, it would make no difference, except in regard to the destiny of them that disbelieved. Absolutely nothing can break the word of God. Time cannot break it. Disobedience cannot break it, as witnessed by such examples as Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Judas, and Demas.
 - a) Neglectful disciples cannot break it.
 - b) The advance of knowledge cannot break it.
 - c) Satan cannot break it.
 - d) Death and the grave cannot break it.
 - e) Even when it seems that the Scripture is broken, it remains yet unbroken.
 - f) Pilate condemned Jesus; but no, it was Pilate who was condemned to perpetual infamy.
 - g) Judas sold Jesus, at least that is what he and the Pharisees thought; but it was Judas who was sold to a suicide's death.
 - h) Herod placed the apostles in jail; but they were released, and Herod was eaten with worms.
 - i) Millions of men fancy they have broken the Scripture, and even churches have denied and broken the Scripture, so they thought; but, of all who do so, it is they who are broken.
 - j) The earth's kings and captains, the mighty and the proud, have broken the Scripture in the sense of ignoring and disobeying the word of God; but wait. Stand at the judgment and behold who is really broken:

- k) And they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand? (Revelation 6:16,17).
- 4) Let no man dare to believe that the Scripture can be broken. If one shall so believe, Christ has made him a liar by this text.
- 5) O Word of God, secure, unshaken, Foiling evil's every art, Bringing peace to man's misshapen Life and broken heart. O Word, eternally abiding, While millennia roll, Thou art the only place of hiding For the ransomed soul.
4. Verses 37-38: "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."
- a. Jesus places the emphasis of his identity on whether he did the works of the Father; if he did not so do, they should not believe in him as the Messiah. On the other hand, if he was doing God's works, they must believe on him.
- b. When they spoke honestly among themselves, they could not deny that he had performed miraculous deeds.
- 1) John 11:47-53: "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."
- 2) Acts 4:14-20: "And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."
- c. The Lord added, *If you will not believe what I say, they examine and believe the works (miracles) that I do.* He knew that they could not explain away the supernatural signs he did; if they would be honest with the facts, they would come to believe on him as the Messiah.
- d. Their proper conclusion about Jesus would be: *The Father is in me and I am in the Father.* The two were inseparable; this is the nature of the Trinity—the Godhead.
- E. John 10:39-42: Jesus Went to the East Side of Jordan.
1. Verses 39-40: "Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode."
- a. These incensed and deadly enemies would not consider the evidence they had been given; they tried to arrest him and put him to death [perhaps in a more orderly manner]. We are not told how he evaded their efforts, but only that he escaped out of their hands. He was able to do this on other occasions.
- 1) Luke 4:28-30: "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way."
-

- 2) John 8:59: “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.”
 - b. “This ends three months of stormy ministry in Jerusalem. Twice there were attempts to mob him (8: 59; 10:31); twice efforts to arrest him (7: 32, 45; 10: 39), and in addition secret plans for his assassination had been laid (7: 19; 8: 37). John is the only historian of this eventful period of the Savior's life, though several incidents reported by other writers may belong to the interval” (Johnson p.169).
 - c. On leaving Jerusalem, Jesus passed to the east side of the Jordan River, to the area where John had baptized many (cf. John 1:19-28).
2. Verses 41-42: “ 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.” “And many came unto him; and they said, John indeed did no sign: but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there” (ASV).
- a. In about three months, he would return to Jerusalem for the Passover season. It was then when his time would have come. The next chapter will give the details of his return to the city.
 - b. In the meantime, the Lord was busy with the large numbers which came to him. They observed that all that John the Baptizer had said about Jesus were true, thus they believed on Christ.
 - c. In their statements of the passage, they also noted that John did no miracle. However, we know that this forerunner of the Messiah was given the messages he presented. He did not heal the sick, raise the dead, or other supernatural works, but he spoke the inspired word he was given infallibly.
 - d. Our Lord’s ministry was filled with activity; of all the servants who have served the Father through the ages, no one could surpass the amount of work our Savior did.
 - 1) John 9:4: “We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”
 - 2) John 21:25: “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 would not contain the books that should be written.”
-

John Chapter 11

A. John 11:1-16: The Sickness and Death of Lazarus.

1. Verses 1-3: "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."
- a. Introduction to the chapter from Johnson:
 - 1) It was from a fruitful ministry beyond the Jordan that the Lord was recalled to Bethany near Jerusalem by the death of Lazarus. It is not in our power to determine certainly the exact time of the raising of Lazarus, but the order of the narrative shows that it was after the incidents of the last two lessons.
 - 2) In chapter 10: 31, 40, we are informed that the Jews of Jerusalem attempted to seize him, that he escaped from them and retired beyond the Jordan into the locality where John had at first baptized. Then for a few weeks he engaged in teaching, and from thence he was summoned by the call to aid his friend Lazarus of Bethany.
 - 3) The Lord waits two days after receiving the message of the sisters before he starts to Bethany. Tholuck thinks that he could not have made the journey (probably about 30 miles) in a single day, and hence parts of two days were required. He supposes, therefore, that Lazarus died the night of the messenger's arrival, was buried the next day, and that Jesus reached Bethany on the fifth day. There was the day of death, two days of waiting, one of journeying, and the fifth day of arrival and his visit to the tomb.
 - 4) Abbott says: "I believe the resurrection of Lazarus took place in the latter part of February or the early part of March A. D. 30, and that it was followed, after a brief retirement to Ephraim, by the triumphal march of Christ and his disciples into Jerusalem, and by his Passion and death there." [See Johnson, pp.170f].
 - 5) Why should John alone give the account of the resurrection of Lazarus? He alone gives the history of the ministry in Judea in which it occurred, though the other writers refer to that ministry. They alone give an account of the Galilean ministry, though John refers to it. Still there seemed to be special reasons why Matthew, Mark and Luke, who wrote many years before John, should be very reticent about the family of Bethany. All speak of it, but only Luke names the sisters.
 - 6) Farrar says: "There may have been special reasons for not recording a miracle which would have brought into dangerous prominence a man who was still living, but whom the Jews had sought to get rid of because he was a witness of Christ's wonder working power. (John 12: 10.)" Long before John wrote, Jerusalem itself had been destroyed, and the reasons that may have caused the silence of the earlier writers no longer existed. [*ibid.*].
- b. Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were close friends to Jesus. After mentioning their names, the apostle notes that it was this Mary who was later to anoint the Lord's feet with ointment and wipe them with her hair (see John 12:3). The scholars tell us that the name Lazarus [meaning, "God is my help"] is the same as Eleazar.
- c. Our Lord spoke of having no home of his own: "And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20). But with these three friends in Bethany, he would always find a warm welcome. The word *home* exudes many cheerful and comforting thoughts and remembrances. One of the most forlorn conditions is to be stranded in a large, strange city, knowing not a single person and without a door being open for you!
 - 1) Moses Lard related a sorrowful, early experience: Moses E. Lard (1818-1880) was born in Bedford County, Tennessee, near Shelbyville. Moving with his family to Missouri when he

was eleven years old, Lard's father died of smallpox. His mother was unable to take care of Moses and his brother; they had to leave home and make their own way.

- a) "As my brother and myself stood beneath the eaves of our little cabin, just ready to take leave of the only objects on earth dear to us, and thus close the saddest scenes of our lives, my mother said to us: 'My dear boys, I have nothing to give you but my blessings and these two little books.'
 - b) "She then drew from her bosom two small Testaments and placed them in our hands, and, as her tears were streaming down her cheeks, and her lips quivering, she screamed as if it were her last, and that family was forever broken on earth" (Sketches of Gospel Preachers: Boles, p.175).
- d. Bethany was a village located about two miles east of Jerusalem, on the other side of the Mount of Olives. In this place lived Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus. Obviously, this Lazarus was not the man of that same name of whom the Lord spoke in Luke 16.
- 1) "Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house" (Luke 10:38). This statement indicates that Martha was the owner of the house, thus was likely older than Mary and Lazarus.
 - 2) "It appears that the family was an affluent one by current standards; they lived in their own house, they owned a tomb in a garden and were able to supply an alabaster box of expensive ointment, 'pure nard, very precious' (John 12:3) to anoint the feet of Jesus. Mary, who did this, is not to be identified with the sinner of that name mentioned in Luke 7:36,37..." (Woods, p.227).
- e. The apostle tells us the Lazarus was ailing with some unnamed sickness. The ailment was severe, for he died. The Gospel of John was written near the end of the first century, a great many years since the events of this chapter occurred. We soon will be told that the Lord's enemies intended to put the resurrected Lazarus to death, due to his connection with Jesus. The other gospel writers did not report the episode of the raising of Lazarus, since that man and his sisters might still have been alive when their accounts were published. By the time John wrote, these good folks were well beyond the reach of evil men.
- f. The sisters sent word to the Lord that his friend Lazarus was ill. They made no demand that he come to them quickly; they did not even ask for his presence. Why? Perhaps they thought the Jesus could heal their brother from a distance, as he had done on certain other occasions. The message contained the reference to the fact that their brother was well-loved by Jesus. This affection was denoted by the Greek word *philein*, a term that pictures a close and warm love, elsewhere a form of this word is translated brotherly-kindness.
- g. Our Lord's regard for Lazarus was not limited to this as verse 5 indicates; a form of agapan appears there descriptive of his love, not only for the ailing one, but for his sisters as well. Since the sisters were involved in verse 5, the more abstract term is used to avoid any hint of fleshly relationship existing. The propriety indicated in this use of these words evidences the care which Jesus used to maintain the high moral tone of his life at all times. The distance between Bethany beyond Jordan, where Jesus was, and Bethany, where Lazarus lay ill, was approximately thirty miles. [*ibid.*].
2. Verses 4-7: "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."
- a. When the Lord received the message from the sisters, he remarked to the apostles that the sickness was not unto death. Some scholars suppose that this was the message that Jesus sent back to the sisters. Of course, he did not mean that Lazarus would not die; rather, the sickness was for the purpose of glorifying the Father. The real purpose of the illness his friend had was not to produce
-

- death, but to bring greater glory to the Almighty.
- b. With the distance the messenger [s] of Martha and Mary had to travel being about thirty miles, it would possibly take at least a day, depending on time of day journey began. The same amount of time would be required for them to return to Bethany with the Lord's reply—"This sickness is not unto death."
 - c. John next inserts the statement noting the great love the Lord had for the sisters and their brother. This verse shows he was greatly concerned about this family, despite the fact that we are then told that he delayed his trip to Bethany. They would mourn for four days, but then their loved one would be raised. God would be glorified, Jesus would be set forth as the Messiah, and Martha and Mary would regain their brother!
 - d. Jesus remained in his present field of labor for two more days before returning to Bethany. By this time the messenger had returned, and Lazarus had been dead four days. How far can a man walk in one day? How long would it require to travel thirty miles on foot? One full day would be a fair guess.
 - e. Lazarus had been dead four days when he was raised up; it required a day of travel for the messenger to reach Jesus; he must, therefore, have died soon after the messenger's departure. It was a part of the divine plan to raise Lazarus from the dead; the delay of the Lord's arrival made it clear to all that Lazarus was indeed dead when the miracle occurred. He was buried the day he died, such being the well-nigh universal custom in that day and land. The view, sometimes expressed, that the messenger returned to the bedside of Lazarus and reported to the dying man the Lord's response is fanciful and imaginary. [*ibid.*].
 - f. After the two-day delay, Jesus told the apostles that now they would return to Judaea. In that place was the hotbed of his enemies, especially in the city of Jerusalem. Shortly before, the Lord had found it necessary to leave from there, to avoid bringing the opposition to a head prematurely.
3. Verses 8-10: "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."
- a. His disciples could not understand why Jesus would want to return to Jerusalem, since the Jews had already determined to put him to death. They only needed an opportunity to arrest, drag him before a kangaroo court, and proceed with the execution. The twelve were gravely concerned about his welfare, and doubtless were fearful of their own safety. Not long after this, when the Lord was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane they forsook him and fled.
 - b. The statement in verse nine is not to be taken as an unchangeable figure; generally, there are twelve hours of daylight and twelve hours of darkness. God had designed the periods of day and night for the benefit of mankind; there would be a time for work and a time for rest. There is a period of time for a man to live on earth, but inevitably the night of death comes, when all worldly activity ceases for each person (cf. John 9:4; Heb. 9:27).
 - 1) Children often have a fear of the dark; some people through the ages have thought night to be evil. Much evil is done by wicked people at night, to try to conceal their crimes and sins.
 - 2) In the Scriptures, darkness is often used to depict wickedness and ignorance, and light pictures knowledge and righteousness.
 - c. "Christ loved to speak by simile, and he declares in this way that he knows just what he purposes to do. He is not stumbling in the dark. He is not groping in the night or walking uncertainly. He has a clear pathway on which the sun is shining. Whether it leads him to Judea, to Jerusalem, to his enemies, to death, he will walk in the light. What was dark to them was clear as sunlight to him. God's true servants will have their twelve hours for walking and toil" (Johnson, p.173).
 - d. Jesus knew precisely what he was doing; his plan was not foolhardy; his time as rapidly approaching when he would allow his enemies to take him into custody to do with him what they
-

had decided. They and their father [the devil] reasoned that if they could put him to death, they would have for all time defeated Jesus. Satan thought this would administer the death stroke to God's great plan. These foes were in ignorance of what God had announced in Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The enemies would bruise the heel of Jesus, but Jesus would deliver a death blow to the head of Satan.

4. Verses 11-12: "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."
 - a. By his supernatural knowledge, Jesus knew the current condition of their friend Lazarus. "Lazarus is sleeping." They knew, as we also know, that a sick person who is asleep is likely in the recovery mode.
 - b. "Is fallen asleep," is perfect passive indicative of *koimao*, and denotes an action which is in a completed state but there is nothing in the verb to indicate when this completed state began. Lazarus was indeed now dead; but when this occurred is not said. "Is fallen asleep" is a figure for death since in death the body is in a position of rest and repose. It is significant that our English word *cemetery* derives from a term meaning "a sleeping place." We must not from this assume that in death one passes into a state of unconsciousness. The reference is to the state, of the body; not of the spirit. The spirit, far from dying, is actually enlivened by obtaining freedom from the restraints of the body (1 Pet. 3:18-20), and lives on in its disembodied state, in the Hadean realm. There was never any doubt in Jesus' mind what he would do. His statement of intent is clear and unequivocal. "I go, that I may awake him out of sleep," that is, to raise him from the dead. [Woods, p.232].
 - c. The word death is often described as sleep. The body in death appears to be sleeping; the spirit leaves the body at death [i.e., it is separated from the body]; the body is disposed of in the manner of local practices, but the spirit returns into the keeping of God (Eccl. 12:7).
 - 1) James 2:26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
 - 2) 2 Chronicles 14:1: "So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years."
 - 3) Psalm 13:3: "Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death."
 - 4) Jeremiah 51:57 And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts."
 - 5) Matthew 27:52: "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose."
 - 6) Acts 7:60: "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."
 - 7) 1 Thessalonians 4:13: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."
 - 8) 2 Corinthians 12:1-4: "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter." The context demands that the individual described is the apostle Paul himself.
5. Verses 13-15: "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.”

- a. Our Lord had just spoken of the death of Lazarus in describing his condition as sleeping; the twelve misunderstood his meaning. If he was sleeping, then he will recover. But Jesus stated plainly that Lazarus was indeed dead.
 - b. He said he was glad that he was not present at the death of their friend. His implication was that he would have healed Lazarus from his illness. While that would have been a notable miracle, his raising the man back to life again, after being dead four days would certainly have been a far more impressive deed.
 - c. The entire community around Bethany would have known of the death of their well-to-do neighbor; many were present during this period of mourning. Jerusalem was almost two miles away.
 - d. We will see later in the chapter the far-reaching and powerful effect the resurrection of Lazarus had on those present and to those who learned of it: “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. 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” (John 11:43-48).
6. Verse 16: “Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.”
- a. Thomas showed great courage by urging the other disciples to accompany Jesus back to Judaea and expose themselves to death, also. So firmly were the apostles bound to Jesus that they were willing to give their lives in serving him. Historical information suggests that all of the apostles, including Paul, suffered martyrdom—except for John, who died a natural death.
 - b. In John 20:25, he was thought to have exhibited doubt that Jesus had himself been resurrected: “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.”
 - c. Thomas Didymus [“Twin”] intended to stay with the Lord. Barclay: “Gilbert Frankau tells of an officer friend of his in the 1914-18 war, an artillery observation officer. His duty was to go up in a captive balloon and to indicate to the gunners whether their shells fell short of or over the target. It was one of the most dangerous assignments that could be given. Because the balloon was captive, there was no way to dodge; he was a sitting target for the guns and planes of the enemy. Gilbert Frankau said of his friend: ‘Every time he went up in that balloon he was sick with nerves, but he wouldn't quit.’”

B. John 11:17-32: Jesus Meets With Family of Lazarus.

1. Verses 17-20: “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.”
 - a. The Lord and his company came near to Bethany and learned that Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days already. By this time the body would have already begun to decay. The most fractious of enemies could not logically deny the resurrection of Lazarus!
 - b. Johnson: “Christ had in Galilee raised two persons from the dead, one soon after death; the other from the bier on which he was carried to burial. Now, in Judea, right at Jerusalem, in the face of his enemies, and just before his own death and burial, a crowning miracle is to be wrought. He will demonstrate that he is ‘the Resurrection and the Life’ by demanding back from the grave one
-

- buried, buried four days, a period so long that in that hot climate decomposition had begun. The miracle is to be wrought under circumstances such that the most captious cannot question the reality of the death, or the resurrection” (p.174).
- c. Many Jewish people had come to comfort the grieving sisters. Word came to the bereaved house that Jesus was on the way, evidently only a short distance from Bethany. Martha quickly went to meet the Lord; Mary remained in the house, for some unexplained reason. Inferences from the report suggest that Martha was the elder sister and owned the house where they lived. She may have considered it her duty to meet the Lord. “Traits of character often express themselves in conduct and the picture drawn here of the two sisters is in keeping with that indicated in Luke 10:38, 39. Martha was the practical, busy one; Mary, the quiet, reflective and pensive one” (Woods, pp.235f).
 - d. Luke 10:38-42 : “Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”
2. Verses 21-22: “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.”
 - a. NKJV: Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."
 - b. Martha lamented that if the Lord had been present, Lazarus would not have died. Her knowledge of the matter was incomplete; Jesus had delayed his coming so that even greater glory for God could be displayed.
 - c. Profound words from brother Woods:
 - 1) “She implicitly believed that any request Jesus would make of God would be granted; it seems not to have occurred to her to include in this the raising up from the dead of her beloved brother. Her words, though literally true, evidently embodied more than she had intended.
 - 2) “It should be noted also that thus far she had ascribed to Jesus personally no supernatural powers; these, she thought, were in God, but bestowed by request from Jesus. The emphasis she placed on God should be noted to understand her present degree of faith: ‘Whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee.’ Moreover, the fact that she chose a verb (*aiteoo*), to beg, used by inferiors to superiors, rather than *erootao* (requests made by equals from equals), is further indicative of her elementary and still yet imperfect faith.
 - 3) “This distinction, to which there are exceptions (John 16:23), seems to apply here. To this point it is safe to say that the deity of Jesus was not yet before her mind.” [p.236].
 - d. Martha believed that Jesus could ask God to raise Lazarus from the tomb, even though he had been dead for these four days. She did not attribute to Jesus the power to do so.
 3. Verses 23-24: “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.”
 - a. Martha and her family had been well-taught about the resurrection of the last day. Perhaps she was aware of the statement of John 5:28-29: “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.”
 - b. When Jesus stated that Lazarus would rise again, she immediately thought his reference was to the end of time.
 - c. He intended to build in her a deeper degree of faith in himself. The Jews [not including the
-

Sadducees] had a belief in the final resurrection. “She must have regarded the Lord's words as consolatory and nothing more. Yet, step by step Jesus leads the sorrowful sister into robust faith requiring the ambiguity with which he speaks. Martha must be made to see there is another alternative to the one she advances in verse 24” (*ibid.*, p.237).

4. Verses 25-27: “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.”
 - a. The Lord announced clearly that he is the resurrection and the life. All the dead will hear the voice of Jesus at the second coming (cf. John 5:28-29) and shall come forth. Therefore, he is able to over-come the power of physical death and to provide spiritual life to those who believe in him. Notice in this the victory over physical death and victory over the Second Death—for the faithful in Christ.
 - b. Those who believe in Jesus will never die. He is here speaking of the second death, and not physical death. The former applies to faithful Christians, the latter to all unfaithful humans (Heb. 9:27). The second death is eternal separation from God.
 - 1) Revelation 2:11: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”
 - 2) Revelation 20:6: “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”
 - 3) Revelation 20:14: “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”
 - 4) Revelation 21:8: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.
 - 5) Matthew 25:46: “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”
 - c. “The means by which to appropriate this power he expressed in these words, ‘He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.’ Only those who thus do, experience these blessings. The word ‘die,’ in the phrase, ‘though he die, signifies physical death; the same word in the final clause of the first sentence is used in a spiritual sense to indicate that such a one will be spared the second death. The meaning is, ‘Whosoever believes in me even though he shall die (physically) shall live (spiritually) for ever and he who now lives and believes on me shall for ever avoid spiritual death.’ ...
 - 1) “It should not be overlooked that the verb believeth is in a construction signifying continuous action; hence, it is the one who keeps on believing of whom these blessings are affirmed. And, since faith, apart from works of obedience, is dead (James 2:26), the believing requires obedience to the divine will in order to the appropriation of these promises.
 - 2) “The question, ‘Believest thou this?’ was to test Martha's comprehension of these matters and to determine how well she was following his remarks. The matters, though eminently true would be of no benefit to her unless she accepted them” (Woods, p.238).
 - d. Martha could not have made a greater confession: *Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God*. This is the very confession that penitent believers must make who desire to be baptized. Compare:
 - 1) Romans 10:9-10: “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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
 - 2) Acts 8:36-37: “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest

with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

5. Verses 28-30: “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.”
 - a. At this point, Martha returned to her house and quietly reported to Mary that Jesus had arrived, and wanted to speak with her. This was great news to this sister also; she hurriedly left and went to the place where Jesus waited. Obviously, Martha told her sister where the Lord could be found.
 - b. The apostle John inserted the remark that Jesus had not entered the town. This information was given for his readers; his account of the gospel was written toward the end of the first century.
 - c. When the Lord and his disciples arrived in the environs of Bethany, they stopped some place outside of the town. It is clear from Martha’s statement, that Jesus had requested for Mary to come. Jesus had a reason to speak with the two sisters separately. His talk with Martha had elicited from her the Good Confession.
 - d. Compare: “I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession.” (1 Tim. 6:13).
6. Verses 31-32: “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.”
 - a. There were some Jews in the house, offering as much comfort as they were able to give. They saw Martha whisper something to Mary, who immediately arose and left the dwelling. They thought that she was going to the tomb, there to continue here weeping. These kindhearted people followed her, to console her in this grievous loss.
 - b. But Mary did not go to the place her brother had been buried. Doubtless, they were surprised to see Jesus at this place outside of Bethany.
 - c. Mary fell down before the Lord. Certainly, she was glad to see Jesus, but her first words were like those Martha had earlier spoken: *If you had been here, my brother would not have died.*
 - d. “Weeping is nature's way of draining away grief; some are unable to give vent to their feelings and thus suffer more intensely than those more emotionally inclined. Her statement, as far as it went, was the same as Martha's (verse 21), but it stopped short of the hope expressed by the older sister in verse 22. The remarkable similarity of the statement suggests that it must have often been exchanged by the sisters following Lazarus' death and preceding the Lord's arrival” (Woods, p.240).

C. John 11:33-44: The Resurrection of Lazarus.

1. Verses 33-35: “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.”
 - a. Christ saw Mary and the Jews who came with her weeping, we are told that he *groaned in the spirit*. “The word rendered ‘groaned,’ here, commonly denotes to be angry or indignant, or to reprove severely, denoting violent agitation of mind. Here it also evidently denotes violent agitation—not from anger, but from grief. He saw the sorrow of others, and he was also moved with sympathy and love. The word ‘groan’ usually, with us, denotes an expression of internal sorrow by a special sound. The word here, however, does not mean that utterance was given to the internal emotion, but that it was deep and agitating, though internal” (Barnes),
 - b. Woods:
 - 1) The word translated "weeping" (*klaioo*), denotes the idea of crying audibly, sobbing, perhaps, wailing; this Mary did, as did also the mourners, not perfunctory as some say, but actually and

- truly since all but the hardest hearts are touched by the grief of others. Mary wept bitterly; her sorrow swept over the group and all sobbed in sympathy with her.
- 2) In verse 35, it is said that ‘Jesus wept’; there, the verb is not *klaioo*, to wail; but *dakruoo*, to shed tears. Observing Mary's deep sorrow, outwardly expressed in bitter sobs, Jesus burst into tears. His heart overflowed with sympathy and understanding for these grieving sisters. Here, he is said to have ‘groaned in spirit,’ and to have been ‘troubled.’
 - 3) The word translated ‘groaned’ conveys the notion of anger, indignation; angered and indignant with what or whom? The unbelieving Jews who affected grief but were so bitter toward him that they would ultimately accomplish his death say some; but this view seems forced and far-fetched with nothing in the immediate context to support it.
 - 4) More likely, our Lord was indignant with death itself which brought such sorrow to himself and to the sisters whom he loved. The word ‘troubled’ translates a term meaning to shake, shudder, and this points up the intensity of feeling expressed in the word ‘groaned.’ So indignant was Jesus that he shook! [pp.240f].
- c. Jesus did not speak consoling words to Mary at this point, but asked where the tomb of Lazarus was located. They were still in the outskirts of the town. By this time, Martha had joined the group.
 - d. Verse thirty-five is the shortest verse in the Bible in our English translation. Our Lord is full of true compassion.
 - 1) Matthew 9:36: “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”
 - 2) Matthew 11:28-30: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
2. Verses 36-38: “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.”
 - a. The other Jews in the group exclaimed over the tears of Jesus, *Behold, how he loved him!* They could not deny this obvious expression of sympathy. But they could not have known all that was in the Lord’s heart. The physical death of a faithful child of God results in eternal salvation and glory; the death of one who still bears the guilt of his sins is a genuine tragedy—what he faces is the second death, an eternal separation for God.
 - b. The word *wept* in verse 35 means to shed tears. A different word was used in reference to his weeping over Jerusalem; there the word means to sob (Luke 19:41). In sympathy with the family, Jesus shed tears; over the rebellious city of Jerusalem our Lord lamented over their impending fate. “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation” (Luke 19:41-44).
 - c. The other Jews present raised the question of whether Jesus could have prevented the death of this man, Lazarus. If he could open the eyes of the blind, surely he could had kept Lazarus from dying.
 - d. Jesus then asked them to take him to the tomb. The burying place was a cave, sealed with a stone. This was the manner of interment by the Jews who could afford such a place. We remember Joseph of Arimathae [a rich man] who owned a tomb, which he loaned to Jesus. The stone used to close up the tomb was often in the shape of a wheel, which fitted a groove cut into the rock base from which the tomb had been hewn.
 - 1) In the present site, John called it a cave. “Spelaion (sph/laion), ‘a grotto, cavern, den’ (Lat., spelunca), ‘cave,’ John 11:38, is said of the grave of Lazarus” (Vine's Expository Dictionary
-

of Biblical Words).

- 2) “It is likely that several of the Jewish burying-places were made in the sides of rocks; some were probably dug down like a well from the upper surface, and then hollowed under into niches, and a flat stone, laid down upon the top, would serve for a door. Yet, from what the evangelist says, there seems to have been something peculiar in the formation of this tomb. It might have been a natural grotto, or dug in the side of a rock or hill, and the lower part of the door level with the ground, or how could Lazarus have come forth, as he is said to have done” (Clarke)
3. Verses 39-40: “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?”
 - a. Jesus instructed that the stone be removed from them mouth of the cave [tomb]. Deity expects us to do those things which we are capable of doing. There were those present who could move the stone. We may presume that there were men present as well as ladies; there were also the apostles.
 - b. Martha, the sister with a very practical mind, stated that the body of her brother would now beginning to decay, thus an unpleasant aroma would be strongly present. In the mid-1950s in Coffee County, Tennessee, a lady found a dead body in her orchard. The men of the community quickly gathered at her call. The body was that of her son. She could not recognize him, though he had died only a very few days earlier.
 - 1) Perhaps the group only thought that Jesus merely wanted to see the body of his friend. Of course, our Lord knew perfectly well the present condition of the dead body. In resurrecting Lazarus, Jesus would have to repair all the physical damage that had occurred to the body, return the blood to its proper status, restore all the organs, and return life to the body.
 - 2) The spirit of Lazarus must be returned to the body and thus the life of the body would be revived. No one but a Divine Being could do such an operation. The audience was about to witness remarkably great supernatural action! The resurrection of one who had been dead four days!
 - 3) But at the end of time, at the return of Christ, the trumpet shall sound and the great voice shall call out, and every dead person will hear and be resurrected—instantly! “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16-17).
 - c. Jesus reminded Martha that he had told her if she would believe, she would see the glory of God. The Lord’s statement in verse four was likely included in the message he had sent back to the family, when they had notified him of the sickness of his friend. “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” (John 11:4).
 - d. To this time, perhaps no one who had so long been dead had ever been resurrected. The daughter of Jairus and son of the widow of Nain were raised before they were entombed. His own body would lie in the tomb for three days and nights before it was resurrected.
 - 1) Matthew 27:50-53: “Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” These had been in the grave for some unspecified period of time.
 - 2) The faith the sisters had in Jesus as the Son of God remained intact; they were quickly to see a great demonstration of the Glory of God as their brother was raised from the dead.
4. Verses 41-42: “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.”

- a. This great miracle was intended to be wonderful proof that the Father had truly sent the Son into the world. It would have an impact that would reach into the conniving councils of the Lord’s greatest enemies among the Jewish leaders.
 - b. Jesus, our perfect example, raised his eyes heavenward, and expressed gratitude that the Father heard him. The prayer, spoken audibly in the presence of the people present, acknowledge that God always heard him.
 - c. His prayer and the miracle impending would have a marvelous influence of those who heard, saw, and witnessed the resurrection. This prayer to God was not meant to bring Christ any additional power, but to give instruction and an example to the audience.
5. Verses 43-44: “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.”
- a. At the conclusion of his prayer, Jesus called out with a loud voice, “*Lazarus, come forth.*” It was not the loudness of his voice that would raise Lazarus, but the power of Heaven. Some have suggested that the Lord specified Lazarus by name, otherwise every dead person would have risen. He called the name of his friend and it was his friend who came forth. Nothing was left for doubt.
 - b. Lazarus came forth as he was commanded, still bound hand and foot in graveclothes. The Jewish custom was to wind up the body in a large sheet, including certain herbs which were calculated to aid in preserving the body.
 - c. Bound as he was, his walking would have been limited to small, mincing steps. The burial napkin was still covering his face. Jesus called on those present to remove these garments so that he could operate normally. There would not have remained a blemish caused by decomposition, nor any smell. He was as whole as he had been in the strength of his life.
 - d. Woods:
 - 1) Jesus is said to have cried "with a loud voice," literally a great voice (*phonei magalei*); not, of course, because it was necessary thus to speak in order for Lazarus to hear, nor as some assert because of tension and excitement which he felt, but for the benefit of those present. It was important that all of these should note that Lazarus came forth at the command of Jesus and *because* of it.
 - 2) The words the Lord used are interesting and significant: *deuro exoo*, "Come out!" appropriate indeed for one in a tomb. It is noteworthy that on occasions of the exercise of mighty power the Lord was both terse and brief in its expression, and his words evidence the weight of solemn authority. "Damsel... arise" (Mark 5:42); "Peace, be still" (Mark 4:39).
 - 3) It is this same Voice which will sound out over the earth and bid the sleeping dead to come forth from their graves to life at the last great Day. (John 5:28, 29.) [p.245].
 - e. John 5:28-29: “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.”
 - f. “The group dispersed without further words. So deeply did the emotions run it was likely not possible for the onlookers to consider the event with calmness and clarity of mind. They must have time to assemble their thoughts and reflect on the unparalleled event they had witnessed. From verse 54 we learn that Jesus left the area” (*ibid.*).

D. John 11:45-57: The Power of the Miracle.

1. Verses 45-47: “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.”

- a. The miracle had a powerful effect on many of the Jews who had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. When many of those people beheld the resurrection of Lazarus, they believed on Jesus. How could any but those with closed minds refuse to believe in him?
 - b. But there some in the crowd who made their way to the Pharisees to report what the Lord had done. As we shall see, these obstinate unbelievers and enemies of Christ recognized that something had to be done to put a stop to the work of the Son of God!
 - c. They confessed that Jesus had done many miracles; this fact could not be denied. They acknowledged the miracles, but refused to believe in him as the Messiah.
 - d. The apostles later faced the same reaction for the Lord’s enemies: “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that **indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.** But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus” (Acts 4:13-18).
2. Verses 48-50: “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.” [Notice his emphasis on **for us.**]
 - a. The Jewish leaders, admitting the miracles done by Jesus, quickly noted that if they left him alone then the whole nation would turn to him. What would be left for us? Here is the crux of their pain: they did not want to lose their influential, glorified and remunerative positions!
 - b. If such a condition of religious unrest developed, their Roman overlords might take harsh steps that could cause these religious and civil leaders to lose their places. Conditions might reach such a state that their whole nation might be dismantled. Their final decision was to remove Jesus by execution.
 - c. Although Annas was the official high priest, he had incurred the anger of the Romans, who replaced him with Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas. This man held the office as High Priest during this momentous time. Caiaphas berated the rest of the council, saying they were totally ignorant!
 - d. The High Priest’s solution was that it was expedient that one man should die for the Jewish people, rather than for the whole nation to be destroyed. They would work behind the scenes to arrange for the “legal” death of this upstart Jesus.
 - e. Their great fear was in losing their positions and their nation. By removing Jesus from the equation through chicanery, they sought to eliminate this danger. But in a few years, in 70 A.D., the Romans invaded Palestine with a great army, besieged Jerusalem, destroyed its walls, its great houses, and the great temple; in the process, we are told by Josephus who witnessed these horrible scenes, that more than a million Jews died during a few months of that year. Their scheme was faulty; they suffered the greatest disaster of their long history as a nation.
 3. Verses 51-52: “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.”
 - a. Woods:
 - 1) These are the words of John the biographer of Jesus and are explanatory of the statement made by Caiaphas. The high priest did not speak these words by himself alone but was influenced

- by divine guidance to utter a prophecy of the vicarious and sacrificial death of Jesus as the Messiah.
- 2) His motive was mean and vicious and wholly void of love for the Lord and the people, but the Lord, whom he treated with contempt, caused his words to be clothed with a sentiment his perversity and hardness of heart prevented him from originating.
 - 3) In the early days of Israel the high priest was clothed with prophetic power; but in its declining years the nation and people lost their regard for God and their priests their communion with heaven. On this special occasion, however, Caiaphas was made to speak prophetically of the atonement and to become an involuntary witness to the claims of Christ. [p.248].
- b. How much of this message did the high priest comprehend? Perhaps, he merely thought that somehow the Jews from all over the world would soon be gathered together in one group. But his Heaven-given revelation reached far beyond the Jews.
 - c. Ephesians 2:11-22: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - d. The Great Commission would be given to the apostles of Christ, and was to extend to all his people, carrying the soul-saving message of the Gospel to all nations and individuals [Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Acts 8:4].
4. Verses 53-54: "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."
 - a. These evil men developed the wicked plan to bring about the execution of Jesus. This plan they were all committed to carry to fruition. This was their determined intent. Using chicanery in secret, little did they know that even their most highly-classified discussions would be exposed for generations of people to read!
 - b. Our Lord knew of their scheme, and did not walk openly among the Jews. His arrest, trials and execution were to be perfectly timed.
 - c. He had come to Judaea from Perea to Bethany. Now he and his disciples went to a place in the midst of a wilderness [where few people lived], and spend time there and in the town called Ephraim. He was to remain there until the Passover season arrived.
 - d. Johnson: [Ephraim's] location is not surely known, but it is supposed to be the Ophrah named in Joshua 18; 23, called Ephraim in 2 Chron. 13: 19, and now a village called *et Taiyibeh*. It is about sixteen miles northeast of Jerusalem on the borders of a wild wilderness region. To this place the Lord must have retired immediately after the resurrection of Lazarus, and here he remained until six days before the passover. His "disciples," meaning more especially the apostles, were with him in this retirement, and he was, no doubt, actively engaged in training them for their great work. This was his last retirement from Jerusalem and he went from Ephraim to attend his last passover
-

and to die [p.183].

5. Verses 55-57: "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."
 - a. John provides no details of the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem from Ephraim, but from the reports of Matthew, Mark and Luke we learn that the route taken was through Samaria into Galilee where they became a part of a great multitude of people who crossed the Jordan and came down on its eastern side recrossed near Jericho and then travelled upwards to Bethany and Bethphage near Jerusalem. The details will be found in Matt. 19:1-20, 34; Mark 10:1-52 and Luke 17:1-19:28. [Woods, p.250].
 - b. Many people, traveling in groups, came to Jerusalem for certain purification rites preceding the great feast. Compare: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai" (Exod. 19:10-11).
 - c. There were some at the temple who talked among themselves, wondering if Jesus would come to the Passover. We know that the Lord's time was at hand, and that he would certainly be present.
 - d. The chief priests and Pharisees had issued a command that if any man learned where they could find Jesus, they were to reveal that knowledge. Their purpose, of course, was to arrest him.
 - e. Johnson: The Sanhedrin had published an edict commanding any man who knew of his whereabouts to reveal it in order that they might take him. Godet is of the opinion that this order was given to intimidate Christ and his disciples so as to prevent their coming to the passover. They certainly could have traced him to Ephraim and when he did appear they had to lay their plans very carefully and nearly a week passed before they dared to arrest him. Lightfoot reports a Jewish tradition that, during forty days preceding the passover, an officer of the Sanhedrim "publicly proclaimed that this man, who by his imposture had seduced the people, ought to be stoned, and that anyone who could say aught in his defence was to come forward and speak. But no one doing so be was hanged on the evening before the passover." It may be that John refers to some such proclamation. [pp.183f].
-

John Chapter 12

A. John 12:1-8: The Supper at Bethany.

1. Verse 1: “Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.”
 - a. The day Jesus and his disciples arrived at Bethany was six days before the Passover. This should help us to set the day of the week in which our Lord made his great entrance into Jerusalem.
 - b. John reminds his readers that this village was the place where Lazarus had lived, died, and at which Jesus raised him back to life.
 - c. We remember from John 11:54 that the Lord led his band away from Jerusalem to avoid being taken into custody prematurely. They spent some time at a city called Ephraim, located in a wilderness area. The time came for him to begin his journey back to Jerusalem and face the ordeal planned from all eternity.
 - d. Woods:
 - 1) Numerous events occurring on his journey to Jerusalem and its vicinity are passed over by John, but narrated in detail by the other biographers of Jesus. On the trip he cleansed ten lepers, blessed some little children, healed two blind men near Jericho, spoke numerous parables, delivered several sermons and arrived in Bethany, on Friday evening, six days before the passover.
 - 2) His arrival there undoubtedly preceded the onset of the sabbath, which began at sundown, since he would not have travelled on the sabbath day. The passover was celebrated on the 14th of the Jewish month Nisan (Lev. 23:5), between the evenings (that is, between sunset and the time darkness fell) (Ex. 12:6); the paschal meal was eaten at the end of the 14th day, and at the beginning of the 15th; six days previously would be on the 8th of Nisan, Friday. [p.252].
 2. Verse 2: “There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.”
 - a. On this day of the Lord’s arrival a meal was prepared for Jesus and his group. We are told that it was Martha who served the guests. There would have been at least fifteen people to serve, including the family of Martha—no small task. We are not told who made this supper. The statement is “they” made him a supper. Matthew 26:6-13 places the meal in the house of Simon the leper. The details given by Matthew and John are too similar to be different occasions and locations. Many questions are not answered:
 - 1) Was this Simon still a leper or was he one of the many the Lord had cleansed? [It would seem unlikely that the Lord and his followers would have eaten in the house of a leprous man].
 - 2) Was he still living at the time of this supper?
 - 3) Was Simon related to the family of Martha?
 - b. A point of great importance is the fact that Lazarus was at the table. Here is a man who had been brought back from the dead a short time earlier; now he is alive and carrying on with the various acts of his regular life—including eating and conversing with friends.
 - c. “As the law forbade a leper to mingle with the people (Lev. xiii. 45, 46), this man had probably been healed of the leprosy by Jesus, and was still called Simon the leper from habit. Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead, was at the supper; the woman who anointed Jesus (verse 7) was Mary; while Martha, according to her well known habit (Luke x. 40), was one of those who served. (John xii. 2,3.) It was an interesting group of notable persons, who were full of gratitude for benefits conferred, and whose unfeigned love was about the only human solace enjoyed by the Savior during the last week of his sufferings” [McGarvey, Commentary on Matthew and Mark, p.223].
 3. Verse 3: “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.”
-

- a. Matthew 26:6-7: "Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat." This account tells us that the ointment was put on the Lord's head; John reports that it was also applied to his feet. She wiped his feet with her hair (it would be strange to wipe hair with hair). It is undoubted that Mary possessed a full head of hair. Women through the ages had taken great interest in their hair. My grandmother had very long hair which she only washed once a month; she would then have it done up in braids, curled upon her head, and covered it with a bonnet. My sister did all this work for her.
 - b. We are told by the scholars that the *pound* named in the passage would be equal to about twelve of our ounces. Johnson: "Spikenard, from which the ointment was made, was an aromatic herb of the valerian family. It was imported from an early age from Arabia, India, and the Far East. It was the costliest anointing oil of antiquity, and was sold throughout the Roman Empire, where it fetched a price that put it beyond any but the wealthy. Mary had bought a vase or flask of it containing twelve ounces" (p.187).
 - c. John said Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with this precious ointment; Matthew has her pouring it on his head. Both are logical and fitting actions. In pouring it on the head, the thick hair of the head would soak up the mixture; to apply it to the feet would require some degree of spreading the ointment.
 - d. The fragrance of this precious ointment would spread through the house, with everyone being able to enjoy the pleasant smell. No one would describe this ointment as having a bad aroma.
 - e. The same is said of "a woman that was a sinner" (Luke 7 :38). That occurrence took place in Galilee and is a different incident. That woman washed his feet with her tears of sorrow; those of Mary were tears of gratitude. [Cf. Johnson].
4. Verses 4-6: "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."
- a. NKJ: But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.
 - b. Judas demanded to know why this precious ointment was not sold for three hundred [pence; shilling; denarii] and the proceeds be given to the poor. When brother Woods penned his great commentary on John in 1981, this amount of money would equal fifty-one dollars at that time.
 - c. Matthew 26:7-9: "There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor."
 - d. "Not all of the disciples, for Judas alone made the complaint. (John xii. 4.) This is an instance in which Matthew uses the plural indefinitely to represent what came from a group of persons, although it was uttered by only one of them" (McGarvey, p.223).
 - e. Judas carried "the bag" and was "a thief." This indicates that Judas was the treasurer for the group, and that he stole from the money he was entrusted to keep. Treasurers in local congregations have been known to rob the Lord. There are many ways to steal, but there is no escaping exposure ultimately. Judas had no concern for the poor; he had found ways to take some of the money for his own selfish use. Satan used this fatal weakness to turn Judas into history's most infamous thief.
5. Verses 12:7-8: "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."
- a. Our Lord always had the proper response to arguments and situations. Here, he ordered them, to let Mary alone. He correctly stated that this anointing was in anticipation of his burial.
-

- b. Johnson: "It is worthy of note that this was all the anointing which our Lord's body received from the hand of Mary or her female friends, inasmuch as he had risen before they reached the sepulchre with their spices. It was, therefore, in verity, an anointing beforehand, although she was not aware of the full import of her act of love" (p.188).
 - c. He reminded them that the poor would always be present. In the mid-nineteen-sixties, President John-son declared a war on poverty. He thought that if he could win this war, he would have stamped out poverty throughout the country! At the time, there were many of us who thought of our present passage; the Lord declared that the poor (thus, poverty) would always be present, despite efforts by politicians or religionists. The best we can do, is to allay some of the suffering of the poor.
 - d. The Lord gave his church the following requirements: "For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12, ASV).
 - 1) Edifying the saints.
 - 2) Helping the needy.
 - 3) Evangelizing the world.
 - e. The time Christ was to spend on earth was limited—about 33 years. His earthly ministry lasted only about three and a half years. Within a few days, he would be arrested, tried, convicted on a false charge, and executed.
 - f. Jesus had two prominent friends who obtained permission from Pilate to remove the Lord's body and inter it: "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" (John 19:38-42).
 - g. Since the Lord ascended from earth to heaven, he remains seated at the right hand of God, having received the promises the Father had made to him, and from this place of eminence, he has been able to provide to his followers all the blessings they were intended to receive.
 - 1) Psalm 68:18: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men...." Compare: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)" [Eph. 4:8-10].
 - 2) Acts 2:33-36: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:22: "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."
 - 4) After his resurrection, Christ met with the apostles on several occasions. Following the last meeting, he ascended heavenward out of their sight: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen
-

him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).

- 5) Psalm 110:1: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Acts 2:33-36 gives the fulfillment: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
- 6) God set Christ at his own right hand by his infinite power: "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*" (Eph. 1:19-20).
- 7) This position is above all principality and power: "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:21).
- 8) Hebrews 7:23-28: "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

B. John 12:9-19: Great Entrance into Jerusalem.

1. Verse 9: "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."
 - a. John's statement here brings us back to the feast at the house of Simon the Leper, where the previous exchange had taken place. The apostle reports that there were many Jews present, not that they were interested in seeing Jesus, but that the resurrected Lazarus was present. The most exciting event of their lives to this point had been the resurrection of the brother of Martha and Mary. Human nature has not changed through the ages; people are interested in seeing or experiencing something different, new or exciting. To see the resurrected Lazarus would have been most interesting to these sightseers.
 - b. Pompous preachers of modern times have tapped in to this characteristic in order to build up huge followings. They devise a continuously changing program of entertainment to maintain the interest of the crowd. They insert just enough of a religious flavor to convince their adherents that they are worshiping and serving God. In reality, it could be better described as a social club with a tinge of religion. They would quickly lose their adoring followers if they began to preach the whole counsel of God!
 - c. The short-sightedness of this crowd is evident; it would have been far better for these present Jews to show greater interest in Jesus, the one who wrought the great miracle, than to see to one who had been dead but had been raised up from the grave by the Messiah!
 - d. Sectarian preachers have long used schemes and gimmicks to entice people to attend. One such man told the morning audience that if they would return that night, he would show them something that no one had ever seen before and that no one would ever see again. He held up a peanut which he had just taken from the shell, ate it, and declared: "No one had ever seen that nut, and no body will ever see it again!" He exposed himself to be nothing more than a charlatan and shyster.
 2. Verses 10-11: "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.”

- a. Some of those who witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus quickly informed the Pharisees of this event: "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" (John 11:45-47).
- b. Now these enemies were met with another great challenge: The resurrected Lazarus! There were many who could bear witness to his resurrection, including the group of Jews who were there, the sisters of the man raised, and Lazarus himself. He undeniably had been dead [for four days]; his body had been placed in the tomb [obviously witnessed by many people]; he was now alive again and could speak with many who knew him personally before his death, and could now speak of shared experiences before he died. Their schemes to murder Jesus were already in the works; but Lazarus' voice and presence must now be eliminated.
- c. These wicked men were unconcerned over the lives of Jesus and Lazarus; they were very much concerned over their own welfare and position. It meant nothing to them to kill two innocent men. Of course, in the case of Jesus, the Father was able to use their evil plans to defeat both them and Satan, and to bring into being the eternal plan by which to save multitudes of sinners.
- d. To allow Jesus to continue his work would result in a great increase on his followers. They could not deny that he had raised Lazarus. The tremendous welcome Jesus was about to receive as he entered into Jerusalem would have hardened them in their sorry scheme to murder him.
- e. Were those who were raised from the dead able to remember and report their experiences while their spirit was absent from their body? Paul related a case [which the context demands to be experiences which happened to the apostle himself] in Second Corinthians 12:3-4: "And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth). How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."
 - 1) In that place, Paul was privileged to hear words which were unlawful to repeat. Human language might not even be able to communicate the ideas, scenes and experience he had in that situation.
 - 2) What was heard and seen would be impossible and unlawful to relate. God had forbidden any such report and it may have been impossible for human language to express the information.
 - 3) This tells us, among other things, that those who report "near-death" experiences are not to be accepted without question. Also, the necromancers, who allege that they can communicate with the dead, are not to be accepted. Even in the cases [in the Bible] where dead people were resurrected, they were not allowed and were unable to communicate what they had seen and heard.
- f. Every particle of information God has for mankind today has already been revealed, recorded, and preserved in the Bible. Nothing else will be or can be added to that grand revelation. "Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, ASV). The following is from G.C. Brewer, *Contending for the Faith*, p.17]"
 - 1) "*The Faith Once for All Delivered to the Saints*. Here again Jude disclaims any intention to write something new to the disciples. In this we see his humility further manifested and we also see that this Epistle deserves a place in the canon even if Jude was not inspired. He does not reveal anything but pleads for that which had already been revealed and which was then a common possession of all saints. He declares that this had been delivered *once for all*. The King James Version says once delivered, but a thing that has been delivered once certainly has not been delivered twice or repeatedly and the meaning is therefore the same.
 - 2) "It was delivered one time for all time. This is an impeachment of those who come to us with

new revelations or visions or dreams. The Lord did not intend that his will should be made in installment, these installments to be given as the centuries pass by. He delivered the faith to the saints and expects them to keep it unto the end.

- 3) “This passage alone is sufficient to refute the claim of the Roman Catholic Church that the voice of the pope is the voice of God and that God continues to speak through any such living representative. It is also a refutation of such pretended revelators as Joseph Smith, Mrs. Ellen G. White, or any other person who claims to speak by inspiration or revelation today.
 - 4) “If what these persons say is exactly the same as the faith once delivered, then there is no need for their revelation. If it is in any way different from the faith once delivered, then it must be repudiated. We, therefore, should give especial emphasis to Jude’s exhortation to ‘contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.’”
3. Verses 12-13: “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.”
- a. The events we are now studying occurred during the last week of Jesus' life prior to the crucifixion. Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany (John 12:1).
 - b. “If the passover began on Friday, which is certain, though it has been questioned by a few writers, then six days before the passover fixes the arrival of Jesus at Bethany on Sunday. This follows from the universal custom of the Jews, in stating the number of a series of days or years, to include in the aggregate both the first and the last, even when only a small part of either was actually included. According to this method, a count of six days ending Friday must begin with Sunday” (McGarvey, *Biblical Criticism*, pp.405f).
- 1) On the day of his arrival at Bethany, a supper was made for him (John 12:1-2); this was on Sunday, in view of the statement by McGarvey above. It was during this supper that Mary anointed the Lord’s feet with the expensive ointment (John 12:3-8). “Though not explicitly stated, the presumption is that this supper was given on the evening after his arrival” (McGarvey, *ibid.*, p.406).
 - 2) The next morning (John 12:12), Jesus made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, when great multitudes spread palm branches and garments before him (Mt. 21:8). “It is palm Monday, if it is palm anything. Thus one of the Roman Catholic traditions, which is without foundation in fact, passes away” (*ibid.*).
 - 3) “While Mark, like the other synoptics, says nothing about the day of the week, he makes a series of chronological statements, extending from the day of the public entry to the first day of the passover, which corroborate perfectly the six days of John. To show this let us suppose Monday to be the day of public entry, and make the count. He says, at the conclusion of his account of the ride, that Jesus ‘entered into Jerusalem, into the temple; and when he had looked round about upon all things, it being now eventide, he went out to Bethany with the twelve’ (11:11). This brings us to the close of Monday; and it shows, by and by, that the public entry took place in the afternoon. Mark next says that ‘on the morrow, when they were come out from Bethany, he hungered,’ and then comes the incident of the barren fig-tree (12-14).
 - 4) This now is Tuesday. They go into the city, he casts out the traders whom he had seen there the evening before, and the statement follows that ‘every evening he went forth out of the city’ (19). Then comes the statement that ‘as they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig-tree withered away from the roots’ (20).
 - 5) This was Wednesday. They pass on into the city (27), and the discussions follow which occupy the rest of the eleventh chapter and all of the twelfth. Then he goes out to the mount of Olives, and delivers the discourse about the destruction of Jerusalem and his second coming (13:1-37). At the close of this discourse, still Wednesday, Mark says, ‘Now after two days was the feast of the passover and the unleavened bread’ (14:1). But ‘after two days’ from Wednesday, in
-

- Jewish count, would be Friday.
- 6) So we have counted in Mark five consecutive days—Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; and if we add to these the sixth day previously mentioned by John, but omitted by the synoptics, we have John’s account reproduced” (McGarvey, *ibid.*, pp.407f).
- c. Henry: “That they had palms in their hands, and so had these branches of palm-trees. The palm-tree has ever been an emblem of victory and triumph; Cicero calls one that had won many prizes *plurimarum palmarum homo*—a man of many palms. Christ was now by his death to conquer principalities and powers, and therefore it was fit that he should have the victor's palm borne before him; though he was but girding on the harness, yet he could boast as though he had put it off. But this was not all; the carrying of palm-branches was part of the ceremony of the feast of tabernacles (Lev 23:40; Neh 8:15), and their using this expression of joy in the welcome given to our Lord Jesus intimates that all the feasts pointed at his gospel, had their accomplishment in it, and particularly that of the feast of tabernacles, Zech 14:16.”
- d. “This was Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the people expected him to become king at once. The outside of this triumph was very mean. He rode upon an ass's colt, which made no figure. This colt was borrowed. Christ went upon the water in a borrowed boat, ate the Passover in a borrowed chamber, was buried in a borrowed sepulchre, and here rode on a borrowed ass. He had no rich trappings, but only the garments of others” (Johnson, p.189). This may be the only time Jesus ever rode on any kind of animal during his mission.
- e. Matthew, Mark and Luke furnish details regarding the procurement of the donkey upon which Jesus rode; John, who wrote many years later, allows his auditors to read the other accounts of the gospel to learn such details.
- f. The palms and other items covering the ground over which he passed suggest the victory he would achieve over death and sin, and the final triumph his followers would gain in Heaven. Compare: “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb” (Rev. 7:9-10).
4. Verses 14-15: “And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.”
- a. Barclay has these good thoughts:
- 1) “Further, this was characteristically the conqueror's psalm. To take but one instance, these very verses were sung and shouted by the Jerusalem crowd when they welcomed back Simon Maccabaeus after he had conquered Acra and wrested it from Syrian dominion more than a hundred years before. There is no doubt that when the people sang this psalm they were looking on Jesus as God's Anointed One, the Messiah, the Deliverer, the One who was to come. And there is no doubt that they were looking on him as the Conqueror.
 - 2) “We must not misunderstand this picture. With us the ass is lowly and despised; but in the East it was a noble animal. Jair, the Judge, had thirty sons who rode on asses' colts (Judg.10:4). Ahithopel rode upon an ass (2Sam.17:23). Mephibosheth, the royal prince, the son of Saul, came to David riding upon an ass (2Sam.19:26). The point is that a king came riding upon a horse when he was bent on war; he came riding upon an ass when he was coming in peace. This action of Jesus is a sign that he was not the warrior figure men dreamed of, but the Prince of Peace. No one saw it that way at that time, not even the disciples, who should have known so much better. The minds of all were filled with a kind of mob hysteria. Here was the one who was to come. But they looked for the Messiah of their own dreams and their own wishful thinking; they did not look for the Messiah whom God had sent. Jesus drew a dramatic picture of what he claimed to be, but none understood the claim.”
- b. From Matthew’s account, we have these remarks:
-

- 1) "And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strowed *them* in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matt. 21:8-9).
 - 2) The Bible reports that a very great multitude went forth from Jerusalem to meet Jesus upon hearing of his approach. This was a momentous occasion; and the entry of the Lord was one fraught with the greatest of danger for the religious leaders had been conspiring to put him to death, as well as to kill Lazarus (John 12:10-11). They were much disturbed over the popularity of Jesus, for as his fame increased, their fortune waned.
 - a) Matthew 27:18: "For he [Pilate] knew that for envy they had delivered him."
 - b) John 12:17-19: "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."
 - c) John 11:47-48: "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."
 - 3) "The people were wild with delight and admiration. Only the most extravagant state of feeling could prompt them to make a carpet along the mountain path with their garments, and with the soft branches of the palm-tree. (John 12:13.) It was 'a very great multitude,' and their numbers enabled them to spread this carpet all the way from the mountain top to the gate of the city" (McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, p.179).
 - 4) Luke gives an interesting detail in 19:39-40. Some of the Pharisees, who were always trying to find fault, called on the Lord to rebuke the multitude for this tribute he was being shown. Christ replied that if they should stop this praise the stones would cry out immediately! This welcome was one of necessity. Another detail furnished in Luke 19:41-44 was the compassion the Lord showed for the citizens of Jerusalem: he wept for them, for they did not know the great tragedies and hardships awaiting them in the near future.
 - 5) **Hosanna**: a shout of prayerful joy; it is derived from two Hebrew words meaning "be now propitious" and "save us now" (See Boles, p.412). Others gave additional cries:
 - a) Psalms 118:25: "Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity."
 - b) Mark 11:10: "Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."
 - c) Luke 19:38: "Saying, Blessed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."
 - c. In September, A. D. 61, about 30 years after Christ's triumphal entry, the most magnificent triumph ever seen in Rome was given to Pompey. For two days the grand procession of trophies from every land, and a long retinue of captives, moved into the city along the Via Sacra. Brazen tablets were carried, on which were engraved the names of the conquered nations, including 1,000 castles and 900 cities. The remarkable circumstance of the celebration was, that it declared him conqueror of the whole world. So the triumphant procession of Christ into Jerusalem was but a faint shadow of the coming of the Prince of peace, when all nations and the wealth and glory of them shall take part in his glorious triumph. And the day is fast approaching. *Fosters Encyclopedia*. [Via Johnson, p.190].
 5. Verse 16: "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."
 - a. The disciples were unable to comprehend the events that were in progress. They were aware that he was the Messiah, but like the majority, they presumed he would sit on an earthly throne, and
-

reign in much the same way as did David and Solomon. When Jesus refused to be placed on a throne in John 6:15, perhaps they thought he did so merely because the time was not right.

- b. After his resurrection, they still not perceive the truth: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8).
 - c. In Acts Two, they received their apostolic power and revelation, and could then grasp the meaning of the prophecies and the purposes of the things he did in his work, which were baffling to them earlier.
6. Verses 17-18: "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."
- a. Reports of the resurrection of Lazarus were passed through the vast multitudes at Jerusalem; many had been present to witness this great miracle. These people bore testimony of this tremendous super-natural work. The witnesses continued to give the report of the miracle for an extended period of time, since the imperfect tense of the verb *bare* means "were baring."
 - b. This miraculous event contributed greatly to the exciting entrance they gave to the Lord as he made his way into Jerusalem.
 - c. Many folks from the city came out to meet the Lord, and doubtless there were other people from afar were also entering. To accommodate such a huge number of people from other lands, there would be friends and relatives living in outlying villages who would provide shelter. Josephus has written that at these great festive occasions, a large number of the visitors would camp out in the open places around Jerusalem.
7. Verse 19: "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him."
- a. From this statement made by Pharisees, we can see that they are at conflict among themselves. They had promulgated an order that anyone who knew where Jesus could be found must report that fact, or else some kind of punishment was to be applied. But look at the situation at that very time. Jesus was being given a wondrous welcome into the city; everyone knew where he was. His deadly foes likewise knew but were too afraid to try to arrest the Lord! Their influence should have died at that very moment.
 - b. Jesus was totally unafraid to enter Jerusalem, although he was fully aware that the Jewish authorities had pronounced him an outlaw, and placed him under the threat of execution.
 - c. Johnson: Matthew describes the commotion in the city that so stirred up the Pharisees: "And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee" (Matt. 21: 10, 11). When the Lord came into the city he entered into the temple. Mark 11: 11, declares: "Jesus entered Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about on all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve." The interview sought by the Greeks, of which we next have an account, ... occurred this afternoon, while the Savior was in the temple John does not say when it occurred ... when the Savior cleansed the temple a second time, made his final appeal to the Jewish nation, and retired from the temple forever, speaking his farewell in the wonderfully pathetic words recorded in Matt. 23:34-39. This discourse recorded by John seems to have contained his last words to the people, and after his words were uttered "he was hidden from them," to appear no more in person with the offer of salvation until they should say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." [p,191].

C. John 12:20-27: Some Greeks Wanted to See Jesus.

1. Verses 20-22: “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.”
 - a. These Greeks had obviously been converted from paganism to Judaism, or else why did that travel to Jerusalem in order to worship? These people came to Philip to get him to take them to Jesus. Perhaps they chose Philip because his was a Greek name. Language would have doubtless been a factor.
 - b. Their request was to meet Jesus. The Lord’s name was universally known in Palestine by this time, and knowledge of him had reached other countries. His name could scarcely be kept secret because of the Jewish people who traveled from distant lands to and from Jerusalem for the religious feasts. News would be spread primarily by travelers.
 - c. Philip reported this to Andrew, and they both approached Jesus to tell of this request. Mark gives us the setting in which the Lord was presently operating: “And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living” (Mark 12:41-44).
 2. Verse 23: “And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.”
 - a. “Answered whom? Philip and Andrew only? The two disciples, plus the multitude? The disciples, the multitude and the Greeks? It is not possible to know. In view of the fact that nothing is said here or elsewhere regarding the desire of the Greeks to interview Jesus it seems in order to assume that the request was granted as in the case of Nicodemus (John 3:1 ff), and that they were present when the words of this section were uttered. Subsequent verses show that the multitude also heard the discourse which begins at verse 23” (Woods, p.263).
 - b. By saying that his time had come for him to be glorified, the Lord meant that the end of his earthly ministry was at hand and that his crucifixion was impending. After his death, burial and resurrection from the dead, the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile would be demolished; the gospel would be available to all.
 - c. On the first Pentecost day following the ordeal of Jesus, the gospel would be preached. We have no way of knowing, but it might be the case that these very Greeks were present to hear the apostles proclaim the gospel. These Greeks, we are told, had come to Jerusalem to worship at the Jewish holy season, thus were Proselytes.
 3. Verse 24: “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.”
 - a. Our Lord used a universally known principle to teach his audience an essential truth about the gospel system. Unless a grain of corn [this is a reference to such grains as wheat and barley] comes in contact with the ground, it cannot sprout and grow and produce other grains. The planted grain loses its outer shell, allowing the inner kernel of life to sprout; the sprout continues to grow until it produces a plant that soon emerges from the earth into the sunshine. The plant grows to maturity and develops one or more appendages [*i.e.*, ear, head] which contains a large number of seeds of grain, identical to the original seed planted in the earth. This operation is commonly known by virtually everyone.
 - b. That first seed must die before it can produce more life. If it remains in a sealed jar, for example, it cannot make contact with the nutrients of the earth, thus can remain in a dormant state for a very long time. “Grains were found in the wrappings of Egyptian mummies that were 4,000 years old, but they had never produced another grain. It is when it falls into the ground and undergoes dissolution, that it brings forth fruit. It is fruitful by giving itself up. So, too, Christ must give
-

himself up. Must die, be placed in the ground, before he can be glorified and draw all men to him” (Johnson, p.193).

- 1) John 12:32-33: “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.”
 - 2) John 8:28: “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.”
4. Verse 25: “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.”
- a. Love and hate are used in the scriptures to denote degrees of love. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:37-39).
 - 1) Religious differences put the disciple’s faith to a strong test. He must decide whether he loves the Lord or his family member more. Christ will not take second place. He that loves father or mother more than he loves Christ is not worthy of the Lord. This verse is parallel and thus explains Luke 14:26. To hate, as used here, means to love less.
 - 2) "And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah....And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated..." (Gen. 29:30-31). Jacob did not hate Leah, he simply loved her less than he loved Rachel.
 - 3) One who loves his parent more than he loves Christ is said to hate Christ. He hates him only in the sense that he loves him less than he loves the parent.
 - b. In our text, the Lord teaches that the disciple who loves his earthly life more will lose the same; the one who hates his earthly life shall keep it, which results in eternal life. His point is, we must love our life on earth less than we love the Lord—we must not allow love for this present world to even equal the love we have for the Savior.
 - c. Johnson: “He gave his life and found eternal exaltation; the grain gives its life and lives a hundred fold; those who consecrate their lives, give them up for others, dedicate them to their holy work, will live eternally. Those who seek to save their lives, live for this present life, live for pleasures and gains and honors, shall lose their lives. The man who says he will get as much out of life as possible, the worldling, is the one who ‘loveth his life.’ The one who disregards present pleasures, or worldly interests, but dedicates his life to Christ, is the one who hateth his life” (p.194).
5. Verse 26: “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.”
- a. “This is Christ's direct answer to the Greeks. His service is to be rendered, not by secret interviews, but by obeying him, for so the word ‘follow’ is to be understood. If any man serve me, him will my Father honor. God demands that ‘every knee should bow and every tongue confess that he is Christ.’ The Christian's ambition should be to follow Christ, to be Christlike, to serve him well, and leave all else to the will of the Father” (*ibid.*).
 - b. To follow Christ is not a one-time action; it must be continuing obedience. Contrary to sectarian doctrine, no alien ever suddenly comes to have faith in Jesus and by this faith-only concept, all of his past sins are erased and all of his future sins are likewise removed ahead of time; this false teaching declares that this new individual can never do or say anything to cause him to lose his salvation. This notion is never taught anywhere in the Bible!
 - c. When an alien sinner obeys the gospel [Believes in Christ, repents of his past sins; confesses his faith in the Lord, and is baptized into the spiritual body of Christ], the Lord adds him to His church, his guilt is washed away by the blood of Jesus, and he remains faithful unto death. Thus, Heaven awaits!
6. Verse 27: “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.”

- a. His passion was at hand; the very purpose for which he entered the human family; his eternal work came to its head at this point in his God-given mission.
- b. Johnson: "Now a sudden change comes over the spirit of the Redeemer. His eye closes on the crowd without; he ceases to think of, or to speak with man; he is alone with the Father. A dark cloud descends and wraps him in its folds." —Hanna. It is the shadow of the cross and the tomb. The horror just before him falls upon his soul with terrific power. It is a foreshadowing of the struggle of Gethsemane. The best comment on this verse is to compare it with the account of the agony in the garden. Here he exclaims: "Father, save me from this hour." There, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Here he adds: "But for this cause came I unto this hour." There "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." Here the perfect resignation that follows the struggle in his soul is in the prayer, Father, glorify thy name. It required a fearful struggle, but he "had hated his life" and given it for his work's sake. [p.194].
- c. Woods: "The struggle between his physical being and his awareness of destiny was a real one, and he resolved it by resolutely resisting the disposition to ask his Father to deliver him from death since he came into the world for just this hour. The deliverance which his human spirit would desire must give way to the realization such would thwart the divine plan and he quickly rejected it" (pp.265f).

D. John 12:28-36: A Voice Speaks From Heaven.

1. Verse 28: "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."
 - a. This was the third time recorded in the New Testament when an audible voice sounded forth from heaven addressing the Son of God.
 - 1) The initial case was at the baptism of Jesus: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 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" (Matt. 3:15-17). This marked the official beginning of his Great Mission on earth.
 - 2) The second occasion was at the Lord's transfiguration: "And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:2-5). This identified him as the one and only Mediator between man and God.
 - 3) The third event was in our present text, a time when our Lord was entering into the final period of his ministry to earth, which brought him into the painful episode of his passion. "To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).
 - a) The Lord showed himself to *them* (the apostles) following his resurrection. These appearances were not subject to misinterpretation or deception. They were infallible proofs that Jesus had been raised from the dead. The word "infallible" does not have a corresponding word in the Greek, but scholars report that the idea of infallibility was incorporated in the word used.
 - b) "In Greek authors it denotes an infallible sign or argument by which anything can be certainly known (Schleusner). Here it means the same —evidence that he was alive which could not deceive, or in which they could not be mistaken" (Barnes, p.2).

- c) His "passion" is a reference to his "sufferings." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:24).
 - d) The Father was fully aware of the inner turmoil his Son was experiencing. To know that God knows is a powerful source of strength—even for us.
- b. The Lord's statements in verses 27-28 were not addressed to the audience of people around him. He was speaking directly to the Father. His heart was filled with the knowledge of the passion which was very near. He was committed to accomplishing the eternal plan. He was as human as Mary and as Divine as his Father. He dwelled on earth in a human body in order to suffer death for the benefit of mankind. "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5).
- 1) Without a mortal body, it would have been impossible for Christ (or any Divine Being) to die, and even then it was only the physical body that died—his eternal Being remained unchanged.
 - 2) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." For him to die a sacrificial death it was necessary that he have a mortal body.
 - 3) Hebrews 2:14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." He partook of human nature by having a physical body; but this does not make him a mere man, anymore than eating pork turns a man into a hog.
 - 4) Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
 - 5) 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."
- c. The method of death intended for him to endure was perhaps the most hideous ever designed by cruel men. It was a common means of executing criminals and slaves by the Romans. The Law of the Empire did not allow a Roman citizen to be executed by crucifixion. In some cases, the victim had to suffer for days before he died. The body was often left on the cross for the birds to destroy. We are told that the victim had to pull against the nails in his wrists and push against those in his feet in order to draw a breath of air. Each such effort would bring an excruciating pain.
- d. In the message of our text, Christ petitioned the father to glorify **his** name. The primary aim of our Lord on earth was to bring glory to the Father. This lesson is sorely needed by mankind; too often men use the name of God only in denouncing some other person or item or situation. The Father will not send any person to *Gehenna* on the demand of some man! No one who has a rudimentary knowledge of God or the place of eternal place of punishment will ever ask God to commit anyone there, and would never want any to enter that location which was prepared for the devil and his angels! [See Matthew 25:41].
- e. The voice [doubtless, that of the Father] affirmed that he had glorified it and would glorify it again. "The glorification was both past and future. The Father had glorified himself in the work of Jesus thusfar accomplished and he would further glorify himself as the work was carried to completion. The former was a pledge and assurance of the latter" (Woods, p.266).
2. Verse 29: The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him."
- a. "It was the voice of the Father to the Son, being attested to by both John and Jesus—John in describing the incident and attributing the voice to the Father, and Jesus in his response thereto. It was a miraculous manifestation as were the other two instances of such speaking. (Matt. 3:13-17; Matt. 17:1ff.)" [*ibid.* p.267].
 - b. The people heard the sound of the voice but did not understand what was said. In fact, the nature of the sound made them think it had been thunder. Others speculated that an angel had spoken to Jesus.
-

- c. Paul had a similar experience in which the others did not comprehend what was spoken from heaven. The following is from the book of Acts:
- 1) It was about noon when the light fell upon them (Acts 22:6); it was even brighter than the sun (26:13); the whole company fell to the earth (26:14). Saul's companions are not identified. They may have been associates from Cilicia; it is evident that they did not understand the Hebrew language in which Christ spoke with Saul (26:14). This explains why they are said to have "heard not the voice of him that spake to me" (22:9). They heard the sound of the voice but did not understand the Hebrew in which the Lord spoke.
 - 2) Acts 26:12-14: "Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*"
3. Verses 30-31: "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."
- a. The Lord knew what his mission entailed; he was strong and dedicated enough to live up to his duty, even though no one had faced such a great ordeal before. Many have experienced execution on a cross, but none of them died for the sins of the world. Some scholars think that while the Lord was suffering on his cross as Heaven's sacrifice for sinful mankind, the full fellowship he had always had, was broken for that short period of time. If so, that time could have been the greatest of his sorrows. Compare: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).
 - b. Jesus stated in verse twenty-seven of our text, that his soul was troubled. He had always been dedicated to his appointment with the cross, with all that was involved in that awful experience. The voice that spoke to him from heaven was intended for the benefit of those around him. He was certainly strong enough to endure crucifixion. But those who were still lost needed that audible, miraculous demonstration. It would furnish more proof that he is the Messiah. His death, burial and resurrection, together with the marvelous events on the next Pentecost Day, would convince great numbers he truly is the Son of God!
 - c. Dooms Day for Satan was at hand!
 - 1) Woods: The word "judgment" translates the Greek word *krisis* from which our English word crisis comes. The meaning is, There is now coming the time of decision, the crisis, when the rightful ruler of this world is to be determined. Thusfar, Satan had unlawfully exercised control over the world; henceforth, he shall not have unlimited sway over men; he is to be dethroned from his position of worldwide influence in their hearts and lives. Satan is called "the prince of this world," because the world has been his domain from the time of the fall in Eden. He is to be "cast out," by which it is meant that his domination of men was to be broken and ultimately to fail, the beginning of which was soon to occur. Jesus wrested from Satan power over sin, death and the grave by his death and triumphant resurrection. This marvelous action was the most effective means possible to restore the law and authority of God in the world; the cross became the dividing line between those who bow to the mandates of the Father and those who reject him. Satan's reign began to decline at Calvary and it will be totally terminated at the end of the age. [pp.267f].
 - 2) The focal point of all human history was at hand. The Savior would offer himself on the cross for the sins of the world. His heel would soon be bruised by Satan [a temporary advantage], but the head of Satan would soon receive a death blow (Gen. 3:15). Christ would achieve the victory over the devil. The great hold Satan held over mankind was death, but his defeat would be through death itself. Satan was man's great enemy was most confident over his victory over God. "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"
-

(Heb. 2:15). The Lord here spoke with the real prospect of Satan's downfall. The full victory would be won by the Messiah's death on the cross.

4. Verses 32-33: "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."
 - a. Woods:
 - 1) He was "lifted up from the earth" when he was crucified. It is remarkable that the words, "lifted up" are from a Greek word meaning **exalted**. Though his enemies intended to destroy him they actually exalted him to the position of Prince and Saviour, by putting him to death. We are not to see in his use of the conditional particle *if* any suggestion of doubt or uncertainty regarding the method or fact of his death; it is, in effect, to say, "As surely as I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all men unto me."
 - 2) His death was certain; just as certainly he would draw men unto him. He draws men to him by offering incentives which induce them to come to him. These inducements are in the gospel. Honest people, aware of the marvelous blessings of salvation, are drawn to him who is their source and their provider.
 - 3) It should be noted that the Lord included "all men" among those to be drawn; neither his death nor the gospel which issues from it is limited in its effects. The gospel is for all men and is to be preached to all nations. (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16.) [p.268].
 - b. This passage denotes him being lifted up upon the cross. He was also lifted up from the tomb and was some weeks later lifted up to Heaven. Notice other places in John where the Lord spoke of his being lifted up on the cross:
 - 1) John 3:14: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."
 - 2) John 8:28: "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."
 - c. There is a certain drawing power to the crucifixion of Christ. To perceive this great influence, one must grasp the life he lived on earth, especially during his three and a half year ministry; also, we must know his timeless teachings.
 - d. Each first day of the week, faithful Christians gather to eat the Lord's Supper, not to call to mind the sins of the past, but to remember the Lord's death, the only sacrifice sufficient to remove our guilt. The Israelites were told to remember their sins; Christians are told to remember Christ. The blessings enjoyed in Christ include the real forgiveness of sins.
 - 1) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - 2) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - 3) Those sins done while we were out of Christ are forgiven when we obey the gospel (Acts 22:16), and are never brought up against us again. As a Christian conducts his life, he will stumble on occasion; those sins he commits are taken away by the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7); he is obligated, of course, to repent, confess wrong, and ask for pardon when he perceives his guilt.
 - 4) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

5. Verse 34: "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?"
- a. Woods:
 - 1) By "the law" they meant the whole of the Old Testament; and they likely had in mind such passages as Psalm 89:36; Isa. 9:6 and Dan. 7:13, 14, which they were grossly misapplying themselves. By asking, "How sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?" they were saying, in effect, "You cannot reconcile your statement with the teaching of the scriptures; you now concede that you are to leave the earth, but the Messiah is to be here for ever; therefore you cannot be the Messiah."
 - 2) Their question, "Who is this Son of man?" was an effort to bolster their position that Jesus was not the expected Messiah. They asked, "Who is this Son of man of whom you speak? He cannot be the one who is to reign over the coming kingdom." With contempt they demanded further information about this person. It is as if they were saying, "Some Son of man thou art who admits to early death and removal from the earth. You are not our Messiah!"
 - b. Pulpit Commentary: The expression, "Son of man," was familiar to the Jews.
 - 1) In the Old Testament it was used as equivalent to "man." It is applied in the Book of Ezekiel to that prophet himself, in about eighty passages. There is one passage in the Book of Daniel in which the Messiah is introduced as "like a Son of man."
 - 2) In the New Testament the expression occurs eighty-two times, and in almost all instances it is used by Jesus of himself. It is found in all four Gospels. Here only in the Gospels is it used by others of our Lord, and as if it were desired to understand the full meaning of the phrase. Stephen, when threatened with the martyr's, death, made use of this appellation, which shows that it was well known and current among the early Christians. The same is apparent from its employment by John in the Apocalypse, when describing the ascended Christ.
 - 3) There are passages from which it would seem that "Son of man" was regarded as almost equivalent to "Son of God." Thus in Peter's great confession, in answer to Christ's inquiry (see Matt 16:13-16). And again in Caiaphas's interpretation of our Lord's language (see Luke 22:69,70).
 - c. Fourfold Gospel:
 - 1) The people were persuaded by certain passages such as Isa 9:6-7; Ps 89:36; 110:4; Dan 7:13-14; Ezek 37:25, etc. that the Messiah would abide forever. They knew that Jesus in his triumphal entry had received honors which they thought belonged to the Messiah, but when they hear him use words indicating that he should die, and thus (as they construed) not abide forever, they felt that he was openly disavowing all claim to Messiahship.
 - 2) Having heard him style himself the Son of man (verse 23), they now catch at it as if Jesus had used it to distinguish himself from the true Messiah, and ask with more or less contempt, "Who is this Son of man?" Thus blinded by their preconceived opinions and misconstructions of Scripture, the people wavered in their loyalty to Jesus, and Watkins well says, "This question came midway between the 'Hosanna' of the entry into Jerusalem and the 'Crucify him' of the trial."]
 - d. Henry:
 - 1) Though they had heard the voice from heaven, and the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, yet they object, and pick quarrels with him. Christ had called himself the Son of man (v. 23), which they knew to be one of the titles of the Messiah, Dan 7:13. He had also said that the Son of man must be lifted up, which they understood of his dying, and probably he explained himself so, and some think he repeated what he said to Nicodemus (ch. 3:14), So must the Son of man be lifted up. Now against this,
 - 2) They alleged those scriptures of the Old Testament which speak of the perpetuity of the Messiah, that he should be so far from being cut off in the midst of his days that he should be
-

- a priest for ever (Ps 110:4), and a king for ever (Ps 89:29, &c.), that he should have length of days for ever and ever, and his years as many generations (Ps 21:4; 61:6), from all which they inferred that the Messiah should not die....
- 3) ...[W]hen they vouched the scripture to prove that the Messiah abideth for ever, they took no notice of those texts which speak of the Messiah's death and sufferings: they had heard out of the law that Messiah abideth for ever; and had they never heard out of the law that Messiah should be cut off (Dan 9:26), and that he should pour out his soul unto death (Isa 53:12), and particularly that his hands and feet should be pierced? Why then do they make so strange of the lifting up of the Son of man?
- 4) [W]hen they opposed what Christ said concerning the sufferings of the Son of man, they took no notice of what he had said concerning his glory and exaltation. They had heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever; and had they not heard our Lord Jesus say that he should be glorified, that he should bring forth much fruit, and draw all men to him? Had he not just now promised immortal honours to his followers, which supposed his abiding for ever? But this they overlooked.
6. Verse 35: "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."
- The Lord did not directly answer their faulty charge; of course, the Messiah would never cease to exist, but that did not mean he would forever live on the earth. He was following the counsel he had stated so plainly in Matthew 7:6: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."
 - His enemies had the singular opportunity to hear from the Messiah directly, and to see his great works, but they wasted their time raising objections, rather than listening, learning and perceiving the truth. They would not long have this benefit; he told them that the light would only be with them for a little while longer. His time on earth was nearing its end. Compare: "Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me" (John 7:33).
 - They should have learned as much as possible while he was present, lest a time of darkness should descend upon them, leaving them without the guiding light of truth. After his death, resurrection and return to heaven, these same enemies would direct their hatred and rejection against the apostles of Christ and his other followers. The history of the Book of Acts is full of such cases.
 - Some of the present opponents would later obey the gospel. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). These priests would have to find other employment, for it is sure that the Jews would not have allowed them to continue their temple service, even if they should desire to do so.
 - When the Great Apostasy came, the light of the Gospel grew increasingly dim, until its light was hidden from the common people. In England a few hundred years ago, the oppressing religious majority would persecute and even kill someone who possessed even a scrap of a page from the Bible. Those who translated God's word into English were severely treated. How precious is the Bible to us?
7. Verse 36: "While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them."
- Jewish rebellion against their Roman conquerors would in a few years lead to the final assault against the Jewish nation and its capital, Jerusalem. In Seventy A.D., the powerful army of Rome, entered Palestine, in a few short months, subdued the nation, destroyed Jerusalem, and scattered the people. During this time of fighting and besiegement Josephus reports that well over a million people died, many in hideous ways.
 - Jesus expressed his great concern for them in Luke 19:41-44: "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day,
-

the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”

- c. Opportunity ignored or despised is soon gone. The nation’s time had now disappeared. Our Lord, in departing from their midst, was saying “Good-bye” to them. They had rejected the Messiah—to their loss and destruction as a nation. “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! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 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” (Matt. 23:37-39).

E. John 12:37-43: A Prophecy Fulfilled.

1. Verses 37-38: “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?”
 - a. The Jews had a great interest in signs and miracles, but many would not be convinced when they beheld an undeniable wonder.
 - 1) Luke 11:16: “And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 1:22: “For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.”
 - 3) In Matthew 12:1-15, our Lord miraculously healed a man’s withered hand; this was on the Sabbath day, which enraged the Pharisees to the point they wanted to destroy him. In this same time-frame, he healed a great number of other people with various ailments. In verse thirty-eight, the scribes and the Pharisees still demanded another supernatural sign!
 - b. At the time of our present text in John, the enemies of Jesus were still unwilling to believe on him in spite of the many miraculous demonstrations he had already wrought. They were beyond convincing! “Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here” (Matt. 12:38-41).
 - c. They professed great confidence in the Old Testament Scriptures, but they failed to see that they were themselves exposed by that part of God’s Revelation. These men should have been well prepared for the coming of the Messiah due to their claims to know and believe the Scriptures. Isaiah was the great prophet regarding the promised Messiah, and chapter fifty-three lies as the heart of the subject.
 - 1) Isaiah 53:1: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” It was God’s intention that his people, the Israelites, should know important parts of his plans for the future. They should have been familiar with the Book of Isaiah, especially with Isaiah 53. This was the very chapter that the man from Ethiopia was reading when he was approached by Philip.
 - 2) Romans 10:16: “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?” Paul quotes a statement from Isaiah 53:1: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” Isaiah predicted the coming of Christ and the spread of his gospel. He knew that many would reject the gospel to their own destruction. Those who remain in the unsaved condition of sin can blame only themselves; the gospel is available to all, and is daily proclaimed far and near by able and faithful teachers and preachers.

- 3) Philip began at Isaiah 53 when he taught the man from Ethiopia about Messiah (Acts 8).
- d. When the Jewish people largely rejected the Gospel of Christ, the apostles and other brethren turned toward the Gentiles, where they often found a very receptive audience. The “arm of the Lord” [his great strength, wisdom and knowledge] was directed first to the Jews, but it found its finest acceptance from the Gentiles.
- 1) Acts 13:44-49: “And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.”
 - 2) Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
2. Verses 39-40: “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.”
- a. Matthew 13:13-17: “Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”
- 1) The statements cited here are from Isaiah 6:9-10, and are also used by Paul (Acts 28:23-29) to describe the rebellious Jews in Rome who rejected Christ and his word. The Lord acted in full accordance with the ancient predictions concerning his work.
 - 2) “In these verses Jesus gives the fourth and final reason for speaking to the people in parables, and at the same time he points out the cause of those facts on which the preceding reasons were based. As Isaiah had written concerning his own generation (Isa. 6:9,10), this people’s heart had ‘waxed gross;’ that is, it has become filled with earthly and sensual desires, and especially so with reference to the expected kingdom of the Messiah.
 - a) “This state of heart made their ears dull of hearing; that is, it made them indisposed to hear with favor the words of Jesus. It led them also to close their eyes; that is, to refuse to see the evidences of his divinity. This closing of their eyes is treated (15) as the fatal act....
 - b) “The evil state of the heart might have the result of having voluntarily closed their eyes against the light which had come into the world, causing parables and dark sayings to be as intelligible to them as the simplest lessons which Jesus taught; their ears were equally closed against both” (McGarvey, *Matthew and Mark*, p.118).
 - 3) The Jewish nation was usually characterized by this obstinate attitude. “The strong inference from the application that Jesus makes of it is that, no matter what he would do or say, they would not obey him or receive what he said. It was like casting the pearls of truth before swine to present his teachings to their sensual and prejudiced minds” (Boles, *Matthew*, p.289).
-

- 4) Their heart was gross (fat: encased in fat); thus was insensitive to his words; his truth could not penetrate. Their ears were dull (deaf: unable to hear). They had closed their eyes (an individual, conscious action). This passage destroys the Calvinistic claims which assert that man came into this dreadful condition by inheriting it from his parents. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20).
 - b. These people the Lord is here dealing with were living out the predictions Isaiah had recorded. They were unwilling and unable to perceive their true condition. Further, because of their denseness of heart, they could not and would not recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah.
 - 1) Isaiah 6:10 : "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed" (ASV).
 - 2) Johnson:
 - a) The cause of their unbelief is not that Isaiah said, thus and thus, but he points out the cause of their unbelief in what he said. The reason why they could not believe was not that God had decreed their unbelief and destroyed their free agency, but that, in the exercise of their free agency, they had made themselves, by the operation of God's moral laws, incapable of belief.
 - b) *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart.* This explains why they could not believe. Whether they were morally responsible for their unbelief, depends on how God blinded their eyes and hardened their heart. If he did it by a direct act, regardless of their moral condition, then they were not responsible. If, however, he did it by a law of the universe that whoever turns from the light shall become blind, and whoever steels his heart against the truth shall find his heart hardened, then they were morally responsible if they had turned from the light and hardened their hearts.
 - c) It is a physical as well as a moral law that he who turns from the light and seeks to abide in darkness will become blinded until he will "believe a lie and be damned." The men who are the champions of unbelief, such men as Voltaire, Paine and Ingersoll, are unbelievers because they did not wish to believe. Their moral condition was such that they could justify their course of life only by refusing to believe on Christ. They sought the darkness, and as a result, finally they became so blinded that they could not believe. They blinded their own eyes because they brought upon themselves the penalty, God blinded their eyes, because their blindness resulted from the action of his universal law. Thus it is said of Pharaoh that "God hardened his heart," but it is also said that "Pharaoh hardened his heart." He chose, in the exercise of his voluntary agency, to harden his heart, but it is God's law that those who harden their hearts shall be hardened, and hence God, by this law, hardened his heart.
 - d) By reference to Matt. 13: 14 the reader will find this passage from Isaiah quoted and applied by the Savior to the Jews. In the application he shows how they were blinded: "Their eyes have they closed." The Savior's words settle how God blinded their eyes. It was by the application of his invariable law to their own acts. Trench says: "The Lord, having constituted as the righteous law of moral government, that sin should produce darkness of heart and moral insensibility, declared that he would allow the law to take its course." (pp.197f).
 - c. God is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart [Exodus 7]. If God did it directly by the use of his supernatural power, then the king had no choice in the matter. Therefore, he was not at fault for his refusal to let Israel go. Why, then, did God punish the man for not doing what he was powerless to do? God did not harden the hearts of the enemies of the Lord, but he placed before them certain information and requirements that they were unwilling to believe and follow.
-

- 1) God is infinitely impartial (Acts 10:34-35). He wills the salvation of all men (1 Tim. 2:4-5) and desires that every sinner repent (2 Pet. 3:9). But he will not force any man to obey him (Rev. 22:17; Rom. 6:16-18; Heb. 3:7-15; Matt. 7:21-28). Neither will he force any man to disobey his will (1 John 3:4; Jas. 1:13-17).
 - 2) James 1:13-17: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
 - 3) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - 4) When God gave Pharaoh a demand the king did not want to obey, he hardened his own heart so that he would not take into account the significance of the miracle he had just seen. We can say that God hardened his heart only in this sense.
 - 5) But the magicians contributed to this hardening when they, by their trickery, produced serpents which seemed to annul the effect of Moses' miracle. But the king hardened his own heart for it was his choice whether to release Israel. If he did not have any choice, why did God send Moses and Aaron to make the request?
3. Verse 41: "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."
- a. Isaiah 6:1-6: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar" (ASV).
 - 1) The prophet Isaiah saw the glory of the Messiah before he came to the earth, the description of whom is provided in the passage here quoted. The apostle John saw the glory of the Messiah while he was on the earth and afterward when he returned to Heaven.
 - 2) "The glory of which both wrote is that which Jesus had with the Father before coming into the world and which he regained following his humiliation. (John 17:5.) Those expositors are in error who assume that Isaiah wrote of the glory which Jesus would experience only after he left the world. It is of interest to observe that the reference to deity by Isaiah is to God and that John, by inspiration, interprets it to apply to Christ. This theophany was thus a reference to the Second Person of the godhead; and there is much reason for concluding that all the theophanies of the Old Testament are allusions to the Second Person rather than to the first. This being true, Isaiah's reference could only be properly applied to Christ. The word *God* names the divine nature and is applied to each Person of the godhead (John 3:16; 1:1; Acts 5:3, 4), since each Person possesses this nature" (Woods, p.273).
 - b. Consider these passages:
 - 1) John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."
 - 2) John 1:14: "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."
 - 3) Matthew 17:1-5: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face
-

did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

- 4) 2 Peter 1:16-18: “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”
- 5) 1 John 1:1-3: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”
- c. Coffman: “Isaiah did indeed see the glory of the coming Redeemer and was especially effective in the portrayal of Messiah's dual nature. Christ as God and Christ as man were prophesied and presented throughout Isaiah as the one Messiah. Thus he was hailed as ‘Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace’ (Isaiah 9:6), and by the same prophet as ‘Despised ... rejected ... put to grief ... bruised ... chastised ... having no beauty ... in travail ... cut off out of the land of the living,’ etc. (Isaiah 53:1ff). Not the least of Isaiah's great prophecies of Jesus was that of his rejection by the chosen people.”
4. Verses 42-43: “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.”
 - a. The people indicated in this passage were called “the chief rulers.” Many of these chief rulers believed on Jesus, but it was not a real and cogent faith. The only faith that can avail the soul is an obedient faith. These men had an intellectual acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, but their fear was greater than their “faith.”
 - b. The proof of the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth was so powerful that they could not sensibly deny his real nature—the Son of Almighty God! But they were in terror that the Pharisees would exclude them from membership in the synagogue. Their fear overwhelmed their superficial faith.
 - c. Nicodemus was a leader among the Jewish elite; at first he came to Jesus at night (see John three). Later, he went openly to Pilate to request permission to remove the body of the Lord from the cross, an action that required a significant amount of courage.
 - d. Courage of strong conviction is necessary for one who is outside of Christ to openly confess his faith in Jesus as the Son of God. This confession is vital to his salvation. The audible confession is necessary, but so also is living up to that confession in life. Following is from ASV:
 - 1) Matthew 10:32-33: “Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.”
 - 2) Romans 10:9-10: “Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:11-15: “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many

witnesses. I charge thee in the sight of God, who giveth life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession; that thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in its own times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

- e. For a Jew to be put out of the synagogue was extremely dangerous to his standing among the nation and could destroy his livelihood. If he had a job, he would most likely lose it; if he had a business, it would not be patronized by fellow-Jews. His family would feel some hard consequences. The leaders cast out from the synagogue the man to whom Jesus had given sight, and threatened to do the same to anyone who confessed the Lord:
 - 1) John 9:22: “These things said his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.”
 - 2) John 9:34: “They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.”
- f. The faith of these chief rulers was so weak that it did not lead them to repent of their sins and openly confess their belief in Jesus. Their *faith-only* was impossible to save them! This puts beyond denial that no one can be saved from their past sins by faith only!
 - 1) Faith without works is a dead faith and cannot possible save anyone’s soul: “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:20-26, ASV).
 - 2) Hebrews 11 gives a lengthy list of Bible characters whose faith was active—was obedient.
 - a) “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous....”
 - b) “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God.”
 - c) “By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”
 - d) “By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”
 - e) “By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted him faithful who had promised....”
 - f) “By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called....”
 - g) “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come.”
 - h) “By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.”
 - i) “By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.”
 - j) “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw

- he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.”
- k) “By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”
- g. “For they [these rulers of the context] loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” (KJV). “For they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God” (ASV).
- 1) “Regardless of the faith that may exist in the heart, it is the love of God which must sustain and activate it if it is to issue in any benefit to the believer. Love is greater than faith, even a complete faith; and the reason for this was announced by our Lord himself who said, ‘If ye love me ye will keep my commandments,’ a statement nowhere made concerning faith (John 14:15). How strange it is that men claim exactly the same thing for faith that Christ claimed for love, making faith the fulfilling of all the commandments. Any theory of justification by faith which omits love and obedience is a false theory” (Coffman).
- 2) If one anticipates the praise or glory [blessings] from the hand of men, then the only advantages and blessings he can ever expect are limited to what a mortal man can provide! Salvation cannot be obtained from a mere man; none of the spiritual blessings are within the power of any human to provide for himself.
- 3) Only Deity can save; only Deity can deliver any of the spiritual blessings.
- a) Mark 2:5-12: “When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.”
- b) Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”
- c) Acts 4:12: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

F. John 12:44-50: The Light of the World.

1. Verses 44-45: “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.”
- a. We are not told in the context whether these words were spoken in this immediate setting, but the declaration certainly fits into the current conversation. Our Lord is said to have cried and said—called out and made the statement. This clearly implies a public address. He raised his voice in order to make himself heard.
- b. His statement is elliptical, meaning that the word “only” is implied but not stated. “He who believes on me does not only believe on me; he believes also on the Father.”
- c. Barnes: “It involves, also, belief in him that sent me. Jesus uniformly represents the union between himself and God as so intimate that there could not be faith in him unless there was also faith in God. He did the same works John 5:17; John 5:20; John 5:36; John 10:25, John 10:37, and taught the very doctrine which God had commissioned him to do, John 8:38; John 5:30; John 5:20-23.”
- d. Woods: “To see Christ was to see the Father, not because they are the same Person, they are not; but because they are so intimately associated in their purposes and plans that the one acts through the other and thus to see the one sent was to see the sender. Thus, he who believes Christ also

believes the Father because the word which produces faith in the former is that which leads to faith in the latter. It is therefore impossible for one truly to believe in the Father and not accept fully the deity of Jesus. (John 14:1)” [p.275].

2. Verse 46: “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”
 - a. Being the light for the world, those who follow his directions will not walk in darkness, but in light. His light will so-illuminate the way that there will be no need for them to stumble. They can see obstacles in time to avoid them.
 - 1) Psalm 119:1-4: “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.”
 - 2) Psalm 119:104-105: “Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
 - 3) The word of the gospel gives illumination; it shows us the way to Christ, the way to serve God acceptably, the way to worship God properly, the way to live, and the way to heaven (cf. Ps. 119:105; 1 John 1:5-10). If Satan, acting through his agents (2 Cor. 11:13-15), can convince us that the Bible is not accurate, or that it is not the final authority in religious affairs, or that it may be correctly followed by merely keeping the spirit of its teachings, he will have very effectively blinded our minds to the truth. Those teachers who affirm that there are many ways to heaven, or who maintain that absolute truth is unattainable, or that sincerity alone is sufficient, blind the minds of many.
 - b. 1 John 1:5-10: “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”
 - 2) Revelation 21:8: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”
 - c. The Great Commission was designed as the means by which our minds can be illuminated with the truth. The following passages are from the American Standard Version:
 - 1) Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.”
 - 3) Luke 24:46-49: “And he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and

rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.”

- 4) Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
- 5) Acts 26:16-18: “But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me.”
3. Verse 47: “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.”
 - a. This reminds us of John 3:16-18: “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.”
 - b. The world was already under the condemnation of sin; he came that they might be taught and redeemed. The Law of Moses was unable to save one who was in sin; it could only move their guilt from one Day of Atonement to the next (cf. Heb. 10:1-4; Acts 13:38-39).
 - c. The Lord is here making a plea to those who were then listening and all those future generations who would read his Gospel—Hear and believe my revelation of truth! It was not Christ’s desire to condemn any accountable person; he came into the world to save, not to condemn.
 - 1) Luke 19:10: “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
 - 2) Jeremiah 33:16: “In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.”
 - 3) Daniel 9:24: “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.”
 - 4) Matthew 1:21: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”
 - 5) Acts 4:12: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
 - 6) Hebrews 7:25: “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”
 - 7) 1 John 3:5: “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”
 - 8) Revelation 1:5: “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”
 - 9) 1 Timothy 1:13-15: “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”
 - d. The Lord, the Righteous Judge, will never condemn those who hear, believe, and follow his word.

For these faithful ones there will be no eternal condemnation! Compare: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:1-2).

- 1) 1 John 4:17-18: “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”
 - 2) The faithful in Christ can have boldness [assurance; confidence] to face the Judgment without terror. Every accountable person will have to give direct and personal account of himself in the last day; the standard with which we will be measured is the will of God. Those who lived their lives under the Patriarchal Age will be judged by the law God had in effect then; those who lived under the Law of Moses, will be judged by that law; those who live in this side of the cross will be judged by the gospel of Christ.
4. Verse 48: “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.”
- a. The Son of God has been appointed to be the final Judge.
 - 1) Acts 17:30-31: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”
 - 2) Matthew 25:31-33, 46: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”
 - 3) The purpose of the Judgment will not be to determine guilt or innocence. That condition will have already been established by the life the individuals have lived on earth. The wicked rich man of Luke 16:19-31 knew the instant he came to awareness [“opened his eyes”] after death and found himself in a tormented state, what his eternal condition would be. The Judgment will furnish the full reasons why the lost are lost and why the redeemed are saved. That will be the occasion which the final verdict will be officially announced.
 - b. Consider:
 - 1) Revelation 20:12, 15: 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 whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”
 - 2) Romans 14:10-12: “...But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his [in the individual’s] body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men”
 - c. Woods:
 - 1) To refuse to receive the "sayings" of Christ (his words) is to reject him—a significant fact in view of the disposition of much of the religious world today. It is by many taught today that one may "believe in Christ" and yet refuse to do what he says in reference to being baptized, wearing his name, and worshipping him as he directs; to all such Jesus says, "When you refuse

- to accept my teaching you refuse, in so doing, to accept me, and my word which you refuse will be that which will condemn you at the judgment."
- 2) True, Jesus will sit on the throne in the day of judgment, but only as the bearer of his word by which teaching the entire world will have its destiny determined. How important then it is that all of us should adhere tenaciously to this word! And, how vividly this points up the necessity of doing exactly what the Bible says without addition, without subtraction, without modification. [pp.276f]
- d. What is this "last day" which is indicated by the Lord? Paul in 2 Timothy 4:8, identifies the day in which the Lord will give the righteous their crown of righteousness—It will be **at that day**. This day could only be the last day, the day when the Lord returns, raises the dead, changes the living, and brings us all into the Judgment. This teaches by implication that we do not go directly to our eternal destiny the instant of our death. Other studies reveal that the spirits of the dead enter a place the Bible calls Hades, which has two "compartments"—a place of rest and happiness, called *Paradise* (Luke 23:43), a place of punishment called *Tartarus* in the Greek (Luke 16:22-28; 2 Peter 2:4). There these spirits await the resurrection and Judgment.
- 1) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) **in that day**."
 - 2) Matthew 7:22: "Many will say to me **in that day**, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"
 - 3) Matthew 11:22: "But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon **at the day of judgment**, than for you."
 - 4) Matthew 11:24: "But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom **in the day of judgment**, than for thee."
 - 5) Matthew 12:36: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof **in the day of judgment**."
 - 6) 2 Timothy 1:12: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him **against that day**."
- e. Coffman: Here it is affirmed dogmatically that the basis of the eternal judgment will be the word of Jesus Christ. Matthew quoted Jesus as teaching the same thing (Matthew 7:24-27). The word of Christ, as delivered to men by the apostles, is the final dogmatic authority in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said, "whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20) is the burden of the church's commission, thus making his teachings the constitution and bylaws of the kingdom of God, or the church. The reason underlying the truth enunciated here (that his word shall judge all men) is given in the next verse [49].
5. Verse 49: "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."
 - a. Jesus, the son of Mary, did not originate these words which he has spoken. This message came from the mind of Almighty God. It was God who directed what he was to say and speak. Final authority rests with the Father. Compare: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, a servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him" (John 13:16, ASV).
 - 1) God the Father sent Christ the Son, therefore God is greater in authority than the Son.
 - 2) Christ the Son sent the Holy Spirit: "...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 go, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7).
-

- a) It is noteworthy that in John 14:26, Jesus said that the Father would send the Holy Spirit; that he would send him in the name of the Son.
 - b) Also, we note that our Lord said in John 14:28 that “my Father is greater than I.”
 - c) But since Christ would send the Holy Spirit, Christ is greater in authority than the Holy Spirit.
- 3) The Holy Spirit empowered, guided and sent the apostles of Christ.
- a) Luke 24:46-49: “And he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.”
 - b) Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
 - c) But before the apostles could begin this great work, indeed before they were *able* to do it, they must receive the miraculous power which the Holy Spirit would provide. “...Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). The source of this power was heaven, specifically through the coming of the Holy Spirit. According to Mark 9:1, the kingdom was to come with power; the power was to be given to the apostles in Jerusalem (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5); the power would be received when the Holy Spirit came upon them; the Holy Spirit came upon them on the Pentecost day of Acts 2 (1-4). From these facts, the following deduction can be made with certainty: the kingdom came on the Pentecost day of Acts 2. This is so because God implied it by the facts he gave in the divine Record, not because we inferred it!
- b. Woods (p.277):
- 1) “Here, as often before, the Lord made clear the fact that his mission was from the Father and that he neither acted nor spoke independently of him. (5:30; 7:16-28; 8:26-38.) Every word, every thought, every expression was in complete harmony with the will of him who sent him. His will was of course the will of the Father, but not apart from that will did he speak. It was vitally important that his hearers should recognize the fact that his teaching derived from a divine source and not a human one.
 - 2) “He acted by divine commitment, both with reference to what he should say (in substance), and how he should say it (in manner of speaking). Thus, both the teaching and the manner of its presentation resulted from direct conformity to the will of the Father. Here, again, is emphasized how much importance Jesus attached to undeviating conformity to the will of his Father. If he, who is our example, was so disposed to speak and act only as his Father directed, we may be sure that he will not tolerate any deviation from the divine standard on our part. (John 5:8, 9; 1 John 2:4; 5:3.)
6. Verse 50: “And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”
- a. The commandment of the Father is not only directed to the bestowment of life on men, but it is life. There is life in the truth of God when it is received into the heart and becomes the law of life. His commandment is truth. Christ says: " My words are spirit and they are life." Thus closes John's record of the Revelation of Christ to the world. In the discourses of the next five chapters there is a fuller revelation of himself to his disciples. [Johnson, p.200).
 - b. 2 Timothy 1:8-12: “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now
-

made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

- c. He has abolished death, and offers life and immortality in its place. The “life” indicated is eternal life, and “immortality” [*aphtharsian*] has reference to the incorruptible nature we will enjoy in eternity.
 - 1) “The death thus abolished has a far more extended meaning than the separation of the soul and body that we call death. It signifies that awful punishment of sin which is best described as the exact opposite to ‘eternal life.’ The death with which we are acquainted by sad experience here is only the forerunner of the death eternal. Already to the faithful believer in Jesus Christ this death of the body counts for nothing; the time will come when it will even exist no more. Christ had deprived it of its power. (1 Cor. 15:26,55; Heb. 2:14). It is no longer an enemy to be dreaded, but a friend to be welcomed” (Lipscomb, pp.202f).
 - 2) Hebrews 7:25-28: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."
 - 3) Hebrews 9:24-26: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."
 - d. He has brought life and immortality to light. If we did not have the gospel, we would know no more about what lies beyond the grave than did the heathen philosophers. The importance of the gospel cannot be over-emphasized.
 - e. “The words of Jesus are eternally important because they are the words of God. Significantly, our Lord never requested men to believe him AS A MAN, but as the TRUE MESSENGER OF GOD. What a difference prevails among human authorities. The rule of thumb for claiming attention on the human level is this: a bishop has spoken; a pope has published an encyclical; the council has made a decision; the head of the church has spoken; an archbishop has said, etc., etc. Not even the holy Christ himself, while on earth as a man, demanded that his words be accepted on the basis of any earthly trust or position that he occupied, his sole claim upon human credibility and acceptance being in this alone, that he delivered the TRUE WORD OF ALMIGHTY GOD! This is the unique significance and authority of the word of Christ” (Coffman).
-

John Chapter 13

A. John 13:1-12: Jesus Washes the Feet of the Disciples.

1. Verse 1: “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.”
 - a. The Lord and his disciples ate the Passover meal, with the full knowledge of what lay in his immediate future, which would include his arrest, trial, crucifixion, death, and burial, a dark and painful series of experiences, which would follow by his resurrection and later his ascension back to Heaven.
 - b. Despite the bickering and complaints made by John and James shortly before the Passover [Luke 22:24-27], our Lord nevertheless loved the disciples unto the very end. He knew they would forsake him at his arrest in Gethsemane, and he would be left alone, bereft of his closest companions in his ministry. Still did the Savior love them.
 - c. He had already been deserted by a large number of disciples in John six. One of the hand-picked men would betray him to the enemies. This treacherous betrayal is graphically depicted in prophecy: “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me” (Ps. 41:9). By his sorry, backstabbing action, Judas earned for himself the name as history’s most despicable character! Think of what his life and influence could have been!
 - d. With these and other disappointing experiences in view, our Lord loved the disciples to the end. His love for his modern disciples is no less consistent and strong. Yet how many of us grow weak in our service to him! Apologizing to the preacher for non-attendance is not sufficient; it is the Lord who has been wronged.
2. Verse 2: “And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.”
 - a. Other translations:
 - 1) NKJ: “And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s *son*, to betray Him.”
 - 2) ASV: “And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.”
 - b. As the ASV translates it, it was during the supper, the devil having beforehand put in the the heart of Judas, the plan to betray Christ, proceeded to fulfill his wicked, covetous design [see 13:21-30]. Of course Jesus knew about the intentions of Judas. He did not expose him openly, as they ate the Passover meal, His kindness, even toward this enemy, continued to the last. What might the other eleven disciples have done to Judas if the Lord exposed him fully at this very time? Perhaps they would have taken some kind of direct action against this betrayer, which would have stained or ruined their own spiritual stance.
 - c. John has prepared us for Judas’ betrayal of Jesus by denouncing that weak man as being covetous (John 12:3-6). Being a greedy person, Judas had readied his heart for the devil’s strong temptations to place Jesus into the hands of his deadly enemies, for thirty pieces of silver. It is possible that Judas may have thought the Lord would deliver himself by miraculous power.
 - 1) He and others had already been strongly warned against covetousness (Luke 12:15).
 - 2) He and others had been shown that physical assaults were foreign to the gospel of Christ; they are to be harmless to others (Luke 9:51-54).
 - d. “The love of money and resentment toward Jesus for rebuking him for criticizing Mary's use of the precious nard likely influenced the deceitful disciple to do that for which he lives in infamy. Though the Lord knew that Judas would betray him, he treated him with kindness (John 13:18-30), and washed his feet along with the feet of others. Why did Jesus not denounce him on the spot?

Even in this the Lord showed love and kindness. It has been observed that if the Lord had uncovered the wicked scheme of Judas and unmasked him before the rest of the disciples it is not likely that Judas would have left that room unscathed” (Woods, pp.280f).

3. Verses 3-5: “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.”
 - a. Lying in the background of the events about to occur is the unwise request which was made by James and John. Their mother was also involved in this demand for prominence in the coming kingdom.
 - 1) Luke 22:24-27: “And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.”
 - 2) Matthew 20:20-28: “Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”
 - 3) "Nothing moves the indignation of men more than to know that one of a company of equals is plotting to get an undue advantage over the others. It was now necessary that Jesus should interfere as a peacemaker" (McGarvey, *Matthew and Mark*, p.177). The others were "much displeased" over this move on the part of James and John (Mark 10:41). The devil had used human ambition and anger to divide the apostles on this occasion. Unless Jesus could bring about a reconciliation, his great mission was in jeopardy.
 - 4) It was an absolute verity that Christ knew he had left the Almighty in heaven to perform fully his earthly work. He came from the Father to the earth, he lived in constant fellowship with the Father while he was on earth, and at the prescribed time, he would return to the Father.
 - b. The apostle tells us plainly that Jesus fully knew his relationship with the Father; he knew what his mission to earth was. “And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? **wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?** And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them” (Luke 2:46-50).
 - c. Although he knew his real identity, he was willing to wash the feet of the disciples, even the one who was already set to betray him. Feet-washing was a chore performed by a lowly servant on a

- guest who had come to visit the master of the house. Our Lord gladly performed this lowly task! It seems clear that none of the disciples were willing to take on the humble work of washing the feet of the others.
- d. It was during the eating of the Passover meal that Jesus arose “from supper,” laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of his disciples, and to dry them with the towel he had around him.
- 1) “The garment which he laid aside was the long, loose, outer robe then common, leaving only the inner tunic, the chiton which men wore. Instead of using the ordinary girdle common to that day he took a towel and girded himself with it to keep the long, flowing inner garment from hindering, or otherwise interfering with that which he was about to do. It is important to note that the details, minutely given, enable us to see, with our mind's eye, the things which transpired in that upper room, when Jesus taught, by object lesson, humility Peter, one of those present, was later to write about girding one's self with humility (1 Pet. 5:5), and he must have thought of this impressive incident when he penned those words” (Woods, pp.281f).
 - 2) “This was after they came to the table. The washing of one another's feet, it seems probable, gave rise to this contention. The humbler should wash the feet of the greater was the rule among the Jews. While they were disputing over this and to reprove them for their untimely contention, Jesus prepared himself to wash their feet” (Lipscomb).
 - 3) “Girded as a servant the Lord does a servant's work. The feet were not put into the basin, but water was poured from it on the feet and they were then wiped with the towel” (Johnson, p.203).
 - 4) Having come into the city from Bethany, about two miles away, traveling over the Mount of Olives and down through the valley and across the stream at the bottom, their feet would have picked up a considerable amount of dust and perhaps dried mud. But only Jesus was willing to perform this important task.
- e. Woods: “When Matthew, Mark and Luke refer to the paschal feast, they refer to the actual feast itself and apart from the week of unleavened bread; John, in his references thereto, embraces the whole of the festivities, including the passover and the week of unleavened bread. Jesus was crucified on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread (and after the actual passover had been consumed), and John alludes to this fact to pinpoint the actual time of the Lord's suffering and death” (p.282).
4. Verses 6-8: “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.”
- a. It was now Peter's turn to have his feet washed. He asked the Lord if he intended to perform this on him. In other words, “Are you going to wash my feet?” Perhaps the room was in stunned quietness as he washed those other disciples' feet before he came to Peter. This disciple was usually quick to speak, and he did so now.
 - b. “While the others sat in shamed silence, allowing Jesus to proceed, the impulsive Peter could not endure what to him was the ultimate absurdity and he spoke out in indignant protest. The Lord of glory washing his feet? At the moment, he could not endure the thought” (Woods, p.283).
 - c. Jesus told Peter that he was not able at present to comprehend what the Lord was doing; but he would later perceive the full meaning of this operation. Peter and the others would grow in knowledge and perception of the nature of the Kingdom. One citizen would not rule over another; they were to be all of equal worth. Greatness in the Lord's church is determined by Heaven's standard, not by human thinking. The Lord did not allow for such an arrangement in his kingdom. Yet this is precisely the setup in the modern denominations! But this is no strange thing because they have seen fit to change virtually every major feature of the Lord's plan, including the plan of
-

- salvation, plan for worship, organization and designation of the church.
- d. The exaltation of certain individuals to positions of authority, or in giving certain ones titles which exalt and distinguish them from the rest, is contrary to the Lord's order. In the kingdom there are no chief seats or positions of power. Rather, all are equal under Christ. Only the apostles who were selected to receive from God and convey to men the New Testament have any authority, and that authority is simply in the privilege of communicating the truth to humanity.
 - 1) The one who would be great, in the Lord's system, is one who is servant to the others. He does not point to some exalted title or position as the proof of greatness. The means of obtaining greatness in God's sight lies in the humble service which one does in behalf of one's fellowman. The way to greatness is in humility. No wonder Christ has forbidden the exalted titles (Matt. 23:1ff) which men are wont to wear!
 - 2) "There are different works to be done, but still there is no rank. Even the idea of authority, as it most certainly resides in the office of elders (Heb. 13:17), still does not carry with it the picture of a military-type rank and command function. We would all do well to remember that, as just a Christian with no assigned functions, or teachers, or deacons, or preachers or elders, all are to be SERVANTS! Servants, first, last and always!" (Bill Jackson, *Book of Matthew*, p.530).
 - 3) Mark 9:35: "And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all."
 - 4) Mark 10:44: "And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all."
 - e. Peter was adamant in refusing to allow the Lord to wash his feet! "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" We are told that in the Greek text, Peter was refusing this action for as long as the ages continue.
 - 1) "His first response to Jesus is understandable and the Lord kindly and patiently tolerated it; but his second reaction was self-righteous and arrogant, questioning the judgment of Jesus. It is small wonder that the Lord swiftly and sharply rebuked him: 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.' If he refused, he would have no part with the Lord in his work, in his coming kingdom, in the blessings eventually to be bestowed upon the faithful.
 - 2) "The first requisite of discipleship is humble and unquestioning submission to the will of the Lord; moreover, in order to be equipped to do the will of the Lord it was imperative that the disciple should learn humility; thus, Peter's future depended on the acceptance of that which thusfar he had found objectionable" (Woods, p.284).
 - f. Again and again, this interesting narrative by John makes clear that our Lord's purpose here was to teach the disciples humility and submission of will. To assume, as some religious bodies do, that Jesus made the act of feet washing a rite and ceremony to be performed in the church throughout subsequent ages is to miss entirely the lesson intended. The literal act was for the purpose of removing actual dirt from the feet; but, it was intended to symbolize for all future generations humility of spirit and the necessity of performing the most menial acts of Christian service. It was never used as a church ordinance in the New Testament and never intended to be regarded as such; its only subsequent mention is in connection with private acts of service. (1 Tim. 5:10.) It is significant that Jesus did not say to Peter, "If I wash not thy feet thou hast no part with me." The washing involved far, far more than the removal of dust from Peter's feet; it included the cleaning of his soul of the pride and vainglory that had prompted his earlier life. The significance of this was now beginning to become apparent to Peter, thus prompting his reply. [*ibid.*, pp.284f].
5. Verses 9-10: "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."
- a. American Standard Version: "Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all."
-

- b. Woods: He was still failing to grasp the lesson intended. He had not yet seen that the Lord, by washing the disciples' feet, was teaching them the sinfulness of a proud and unbending spirit which all of them had exhibited in their contention over which one of them was to be the greatest in the kingdom.
 - c. All of the twelve had been baptized with the baptism of John the Baptizer, and the Lord himself had (Matt. 3:15-17). If one has been baptized correctly, there is no further need for another baptism. The men in Acts 19 had received John's baptism, but that baptism had gone out of effect when the baptism of the New Testament took effect. Paul immersed them into the Lord by the authority of Christ.
 - d. Lipscomb: "[Which may have become soiled from the defilements of the road.] But since they had been purified and only the feet had been exposed to contamination, only the feet needed to be washed and the whole person was cleansed Here he gives a spiritual significance to his language and says that not only the body was clean, but they were all spiritually clean, save one, whom he knew would betray him. [There was one of the little crowd who had not spiritually bathed himself, to whom mere foot washing would do no good.] For he knew him that should betray him. —Jesus already knew that Judas had bargained to betray him By expressing in this way the grief which they thought his crime caused him to feel, Jesus makes a last effort to bring Judas to repentance. And if he does not succeed, he will at least have shown to his disciples that he was not the dupe of his hypocrisy. (Verse 19.)"
 - e. Woods: These words of the Lord were uttered in response to Peter's request that Jesus should wash not only his feet but also his hands and his head. Jesus showed the apostle that one who has bathed (as very likely the disciples had before leaving Bethany), needs only to wash the feet from the grime of recent travel. The lesson has spiritual application and may well have been intended by the Lord. One, once forgiven, and in Christ (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27), is cleansed from past, or alien, sins; thenceforth, by walking in the light and by claiming the promise of cleaning by confession and prayer justification is maintained: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin.... If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. "(1 John 1:7, 9.)" [p.285).
6. Verses 11-12: "For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. 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?"
- a. The apostle Peter did not need to be immersed again; he and ten of the other twelve were clean; but there was one who was not clean. He is subsequently identified as Judas who betrayed the Lord.
 - b. Having finished the task of washing the feet of the disciples, he got fully dressed and sat down again. He asked them whether they comprehended what he had just done to them. Modern sectarians have failed to perceive the meaning of the Lord's action of washing the feet of the disciples. Some of them have special services in which they wash each others' feet. We may be sure that the ones who take part in the meaningless ceremony had previously thoroughly cleansed their feet.
 - c. Those who received the baptism of John during the time in which it was in effect, received pardon for their past sins; their forgiveness was based on the fact that Jesus would later die on the cross, shedding his soul-saving blood, bringing into reality the one perfect sacrifice which would remove the guilt of sin. There was no need for them to be immersed again.
 - 1) However, Acts 19:1-7 reports the case of about a dozen disciples Paul found in Ephesus who had received John's baptism after it had been replaced by the baptism of the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). The apostle quickly perceived that there was something amiss in their baptism. The men were then baptized in the name of the Lord.
-

- 2) Those receiving John's baptism were told to look forward to the time when the Messiah would come; the baptism of the Great Commission calls on to look backward to the fact that the Messiah had come. A subtle difference, one which made the difference between guilt and salvation.
 - 3) Look at the "baptisms" which have originated from men. They are said to be various purposes, except the one great essential. This man-made rite is designed to put one into the membership of man-made religious groups. They not only have corrupted the purpose of real baptism, but have also mutilated the identity of those who are offered it, and also the action by which it is to be done. The so-called baptism practiced by our friends in the sectarian world is no more acceptable than that which the men at Ephesus had received at the first.
- d. All those who lived and died under the Patriarchal and Mosaic Dispensations, who were loyal to the requirements under which God had placed them, were likewise redeemed by His blood. We could say that they were forgiven "on credit."
- 1) "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25). God's plan for making men righteous extends backwards in time to benefit those who lived in the past, but were dead when Christ died (Heb. 9:15,22). *Remission* is from a Greek word which means "passing over" (see margin). Hebrews 9:15 gives an inspired commentary on the thought, and shows that the idea is that of forgiving, not ignoring the guilt of the offenders. But upon what basis did God forgive their sins? The only possible basis was their faithfulness to the law under which they lived.
 - 2) "And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:15,22).
 - a) The benefits of his shed blood flowed backward in time to cleanse the sins of the obedient ones who lived under the Old Testament system.
 - b) As the Israelites followed the Mosaic Law, participating in the atoning sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), the guilt of their sins was rolled forward to the next year. Such a person who lived out his life under the Law, received forgiveness, not by the Law, but by the death of Christ. The pardon they were granted in prospect," based on the future sacrifice of the Savior.
 - c) Those who lived under the first covenant could receive the promise of eternal inheritance only through the sacrificial death of the Messiah. This is true of all who are called, regardless of the religious age under which they lived on earth. "But before any could rightfully inherit it and claim it as their own, the covenant through which it has been provided had to be sealed and ratified with the blood of Jesus. The necessity of this the Apostle now proceeds to illustrate (1) by the analogous case of a will or testament; and (2) by example of the Old Covenant" (Milligan, p.258).
- e. Far more was involved in the washing of the feet of the disciples by the Lord, than the outward actions. He asked them whether they comprehended what he had just done. Woods: His question, "Know ye what I have done to you?" means, Do you know the significance of what I have done? They had witnessed the action, but they did not fully realize its meaning and the question was asked, not to prompt a direct answer from the disciples, but to focus their attention on what had been done and the explanation which was to follow. It had special significance, but in vastly different fashion, for Peter and Judas. [p.286].
- B. John 13:13-20: Jesus Calls For Humility on the Part of the Disciples.
1. Verses 13-15: "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.”

- a. The disciples had for a long time known that Jesus was very much more than a common man. They had witnessed an untold number of supernatural things he had done. With their own eyes they had seen him raise Lazarus from the dead, not long before. They had beheld him as he walked on the water. They had by the power he gave them also performed miracles.
- b. They knew him to be their Lord and Master! He was indeed the Son of Almighty God! He was in truth the great Messiah whose coming was announced many generations earlier. They acknowledged him as their Master and Lord. The Greek term translated “Master” in the King James, is rendered “Teacher” in the American Standard. Compare: “Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel (John 1:49, ASV). Woods offer the following [p.287]:
 - 1) Our Lord was preeminent as a teacher and such is far more often affirmed of him and of his work than preaching. "Lord," signifying master, was another title of Jesus and designates the authority he properly exercised over them. It is significant that at the very time Jesus was teaching his disciples, both by precept and example, the obligation to perform when necessary the most menial services that he was affirming his rightful position as their sovereign. Men today often regard these positions as mutually exclusive but Jesus did not and neither should we.
 - 2) Genuine greatness is along the road of useful service. "He that is greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." (Luke 22:26.) If one who occupied the high position that was the Lord's but condescended to perform the lowly task of washing the feet of his disciples, then his disciples ought also to be willing to wash one another's feet—the symbol of the performance of any humble act of service.
 - 3) Instead of seeking places of preeminence and prestige they should follow the example of their Lord in serving others though such required—as in this instance—the most menial of tasks. Their unwillingness to recognize this appears to have been the factor which prompted the Lord to wash the disciples' feet. Each wanted the other to do this and thus the work went undone until the Lord, to their shame and dismay, did it for them. The rebuke which the Saviour administered to these disciples was far more severe than any word, without the example, would have been.
- c. Christ used this fundamental truth to inculcate in them the essential quality of humility. Although he was their Master and Lord, nevertheless did he kneel before them and perform the important task of washing their travel-dirtied feet! This was an important and time-honored custom among the Jews. The washing of a traveler's feet would be a refreshing action and a sign of welcome. Returning home from work, we often remove our shoes; sometimes our children or spouse would do this for us. “A weary worker's welcome home!”
- d. The Lord's example was to serve as an object lesson for the disciples, as children of God. As they had opportunity, they were to be willing to humbly aid others. We have no custom of washing the feet of a visitor, but we offer them a chair and likely will bring them a glass of water.
- e. There are many ways we find to offer some humble aid to other people. We do not lose any self-esteem, but rather our gracious actions will exalt us in the estimation of the Lord. He told those very special disciples to imitate his humble example; his example was also intended as an object lesson for his followers today. As already noted, this matter was never intended to be an act of worship in our worship assemblies. No New Testament congregation used it in their worship; no reference to such.
- f. Johnson: There is a wide difference between an example and a church ordinance. When Christ wept with sympathy, or fed the hungry, or ministered to the sick, or taught lowly service by washing the feet of his disciples, he set an example, and happy are we if we know what he did,

drink in his spirit, and follow the example. That feet washing belongs to the class of examples, rather than of church ordinances, is demonstrated by the fact that when we turn to the inspired history of the church as recorded in Acts and in the Epistles, it is silent concerning any such ordinance. The Savior, the night before he was crucified, established a church ordinance, the Lord's Supper [p.205].

g. Woods:

- 1) Thus, those who have created a church ordinance out of this engage in a fashion not intended by the Lord and wholly unrelated to the motives which influenced him. On occasion, the popes of Rome, with much pomp and ceremony, have washed the feet of a carefully selected group in alleged compliance with the action of the Lord in the upper room; and some denominational bodies in the United States perform similar rituals, not because soiled feet need washing as was the case with the disciples, but solely as a ritualistic and ceremonial act.
 - 2) Jesus washed the disciples' feet; he washed the feet of all the disciples; he washed both feet of each disciple and he washed them because they were dirty. His action was one of humble service and a necessary one. To wash but one foot, as most groups who have adopted such as a religious rite, and only after this foot has been meticulously washed at home before presenting it to be washed is a shameful counterfeit of the Lord's action and nothing less than pious mockery.
 - 3) We must always be careful that we do not empty the examples of our Lord of their real and intended meaning and substitute rituals and ceremonials in their places. To go through the sham of washing others' feet as do the popes of Rome "after due private preparation, and in the presence of the proudest rank," bears no resemblance to what Jesus really did on this occasion. [p.288f].
2. Verses 16-17: "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" (KJV). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, a servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them" (ASV).
- a. Christ, the Son of God, reminded the disciples that they are not greater than he; since he humbly washed their feet, thus fulfilling a needy task, they ought to be willing to do such things for each other. In a slave and master situation, obviously the lowly servant is not greater than his owner. It is far more certain that the Messiah is vastly superior over any of his followers.
 - b. Our Lord also stated that he who is sent, is not greater than he who sends. God the Father is greater than his Son, for it was the Father who sent the Son on his earthly mission. A little later in the book, Christ will promise to send the Comforter [the Holy Spirit], thus clearly implying that he is greater than the Spirit. This depicts a kind of divine chain of command—an illustration of Divine Authority.
 - c. The Lord's actions and words provide an object lesson on humility. You will recall that a very short time before the present events, the disciples had been arguing among themselves as to which of them would occupy the positions of the highest honor in the coming kingdom. James and John were aided by their mother in making a direct request to that end.
 - 1) Romans 12:3, 10, 16: "For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits" (ASV).
 - 2) Romans 12:3, 10, 16: "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly
-

love, in honor giving preference to one another Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion” [NKJV].

- d. Woods:
 - 1) In that remarkably precise fashion characteristic of the marvelous Greek language which inspiration chose to be the vehicle by which to bring the truth of the gospel to the world, the words "If ye know..." are in a construction (condition of the first class), where that affirmed is known to be true and thus Jesus said, in effect, "Since you now know these things if you do them you shall be blessed indeed."
 - 2) They knew them, having been taught them by both precept and example, but the blessedness deriving therefrom was conditioned, as always in the scriptures, by their obedience thereto.
 - 3) God blesses men because of their faith only when their faith prompts to obedience. Faith, apart from works (the commandments of the Lord) is vain. (James 2:20-26.) Genuine happiness, both in this world and in the world to come is dependent on faithful obedience to the will of the Lord as expressed in the New Testament. (Matt. 7:21-24; Luke 11:28.)
 - 4) This blessedness is not limited to man's realization of God's approval by compliance with his will. His appreciation for us is enlarged and enhanced by the humility and service we render to others. Thus the blessedness of which Jesus spoke is both manward and Godward. [pp.289f].
 3. Verses 18-19: "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."
 - a. The Lord has told these disciple some wonderful truths, but the blessings involved do not apply to every one of the twelve. There is one notable exception—Judas, the betrayer. As we shall see, Jesus identified the man in the next section of the passage.
 - b. Our Lord hand-picked each of the twelve, including Judas. He knew the potentials of each of them. He changed Simon Peter's name to Cephas, being fully aware of that man early weaknesses, but knowing full well of the spiritual giant into which he would develop. The others also had certain weaknesses, including the desire of some to be elevated above the others, as we have seen above.
 - c. Christ could perceive in the heart of Judas a fundamental propensity toward material wealth. In John chapter twelve, the apostle plainly described Judas as a thief, and that he purloined money that was been placed in the contributions that sustained the little band. John wrote near the end of the first century, when Judas and the other apostles had passed on into eternity. His information about the evil dealings of Judas was necessary for Bible students to understand the full story.
 - d. Johnson on Judas:
 - 1) In washing the disciples' feet, Jesus had said, "Ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who would betray him; therefore he said, Ye are not all clean." So early, from the very first, did the thought of Judas and his meditated deed press upon the Savior's spirit.
 - 2) When the washing of feet was over, and Jesus sat down, and the repast began, they all noticed that there was a cloud on the Master's countenance, and the disciple who, sitting next to him, could best read the expression of his face, saw that he was "troubled in spirit." They were not left long in doubt as to the cause. Still sitting at the table and engaged in the solemn feast, he began to speak of his betrayer.
 - 3) Already Judas had been to the chief priests and agreed, for a certain sum of money, to betray the retreat of Jesus at night. The time of the deed had not been determined and the Savior brings it about that Judas, at once, leaves the company and perpetrates his dark crime that night. [pp.209f].
 - e. Jesus cited an Old Testament passage which presaged the evil act of Judas: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, Who did eat of my bread, Hath lifted up his heel against me" (Psa. 41:9). Christ knew beforehand what Judas would do, although that man was in full control
-

of his decisions and actions; he was not foreordained to commit this heinous sin and crime! If God had programmed him to these evil deeds, Judas would not have had any responsibility in this matter. Deity can foreknow without predestinating the event foreknown.

4. Verse 20: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.”
 - a. Christ was sending these apostles, excluding Judas, who were to be empowered to carry the Gospel as far as was possible. When people received the teaching done by the apostles, they were receiving the Messiah who had sent them. In this same process, those who received Christ, also received the Father. The flow of the message was from the Father, to Christ, to the Apostles and to the obedient believers of the message.
 - b. God does not directly plant knowledge of his word into the minds of the lost. This operation is performed through teaching the truth to others, with sufficient evidence to create faith in their minds, which leads to their obedience. This is precisely what is done when the followers of Christ teach others the gospel (Matt. 18:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
 - c. When Judas fell into sin and betrayed the Lord and hanged himself, that did not suggest any weakness of the Lord’s system. When elders, teachers, preachers, or others fall away, the blame can only be on the individual who fell. The Gospel of Christ is perfect. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Those who obey the truth do not always remain with the truth.

C. John 13:21-30: Judas the Betrayer.

1. Verses 21-22: “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.”
 - a. After making the above remarks, our Lord was troubled in his spirit. The apostles were able to see the sorrow that was in his heart; they quickly learned the cause of that inner pain.
 - b. He declared to the group that one of them would betray him. Doubtless, this statement shocked each of the eleven. Judas already knew what his intentions were. He was the guilty party. The others were perplexed, wondering who the traitor would be.
 - c. Woods:
 - 1) The awareness that one of his own company would betray him greatly troubled the Saviour. Evidence of his strong agitation is seen in the terms used. He was "troubled in spirit" (John 11:33; 12:27), deeply disturbed in mind; his use of "verily, verily," points up the vividness with which he bore witness to the fact and he "testified" (spoke plainly) regarding a matter he could only view with horror and indignation.
 - 2) Of his betrayal he had earlier spoken; he now reveals that it would be by one of the twelve apostles. (Matt. 17:22; 20:18; 26:2.) The "spirit" in which Jesus was troubled was that which was in his own inner being—not the Holy Spirit. [p.292].
2. Verses 23-25: “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?”
 - a. “The party were reclining at the table in the Greek and Roman fashion. A wide couch was placed along the table and each guest reclined on his left elbow with his feet extended outward. The disciple next in front of the Savior would, therefore, be very near his bosom” (Johnson, p210).
 - b. Peter, James and John were the inner circle of the twelve disciples. On certain special occasions, these three were with the Lord, including the Transfiguration scene (Matt. 17) and in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested. We are not explicitly told why these three were special.
 - c. Why is one disciple described by John as the one Jesus loved? We are plainly told that he loved them all to the end: “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” (John 13:1).

- 1) The apostle John, who was guided to write this book, does not refer to himself by name. “Though John never declares that he is the one meant, it has always been so understood by the church. One reason for this view is found in the fact that he names all the other apostles freely, but never names himself otherwise. Some have insisted that it was egotism to thus designate himself. Rather, I suppose that it was such a joy to John to know and feel that one so glorious as Christ had loved ‘even him,’ that he could hardly suppress his joy. After long years of work and trial had passed and he was a gray-haired man, it filled his soul with transports to think that Jesus loved him and that he had reclined on his bosom (*ibid.*).
 - 2) John did not choose what he was to write, but was inspired to pen these great truths that comprise the book. Compare what Paul wrote: “If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37, ASV).
 - d. Peter gave the unnamed apostle a signal that he should ask Jesus who the Lord meant was to betray him. No word was spoken in making this request. John asked the Lord plainly.
 - e. John could have been the youngest of the apostles; since he was an old man at the end of the first century, some sixty years or so later; during the time of the public ministry of Jesus, he might have been between twenty and thirty. He must have been a very lovable person. That he was a dependable man is seen in the fact that Jesus commended him mother the the care of John (See John 19:26-27).
3. Verses 26: “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.”
 - a. Our Lord responded to the question by saying that the individual meant would be the one who whom he would give a sop when he dipped it. His answer to John would have been in a quiet tone of voice.
 - b. There was upon the table a dish of bitter herbs, a kind of sauce that was always eaten at the passover. No knives, forks or spoons are used at an Eastern table, but the fingers only, which are always carefully washed before eating. These are dipped in the dish. The Lord took a piece of the unleavened bread, dipped it into the dish of sauce and handed it to Judas. John saw the act and understood what it meant. The rest did not yet comprehend that Judas was the traitor. [See Johnson, p.211].
 - c. The one who was to betray the Lord is identified as Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Jesus did not say or show any malice toward this unfaithful disciple. He did not express any harsh anger even toward those who tormented him in his trials, scourging, and crucifixion.
 - 1) Luke 23:34: “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.”
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:21-23: “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.”
 4. Verses 27-29: “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.”
 - a. Woods: The enormous wickedness of Judas is to be seen in the fact that when it became apparent to him that Jesus knew of his duplicity and faithlessness, he felt no compunction of conscience, he made no effort to justify his act nor was there the slightest disposition to turn back from his fatal course. On the contrary, "Satan entered him," that is, the devil took full possession of his faculties,
-

- inflamed his heart further against the Lord and his cause, and spurred him on to pursue his wicked course. [p.294].
- b. If a Christian turns back to his former evil ways in one wicked matter, that first step naturally and easily can lead to another such step, which is likely to quickly lead to many other acts of sin. The heart is thus hardened by degrees, and the person is back where he used to be! This describes the falling away of Judas. In a similar fashion, a faithful child of God can begin to be active in the Lord's service, with one act of work leading naturally and easily into more and more operations of faithfulness.
 - c. Other accounts of the betrayal:
 - 1) Matthew 26:14-16: "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him."
 - a) Judas went to the chief priests with his unholy proposal. It appears, from the placement of the story of the feast in which Judas had exposed his avarice, that he was upset over the stinging rebuke the Lord had meted out. This appears to explain his evil act reported here, which was also motivated by his greed.
 - b) From that time Judas sought an occasion and opportunity to betray the Lord. The words "deliver him" and "betray him" are used interchangeably (verses 15,16). The opportunity was not long in coming. When evil is contemplated, the devil often quickly provides the means. Jonah ran from his God-given obligation; the ship and passage money were available for a hasty flight (Jonah 1:1-3).
 - 2) Mark 14:10-11: "And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him."
 - 3) Luke 22:3-6: "Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude."
 - d. Not long before in John 12, Judas had been reprov'd for his complaint made against the "wasting" of some valuable ointment which was lavished upon the body of Jesus, which, he argued, could have been sold and the proceeds given to the poor. We learned in that setting that the apostle John accused Judas of being a thief, purloining from the treasury of the little group some of the money kept in that bag (John 12:1-6). This thievery reveals the worldly heart this man had developed. From the chief priests, his obtained the price of thirty pieces of silver, as a bribe to betray Christ.
 - e. Jesus quietly told Judas to do that which he was intending to do that quickly. He left immediately on that wicked work. It was already too late for Judas to reform his life, his evil intentions were so deeply seated. We are told by John that no one at the table heard what Jesus had said to Judas; they thought that since he carried the group's money bag, that the Lord told him to go out and buy something.
 - f. We later see that he regretted what he had done, but instead of genuinely repenting, he hanged himself.
 - 1) Matthew 27:3-7: "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in."
-

- 2) Acts 1:16-20: "Brethren, it was needful that the Scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered among us, and received his portion in this ministry. (Now this man obtained a field with the reward of his iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch that in their language that field was called Akeldama, that is, The field of blood.) For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be made desolate, And let no man dwell therein: and, His office let another take" (ASV),

D. John 13:30-35: The Son of Man to be Glorified.

1. Verses 30-32: "He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night. 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."
 - a. Judas received the sop [ate it] and went out immediately into the night. He may have been very angry over what the Lord had said to him. It was after the Passover meal was over that Judas left the room; it was after his departure that the Lord's Supper was instituted. The betrayer never had the opportunity to partake of this glorious feast. He was now on his mission to fulfill his wicked plan to lead the enemy to where he knew the Lord could be found.
 - b. After Judas left the upper room, the Lord said "now" the Son of man is glorified. He was fully aware what was about to be transacted; he would be accosted by the posse, guided by Judas, and arrested in the garden; he would be then led into the city where his awful ordeal would be brought to its conclusion. The Lord would get no sleep that night; only cruelty, scourging, and execution lay ahead.
 - c. But following his humiliation and agony of the night and the next day, his spirit would leave his mortal body in death; his body would be tenderly removed from the cross and placed in the new tomb, where it would remain until early on the first day of the week. His resurrection would begin his unending glorification. In completing his earthly mission, the Father would also be glorified.
 - d. Think on these words:
 - 1) Woods: "Now," in this very hour while Judas was pursuing his course of betrayal, Jesus and the Father were being glorified, i. e., made to appear glorious. The events preceding, including and following, the cross all served to glorify the Father and the Son in that they were a part of his mission to the world of sinful men and necessary to the salvation thereof. The cross for him came before the crown, and from it he was to go to the Father in the ultimate glorification which was to be his. His Father would share in this glory because it was the will of the Father that he should come into the world to suffer and to die and the glorification which came to him in these events was also to be characteristic of the Father. These facts were by him affirmed in connection with the exposure and departure of Judas because the betrayal initiated the events leading to his death, his resurrection, his ascension and his coronation. His work on earth would soon end. [p.296].
 - 2) Schaff: "I in the Father; the Father in me; I in the believer; the believer in me; I came from my Father in heaven; I fulfilled his will on earth; I now return to my Father, and prepare a place for my disciples in the many mansions of my Father's house that they may be where I am and share my glory."
 2. Verse 33: "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. Even though some of the eleven apostles may have been older in years than was Jesus, yet he called them "little children." Compared to the Son of God, they were truly little and as helpless in spiritual concerns as little children are in this world. They had to depend on Christ just as our little ones had to depend on us, as parents.
 - b. We will learn in the following chapters of John (14-16) the plans he had for instructing,
-

- empowering, and guiding the apostles in receiving all truth. That power would come upon them on the Pentecost Day of Acts two. They would not be left alone; they were not to depend on their fallible memories.
- c. In this verse, he told them that he would be with them for only a little while—for a short time during the night yet remaining, until he was arrested and taken away. But after his resurrection, he would be with them much of the forty days which were to pass before his ascension. The “little while” of John 7:33 would cover about six months of his remaining ministry.
 - d. “Observe the tenderness of the term applied to his disciples, a term applied nowhere else except in 1 John 2: 1. 12. He had told the Jews (7: 34; 8: 21) that he would go away and they could not follow him. So now he says to his disciples, but he comforts them by the assurance (14: 3) that he will return for them” (Johnson, p.214).
 - e. In John 14, Christ will promise them that where he is going, they would be able to go also—but not soon. That journey will be after the resurrection of the last day, the Judgment, and the final separation of all humanity (Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 24:15; Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 4:16-18).
 - f. 1 Corinthians 15:24: “Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power.”
3. Verses 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.”
- a. This new commandment regarding love was not the first time this requirement had been made. “Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah” (Lev. 19:18, ASV). This command was made to the people of Israel, whereas the demand of the present text is issued to all Christians.
 - b. The newness of this commandment is to be found in its degree and scope. We are to love one another as Christ loves us.
 - c. Romans 13:10: “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”
 - 1) Paul summarizes the point of this passage by saying, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor.” Stated positively, he teaches that love seeks the best interests of its object. If we love another person as we ought, we will not wish him any harm, we will do him no harm, our words and deeds toward him will be such as we would want for ourself.
 - a) Matthew 7:12: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”
 - b) Mark 12:30-31: “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”
 - d. How is love expressed:
 - 1) We show our love for God by doing what he says: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” (1 John 5:3).
 - 2) We show love for others by having no ill-will toward them, by the willing of good toward them, by doing nothing to harm them, by doing good to them. We want the best for them.
 - e. Romantic love cannot be commanded with expectation of success; it must develop. A good, warm feeling toward a rogue cannot be commanded with expectation of success. There are some people we would not want to be around, because of their being uncouth, dangerous, sinful, criminal, use foul language, etc. But we can still love them: we will have no malice toward them, we will not assault them, but we can wish the best for them; we can set a good Christian example before them and endeavor to teach them the gospel.
 - f. We are to have and demonstrate love for other Christians.
-

- 1) 1 John 3:16: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” This expresses our willingness to suffer for another.
- 2) By loving other saints, others can see that we are truly the disciples of Christ. When a pagan [then] or an unbeliever [now] sees some manifestation of our love to the other disciples, that will be evidence we are Christians.
- 3) Woods:
 - a) Love is to be a mark or token by which Christians may be distinguished from people of the world. These distinguishing features do not include manner of dress, nor peculiarity of speech—these distinctions may easily be counterfeited—but by love the only characteristic of Christians which Satan cannot fabricate!
 - b) Historians of the early church have often directed attention to the fact that the love Christians exhibited was utterly without parallel in the heathen world.
 - c) Tertullian's famous statement well illustrates this: "The heathen are wont to exclaim with wonder, 'See how these Christians love one another!' for they (the heathen) hate one another; 'and how they are ready to die for one another!' for they (the heathen) are more ready to kill one another." (Apol. 39.) [p.298].

E. John 13:36-38: Peter Wanted to Know Where the Lord Was Going.

1. Verse 36: “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.”
 - a. The work that Christ came to do was about to be completed; forty days after his resurrection he would return to his eternal home with the Father. His work would soon be finished, but their work was only about to begin.
 - b. Peter’s knowledge was not ripe; neither that of the other apostles. Ten days after his leaving the earth, the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).
 - c. Their understanding of John 14:1-3 became clear: “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.”
 2. Verse 37: “Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.”
 - a. Peter said he was willing to lay his life down for the Lord, therefore he asked, “Why cannot I follow thee now?” Doubtless he was sincere in his statement.
 - b. “It was very hard for Peter to give up. He was impetuous, generous and self-willed. His conduct now was characteristic of the man. Christ has spoken of death; Peter declares that he will die too for his Master's sake” (Johnson, p.215). For him to die now would not make it possible for him to accompany or follow the Lord now. It was not Peter’s death that the Lord sought, but a life of service.
 - c. John 21:17-19: “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 girdedst 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.” Christ made this statement to show Peter that he would die a martyr’s death. The Bible does not report the death of Peter.

3. Verse 38: “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.”
 - a. That Peter was honest in what he had said about willingly to die for the Lord. However, Jesus told him that he would deny knowing the Lord after a rooster had crowed a certain number of times.
 - b. After the arrest of Jesus, a trial was going on in a spacious chamber when Peter was present. “But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. 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” (Luke 22:56-62).
 - c. Christ knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. We must all be careful about thinking too highly of our inner strength.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”
 - 2) Romans 12:3: “For say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

John Chapter 14

A. John 14:1-4: The Promise of Heavenly Mansions.

1. Verse 1: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”
 - a. There were several critical matters which had surfaced in quick order, in the context of this chapter. These events would take place within a few hours of time.
 - 1) Jesus had announced that one of the twelve would betray him to his deadly enemies—this announcement would have sent pain through the other eleven apostles.
 - 2) He had told them that he would shortly depart from them.
 - 3) Judas had left the upper room, although the eleven did not know for what purpose. They would soon learn that he was on the despicable mission of leading a mob of men to arrest the Lord.
 - 4) The Lord had told them that they would forsake him, and that Peter would deny even knowing Jesus.
 - 5) After his betrayal, the Master would be forced to stand before several unlawful trials, which would end with his condemnation to death.
 - 6) He would then be led to Golgotha, where his crucifixion would take place.
 - b. It was, therefore, necessary for our Lord to strengthen the eleven for the upcoming tragedies. He knew that their faith in God was strong; he urged them to maintain their faith in him, as the Son of God. Their faith in him was about to be sorely tested; they would all show weakness of faith, but their faith would be brought back to even greater strength, following his resurrection. What Christian in our time has been as severely tried as was the faith of these men? What lay ahead of them was the fulfillment of the Great Commission before that generation passed from earthly scenes.
 - 1) Mark 16:17-20: “And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen.”
 - 2) Colossians 1:23: “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”
2. Verse 2: “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.”
 - a. The apostles would not be left without a home; they would sometimes on earth be homeless, with many deadly enemies. But there would be an eternal, heavenly home awaiting them. Even on earth, they would not be left without friends and fellowsaints.
 - 1) Mark 10:28-30: “Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.”
 - 2) While Paul and other apostles were moving about the Roman Empire, near or far from their homeland of Palestine, they might have no regular place to live, but there were many faithful saints who gladly would open their homes to them. Doubtless, this happened not only with the apostles, but with many other Christians who were traveling or fleeing from the enemy.
 - 3) Our lord willingly left all the comforts, glories and every pleasant circumstance to come to this place of sin, sorrow and suffering. Compare: “And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Matt.

- 8:20).
- b. These *mansions* are in Heaven, where the Almighty abides. It is not to be found on earth, despite the false claims of the Watchtower Witnesses and other Materialists. The earth will not be renewed at the Lord's return; it will be burned up, pass away, melt, dissolve, and degenerate into nothingness. It was made from nothing and would return to nothing—go completely out of existence.
- 1) 2 Peter 3:10-11: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."
 - 2) Hebrews 1:10-12: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."
 - a) This quotation is from Psalms 102:25-27: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end."
 - b) Continuing the figure, the Psalmist describes the universe and the heavens being folded up as one would fold up a garment. They shall be changed. That is, the present heaven and earth (universe) will be replaced by the new heavens and new earth. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Pet. 3:13-14). The "new heavens and new earth" is a biblical reference to heaven itself. The material creation will be no more.
- c. *Mansions* is a reference to abiding places.
- 1) Greek word: "primarily a staying abiding" (akin to *meno*, to abide), denotes an abode (Eng., manor, manse, etc.) [Vine].
 - 2) Woods: "So immense is heaven, and so numerous are the abiding-places there, all faithful disciples will be abundantly provided for. Were its extent so limited that some might be excluded from among his disciples he would have told them so; he would not have deceived them with false hopes or impossible expectations. For them there is room and eventually they would follow him to the Father's house and live in its mansions. To this place it was necessary for him to return; among the reasons, to prepare a place for them; and, as just as surely as he was to leave, he would return and take them to heaven where they were to live with him and with all other redeemed saints for ever. There is room! Oh, what a glorious promise!" (p.303).
- d. Our Lord affirmed that he was going there to prepare a place for them (and all the redeemed). He would not be using hammers and nails or cement. His means of preparing for them a place were his death, burial, resurrection and ascension back to his Father's house. He was about to prepare the way for them to make this passage from earth to Heaven.
- 1) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 2) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 3) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall
-

- be damned.”
- 4) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14: “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - 5) James 1:21: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”
 - 6) 2 Peter 1:3-11: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, **through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: **For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**”
3. Verse 3: “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.”
 - a. The Lord was not expressing any doubt by using the word “if”, but was affirming that since he was going in order to prepare a place for them, he would certainly return to get them. Of course, he is speaking of his Second Coming, at the end of time.
 - b. In other passages, the “house of God” refers to the church of Christ. The apostles (and all other people who obey the gospel) would be in the church (Acts 2:36-47). The house in this text is where the Father dwells; it is Heaven, the Holy of Holies. Great prophecies were given which promised the establishment of God’s house, the church, including the following:
 - 1) Isaiah 2:1-4: “The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”
 - 2) Micah 4:1-3: “But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”
 - 3) Matthew 16:16-19: “And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto
-

thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

- 4) 1 Timothy 3:15: “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the **house of God**, which is the **church of the living God**, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
- c. To further encourage the apostles that they should endure the upcoming great troubles, the Master told them that he was preparing the place for them in Heaven so they could be there with him. Of course, this same situation is also intended for all the redeemed at the end of time.
- 1) Philippians 1:23: “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.”
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 4:14: “Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.”
4. Verse 4: “And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.”
- a. Christ had often spoken to the apostles about returning to the Father in Heaven. In this very context, he had stated directly that he was soon to go to his Father’s house, where there were many mansions. Compare: “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (Matt. 16:21).
 - 1) This is the Lord's first plain statement to his apostles about his coming death; scholars say this was about six months before his crucifixion. He had begun early in his ministry to make obscure references to it but they did not apprehend his meaning (cf. John 2:19-22; 3:14; Matt. 12:38-40).
 - 2) "He had wisely postponed a plain declaration on the subject until the faith of the disciples had taken the definite shape just indicated by Peter's confession (verse 16), and had acquired sufficient strength to endure the shock which this announcement gave" (McGarvey, *Matthew and Mark*, p.147).
 - b. They knew the place to which he was going—*whither I go*. “Jesus probably uttered these words to provoke questions such as follow. He was going to his Father from whom he came and the way by which he would go was the cross, the tomb, the resurrection, and the exaltation” [Lipscomb]. The apostles and other faithful saints would be obliged to endure hardships, persecutions and even death before they were prepared to enter Heaven.
 - 1) Romans 8:17-18: “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.”
 - 2) 2 Timothy 3:12: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”
 - 3) Matthew 20:22-23: “But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.” *This baptism was that of suffering.*

- c. The Lord bluntly stated that the world hated him, and thus was altogether willing to persecute him even unto death. Since the disciples are not greater than the Master, so the world will hate them also. "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" (John 15:20).

B. John 14:5-7: Thomas Had a Question.

1. Verse 5: "Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"
 - a. Thomas raised a question of significance, but which was strange in view of the Lord's previous remark. A perceptive mind could have already grasped the truth that, since the Lord had come from Heaven, and had announced his intention of returning to his Father, it would obviously be the case that he would return to Heaven.
 - b. If he had perceived this truth, he would still not know how he and the other apostles were to go there. "He was perplexed by the Lord's reference to many mansions in the Father's house; he was confused and uncertain about why it was necessary for the Lord to leave them and he could not understand why Jesus could accomplish his work only by going away. He was still seeking to fathom the Lord's plan on the basis of human judgment thus walking by sight and not by faith" (Woods).
2. Verse 6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - a. In response to the question Thomas asked, the Lord declared that no one could be with the Father except by the way which Jesus would prepare. If any one wants to go to Heaven, where the Father resides, he can do so only through the method the Messiah was about to establish. If one desires to have fellowship with the Father, that communion can only be had through Christ.
 - b. Christ is here declared to be the Way.
 - 1) Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
 - 4) Ephesians 2:11-13: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
 - c. Not only is Christ the way, he is also the Truth. He is the embodiment of truth.
 - 1) He brought God's final revelation to humanity.
 - a) John 1:17-18: "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."
 - b) Hebrews 1:1-4: "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; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
 - 2) God now speaks through his Son, with all the significance of that great reality.

- a) Matthew 7:28: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine."
- b) John 7:46: "The officers answered, Never man spake like this man."
- 3) The Son and his message are greater than the prophets and their messages.
 - a) John 6:68-69: "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."
 - b) Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
 - c) Ephesians 1:11: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."
- 4) Through the work of the Son, the New Covenant was delivered to mankind.
 - a) Jeremiah 31:31-34: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Cf. Hebrews 8:1-13.
 - b) Galatians 3:19-25: "Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one, but God is one. *Is* the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."
 - c) Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
- d. Further, he is declared to be the Life.
 - 1) John 10:10: "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."
 - 2) John 1:11-12: "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."
 - 3) 1 John 5:11: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."
 - a) God has born record that he has given his people life in his Son. If one is in the Son, then

that person has eternal life; one who is not in the Son does not have eternal life. God gave testimony; the testimony which he gave is with reference to eternal life; this eternal life is in his Son.

- b) John 17:3: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”
- c) Colossians 3:3-4: “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”
- 4) Woods: He is the Word, the personification of all saving truth; and he is also "the life," being its source and its preserver. His statement is conclusive and exhaustive. He is the only way, the total demonstration of deity to the world, and the one in whom alone is eternal life to be received. [p.304].
- e. Faithful Christians have eternal life now, but in promise and in hope [1 John 2:25; Titus 1:2].
3. Verse 7: “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.”
 - a. By this Jesus does not intend to say that they were not truly his disciples, but that they had not a full and accurate knowledge of his character and designs. They still retained, to a large extent, the Jewish notions respecting a temporal Messiah, and did not fully understand that he was to die and be raised from the dead. You would have known the counsels and designs of my Father respecting my death and resurrection. If you had been divested of your Jewish prejudices about the Messiah, if you had understood that it was proper for me to die, you would also have understood the purposes and plans of God in my death; and, knowing that, you would have seen that it was wise and best [Barnes].
 - b. The twelve had been with Jesus for three years or more, and still their comprehension was limited. This is no more than we should expect of them, with their incomplete knowledge at this point. Their greatly expanded knowledge would begin once they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Pentecost Day of Acts chapter two.
 - c. They were about to learn that Jesus presented to them a demonstration of the nature of the Father. If Jesus were to be removed from the proposition, we could have an incomplete perception of the Almighty. Our Lord had already spoken to them of how close the Father and the Son were. The following verses are from the American Standard Version:
 - 1) John 6:44-45: “No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me.”
 - 2) John 7:16: “Jesus therefore answered them and said, My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me.”
 - 3) John 10:30: “I and the Father are one.”
 - d. “Thomas' query evidenced the fact that he and his fellow-disciples had not really understood (known) Jesus in spite of their devotion and dedication to him and that only through clear apprehension of him could they know the Father. Now, however, they were beginning, even though vaguely, to see the spiritual nature of the Lord's work, and as their apprehension of this developed there would be a corresponding increase of their true knowledge of the Father. Jesus is the interpreter of the Father to the world, being in his express image and possessed of the same nature. (John 1:14-18; Heb. 1:3; Phil. 2:5-11.) We should be deeply impressed that it is possible for us to have a true impression of God only as we see it exhibited in Christ” (Woods, p.305).
- C. John 14:8-14: Show Us the Father.
 1. Verse 8: “Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him.”
 - a. Moses asked to see God's glory: “And he said, Show me, I pray thee, thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

And he said, Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live. and Jehovah said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon the rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by: and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back; but my face shall not be seen” (Ex. 33:18-23).

- b. Could it have been the case that Philip was asking to see some overt manifestation of the Father? If so, it was not to be. We will soon learn, after the Lord’s resurrection, that Thomas demanded to thrust his hand into the wounded side of Jesus before he would believe that Christ had been raised. In that place [John 20:24-29], Thomas was seeking proof of the resurrection. When he saw, he believed:
 - c. Doubtless, there are many today walk by sight, and not by faith.
 - 1) Romans 10:17: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
 - 2) Acts 15:7: “And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.”
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 5:7: “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”
 - 4) John 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 hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, 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 see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (ASV).
 - d. Johnson: “The disciples were not only confused but filled with wonder; almost stupefied with the immediate prospect of the death of the Lord, but still had some expectation of the manifestation, in some way, of the kingdom. Philip's request is for a vision of God, of which he may have thought that Christ spoke. He wanted to walk by sight, instead of by faith” [p219]. [*Just show us the Father, and that will suffice us—that is all we want!*].
2. Verses 9-10: “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, Shew 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.”
 - a. Woods:
 - 1) “Were it possible, which it was not, to have a physical sight of deity in essence or nature (John 1; 14-18), this would have revealed little, or nothing, about the character of God or his attributes; to know the Father really it was necessary to see him in the revelation which his Son made to the world.
 - 2) “And, as it is not possible to know the Father except as he is revealed through the Son, in like manner it is not possible to apprehend the true nature of the Son without a clear conception of the Father and the Son's innermost relation to him. Each possessed, in equal measure, the divine nature; thus, to know one was to know the other.
 - 3) “It was this which prompted the Lord to say to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," because the Father was revealed in him. By this it is meant that he who has seen the love of the Son for mankind has seen the love of the Father to the same extent, since this love was exhibited to the world through the Son. (John 3:16.) So, also, of every other divine characteristic” (p.306).
 - b. We are told in sacred writ that God is Spirit (John 4:24); a spiritual being cannot be seen by

material eye-sight (Luke 24:39). We are also told that no man can see God and live (Ex. 33:20). What Moses was enabled to see was a manifestation of God, not God Himself. In the Transfiguration scene (Matt. 17; Mark 9; Luke 9), Peter, James and John beheld the manifestation of the transformed body of Jesus. Evidently, this was as he is to appear at his return:

- 1) "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 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. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:1-3).
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:16-19: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."
- c. The "One-ness" religious doctrine mistakenly takes the statement, "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," as meaning that God and Christ are the same person, that there is only one person in the Godhead. Many biblical truths expose this doctrine as false. See notes under John 1:1-3. Our Lord is declaring here that when Philip and the others who have been with Christ and had seen him in word and in deed, were seeing a demonstration of what the Father is like.
- 1) John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."
 - 2) 1 John 4:12: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."
 - 3) 1 John 1:1-4: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."
 - 4) John 17:3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."
- d. Lipscomb: "Jesus entered into a more minute statement of the oneness of himself with the Father. *The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works.* The oneness is so complete that the words of Jesus came from the Father and God dwelling in Jesus did the works done by Jesus. Jesus was the human body in which God dwelled and through which he spoke and worked. [The personalities of the Son and the Father was perfect union, and we may never on earth comprehend fully its nature, but we can understand it to be so complete that he was the manifestation of God in the flesh.]"
- e. Fourfold Gospel: "As Thomas asked for a physical instead of a spiritual approach to God, so Philip asked for a physical instead of a spiritual revelation of him. The answer of Jesus tenderly rebukes Philip. The excellency of God is not physical, but spiritual. Righteousness, truth, love, holiness, etc. are all spiritual. A physical revelation of God, if such a thing had been practicable or even possible, would have been of little or no benefit to the apostles. All the physical demonstrations at Mt. Sinai did not prevent the manufacture and worship of the golden calf."
- f. Woods:
- 1) It is important to observe the close correlation between the Lord's words and works as indicated
-

- in this verse. They constitute two proofs of his relationship with the Father, the words showing identity in thought, the works in power. (John 3:34; 5:19; 6:62.)
- 2) In his talks with unbelieving Jews, the relationship between the Father and the Son was shown to prove his divine mission; here, to enable his disciples to understand the spiritual relationship existing between him and his Father. He would have them know that so close was the union obtaining between them that he did not speak apart from the Father, i. e., independently of him; and the works that he did were in reality the works of the Father through him.
 - 3) When it is said that the Father abides in the Son this does not mean, as some allege, that the Father and the Son are the same person; what is meant is that so united were they in nature, character, intent and work that the action of the one was also the action of the other.
 - 4) When Paul wrote, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27), he did not mean that the Colossians and Christ were the same, in person, but that Christ worked through them to the accomplishment of his will on earth.
3. Verses 11-12: "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."
- a. The Lord had more than sufficiently taught the twelve that he and the Father were perfectly in concert with each other. Without this knowledge and the acceptance of the same the apostles would not be fully prepared to carry out the great mission that was about to descend upon them. With their reception of Holy Spirit baptism on the Pentecost of Acts two, they would obtain all the information essential. But already they should know and believe that Christ was in the Father, and Father was in him.
 - b. If they were unable to fathom this profound truth, they could perceive it by miraculous works he had done in their presence. On the limited commission which they had earlier conducted, they had been given certain supernatural powers to use. When the seventy disciples returned from their part of this mission, they were ecstatic: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name" (Luke 10:17).
 - c. But on the Great Commission, of which the twelve apostles [plus Paul] were to accomplish, beginning in Acts two, their work would be more extensive than that of the Lord's personal ministry. His disciples at one time during his work, amounted to a great number, but many of these went back to their former ways (John 6:59-69). Following the Lord's ascension (Acts 1:9-11), the disciples at first gathered in the famous upper room in Jerusalem; their number was placed at one hundred and twenty (Acts 1:15). We are not told the number of faithful disciples he had throughout Palestine.
 - d. Brother Woods suggested that the Lord had about five hundred disciple from his personal ministry; this number may refer to those who remained faithful. If that is the case, that number was exceeded many fold by the conversions on Pentecost Day and in the following weeks:
 - 1) Acts 2:41: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."
 - 2) Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."
 - e. Our Lord's work was limited to Palestine, and only unto the Jews. But the apostles were directed to go throughout the world, they and those who were converted by them. The apostles had more converts than did our Lord, and their range of their field of work was not limited to any given locality.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the
-

- world. Amen.”
- 2) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - 3) Luke 24:47: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
 - 4) Acts 8:1, 4: “And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles....Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”
 - 5) Colossians 1:5, 23: “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel....If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”
- f. The basis for their world-wide mission, authority and guidance is the fact the Lord was to return to the Father.
- 1) John 14:26: “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.”
 - 2) John 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.”
 - 3) John 16:13-16: “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. 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.”
 - 4) Mark 16:17-20: “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”
4. Verses 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.”
- a. Woods:
 - 1) To ask "in" his name, is to ask in the manner he authorizes. The Lord never gave an unconditional promise of affirmative response to prayer. Quite obviously, to have done so, would have put him at the mercy of every ignorant and greedy soul who prayed.
 - 2) Prayer, to avail, must be in his name; not, of course, in the mere mention of his name as in some magic formula, but in what the name implies—he being the only way to the Father. Prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ glorifies the Father because the Father would answer prayer thus prayed, showing his approval.
 - 3) Verse 14 repeats the promise and the condition of verse 13, so that it may ever be apparent that there is the closest union between the Father and the Son as seen in the fact that a petition through the name of the latter brings immediate response from the former. [p.310].
 - b. Johnson: What man would dare to make such a promise? It will be noted that in order to enjoy the fulness of these glorious promises we must,
-

- 1) Believe. It is limited thus in verse 12. Without faith it is impossible to please God.
 - 2) We must ask in his name, or, in dependence upon the merit and intercession of Christ.
 - 3) As shown elsewhere, we must come with a spirit of complete submission to the Father's will, feeling that his will is best, and saying in our hearts, Thy will be done. Every prayer "in the name," must be done. Every prayer "in the name," must be in the spirit of Christ, and that always says, "Not my will but thine be done." [p.220].
- c. Of course, we understand that the Lord's statement here was directed to the apostles, as are many other matters he discussed in the context of John 14-16. It is generally assumed that the promise relating to prayer in the immediate text applies to all of the faithful followers of Christ. However, we must make distinctions between the items which clearly apply only to the apostles. When the Lord stated that the Holy Spirit would infallibly bring back to their remembrance of the things He had taught them during his ministry, we are expected to perceive that he is not making this promise to us.
- d. Comments from Johnson:
- 1) There was but one place of safety when the flood came—the ark. There was but one man to whom the Egyptians could go for corn during the famine—Joseph. There was but one way to keep off the angel of death on the Passover night—the way of the sprinkled blood. There was but one word that could save the Ephraimites at Jordan's ford (Judges 11)—the word Shibboleth. So there is but one name that hath power to save men now—the name of Jesus. J. O. Ryle.
 - 2) If men need not to go to heaven by the Cross, but by some other way, then the Cross may become an old, worn, unused way; no footfall of a traveler may cheer it, heaven may be filled through other avenues, and other songs than those of Praise to the Lamb may echo through the arches of the Upper Temple. If Christ is not the exclusive Savior, then other Saviors could be made without the Cross, and the Cross is all an idle waste. We are lost men outside of God's kingdom. There is a way into it—Jesus Christ. There is a name, one name, given whereby we can be saved—that name is Jesus. There has come from the sweet heavens over us no other. It is enough. We need no other. —J. Drummond.
- D. John 14:15-21: To Love Me Is To Keep My Commandments.
1. Verse 15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (ASV).
 - a. Woods: The verb in the clause, "If ye love me," is present active subjunctive; literally, "if ye keep on loving me, ye will keep my commandments." The test of genuine love is the keeping of the commandments. It is idle for one to profess love for him, while refusing to do what he said.
 - 1) 1 John 5:3: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
 - 2) 1 John 2:3-5: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."
 - b. Lipscomb gives here the fruit and test of their love to him. If they loved him as their Lord and Master, they would cherish and obey his commandments. This is the divine test of love. Love as God views it is practical and embodies the actions of the whole man. And the test and proof of love is the desire to do the will and seek the honor of the one whom we love. To do God's will, to do it because it is the will of God, is God's test. Let us apply it.
 - c. Consider these passages:
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."
 - 2) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom
-

- of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
- 3) Hebrews 5:8-9: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”
 - 4) Revelation 22:14: “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”
2. Verses 16-17: “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.”
 - a. *I will pray the Father*: Rather "request" the Father. There are three Greek verbs used in the New Testament which mean respectively, "request," "ask," and "entreat." Christ never uses the last in his petitions to the Father. It belongs to the petitions of the creature to the Creator. [see Johnson].
 - b. The Lord had frequently told his apostles about returning to his Father; they had been unable to grasp the full significance of his leaving the earth and them behind. Here he brings to their knowledge that though he would soon be gone from their presence, yet he would send them another *Comforter*.
 - c. Woods:
 - 1) The promise of "another Comforter" clearly implies they already had one; and John, in the first of the epistles that bears his name, identifies Christ as a comforter also. (1 John 2:1.) There, the word advocate translates the same Greek word (*paraklete*) as "comforter" does here.
 - 2) There is no exact equivalent in English for the word thus rendered. Etymologically, it signifies to call to one's side: and in usage, to comfort, encourage, aid, counsel and assist; and also, to plead in behalf of another.
 - 3) The *paraklete* is thus a comforter, an advocate, a helper, a counselor, a teacher, an intercessor and an exhorter. It will be seen, therefore, that it is a word of rich and varied meaning and, for this reason, chosen to designate the many functions of Christ and the Holy Spirit in their work for men. Those expositors who limit it to advocacy restrict its meaning far too much. It appears only in the writings of John. (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2: 1.) [p.311].
 3. Verse 18: “I will not leave you comfortless.” “I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you” (ASV).
 - a. This same word (comfortless, desolate) is used in James 1:27: “Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the *fatherless* and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (ASV).
 - b. The apostles and other disciples were overwhelmed when the Lord was crucified and his body buried and secured by the awesome Roman seal. The might of Rome was invincible to any earthly power; it was death to anyone who broke that seal.
 - c. However, if they had remembered the Lord's promise in this verse, their feelings of desolation could have been quickly erased! Under the tremendous pressure of the awful events related to the arrest of Jesus, the trials he faced, the scourging, and the quickly following crucifixion, their immediate hopes were shattered. Peter even announced that he was going back to his fishing business: “Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee. They went forth, and entered into the boat; and that night they took nothing” (John 21:3, ASV). To the human eye, the great work of the Messiah would appear to have failed.
 - d. Notice that they had absolutely no success in catching fish during their night of labor. As one reads more of the context, Christ appeared unto them and stirred up their faith and hope again! He had indeed come again to them here, as he did on other occasions during the forty days following his resurrection. These appearances were brief and were completed in only a few weeks. The return
-

of the Lord would be much longer-lasting: “Even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). His influence on them would last until the end of the miraculous age; following that time, the all-sufficient, all-powerful, and ever-lasting gospel would continue.

- 1) Matthew 24:35: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
 - a) The coming the Lord meant in our present text, would be done on the first Pentecost, following his resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:1-4).
 - b) The statement here shows at least two things: the earth is not eternal and the Lord's words are unshakable. In nature, the universe and the earth seem to be the most stable and permanent of all. But the Lord affirmed that these would not always be (Cf. 2 Pet. 3:10; Heb. 12:25-29). Paul described material things as temporal and the things which cannot be seen as eternal (2 Cor. 4:16-18). Genesis 8:22 implies that the earth will have a limited history ("while the earth remaineth").
 - c) Just as surely as his words will never have an end, just that certain will the end of Jerusalem come as he had just explained [in Matt. 24]. But his gospel would be age-lasting!
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:21-25: “Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
 - e. It was on this momentous occasion that Christ sent to them the second Comforter, the Holy Spirit. The information he had conveyed to them in John 14-16 included much information and many promises about this event. Also, notice:
 - 1) Acts 1:5: “For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.”
 - 2) Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
 - 3) Acts 2:1-4: “And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”
 - 4) Acts 2:16-18: “But this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams: Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.”
 - f. The Lord is not here referring to his Second Coming, for then everyone on earth shall see and hear his arrival.
 - 1) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”
 - 2) Revelation 1:7: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”
4. Verses 19-20: “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.” NKJ: "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

- a. Before dawn on this very night, the enemy would arrest Jesus in Gethsemane, his place of refuge, having his location exposed by his erstwhile disciple, Judas. He would be unlawfully tried during the night, and brought before Pilate early the next morning. After his trials and crucifixion, his body would be buried, not to be seen again by the world [until his Second Coming, of course].
 - b. “The day following he was crucified; thenceforth the unbelieving with whom he had reasoned for many months in an effort to turn them from their fatal course would behold him no more; his appearances, following his resurrection from the dead, would be to his disciples only. They would see him with their physical eyes and more, they would behold him in his spiritual manifestations and the immortal life which was in him would be theirs also” (Woods, p.313).
 - c. The apostles of Christ did not come to the full understanding of the eternal plan until the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2); and even then, not every particle of truth was revealed; and at least one thing Peter uttered on that day, he did not fully grasp:
 - 1) Acts 2:39: “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” The gospel is intended for every accountable person, without regard to his national or racial standing—both Jews and Gentiles were proper subjects to it.
 - 2) Galatians 2:11-14: Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, “If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?” (NKJV).
 - 3) Peter learned this great truth during his experiences at the house of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).
 - 4) The great events that occurred on that occasion convinced the Jewish Christians of this same truth: “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18).
 - d. After the full revelation of the New Covenant was presented, then all who read, study and comprehend its truths can perceive God the Father and Christ his Son are unbreakably bound, and to be in Christ, is to be in fellowship with the Father.
 - 1) Galatians 2:20: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”
 - 2) Ephesians 4:6: “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”
 - 3) 1 John 1:3: “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”
 - 4) John 10:30: “I and my Father are one.”
 - 5) 1 John 1:7: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”
 5. Verse 21: “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.”
-

- a. Johnson: The conditions upon which Christ may be present in each soul, seen and enjoyed, are next shown. As before seen, obedience and love are essential. "Hath" the commandments implies more than a mere possession of them. It implies that they are clearly apprehended. This must be the case before one can be said to "keep" them. This verse gives the same idea as verse 15, but in a converse form. There active obedience is seen to follow as the result of love. Love is the cause, and obedience the effect. Here the effect is placed first and traced back to its cause. The active obedience is a proof of love. [pp.223f].
- b. This verse is spoken directly to the apostles. It was incumbent upon them to Love God and his Son; they would demonstrate their love by sincerely doing what they were instructed to do—faithfully follow the will of God. Of course, the principle of the matter applies to all who would be pleasing and blessed by the Lord. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha" (1 Cor. 16:22).
- c. The manifestation the apostles would be given of the presence of the Divinity would be, first, their being enabled to perform miraculous deeds; further, as Paul and Silas were traveling westward through Asia Minor, the Holy Spirit forbade them to turn either north or south, but to continue ahead to Troas; there they were instructed to go on into Macedonia (Acts 16:6-16). Through revelation, through miracles, and through providence, the Apostles of Christ were guided.
- d. Woods: "To have the commandments is to treasure them in one's heart; to keep them, is to obey them fully. Thus, the requirement is more than a slavish adherence to a set of rules or the outward mechanical conformity to a plan neither understood nor appreciated, but an intelligent, meaningful and precious conformity to the commandments because of him who imposed them. Through such faithful conformity to his will the obedient one will be privileged to have an awareness of the presence of Christ in his heart and his life. It is in this way, and in no other, that the Revealer of truth, the Holy Spirit, abides in the heart, as also the Father and the Son" (p.314).
- e. Lipscomb:
 - 1) Love as presented by Jesus is not a mere sentiment. but it is a living, active principle. "For this is the love of God. that we keep his commandments." (1 John 5: 3.) So he makes the keeping of the commandments of God the test of their love for him. Man needs a test to try his love for God. When do I love him sufficient to be accepted of him is a question that will frequently come up to the believer. Jesus gives the test: If we are willing to do what he commands us to please him, he will accept us. He gives commands that man can see no wisdom in, and that are humiliating that he may be sure he keeps the command from a desire to obey God.
 - 2) [Jesus repeats his crucial test of love. It is of the highest importance to us that we shall not overlook this pregnant utterance and substitute for obedience emotional ecstasies.]

E. John 14:22-26: The Comforter Will Be the Holy Spirit.

1. Verse 22: "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?"
 - a. John makes it clear to us that the Judas who raised the question in this verse was not the one known as Judas Iscariot, the Lord's betrayer. The Judas of this passage is also called Thaddaeus and Labbaeus [Woods, p.315]. Others think he is the one called Simon, the Canaanite or Judas the son of James.
 - b. The question: How are you going to manifest yourself to us, but not unto the world?
 - 1) Woods: Judas, obsessed with the idea that it was the intention of Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom, was totally confused by his statement that soon the world would see him no more and his question was designed to determine why he had altered so greatly his original plans. How could he have a kingdom and throne and a retinue of servants and not be seen? Of course no change in plan had been made; the Lord was not responsible for the erroneous views which Judas held regarding the kingdom and the difficulty was of his own making. [p.315]. See also Johnson, p.224.

- 2) It was through the apostles that Christ would reveal the New Covenant and work out the eternal plan. Thus, only the Lord's apostles would receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. No alien sinner would receive this authority and power; neither would the members of the church in general receive it. **See the comments by Franklin Camp below for details.**
2. Verse 23: "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."
 - a. The world [accountable individuals out of Christ] could receive the benefits of the gospel if they were to develop genuine love for Christ. That love can be demonstrated by sincere obedience to his gospel. If this is true of those folks, then the Father will also love them, and both the Father and the Son would make their abode with them.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-15: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) 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."
 - 3) Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Only the individual has the power to open the door: Christ will not and cannot do so because of the nature of his will. An artist has pictured this scene and showed the only doorknob as being on the inside.
 - b. Among the fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal. 5:22-23). Here, Paul states that the abundant presence of love is directly connected to the indwelling of Christ, who resides in our hearts by faith. To have the Spirit within us is equated to having Christ within us. But neither of these dwell in us personally, as is seen by the statement itself.
 - 1) Christ dwells in our hearts by faith.
 - 2) Faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17).
 - 3) Christ dwells in our hearts as we learn, believe, and follow the teachings of God's word. This is the same method by which the Spirit dwells in our hearts (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18-19).
 - c. Compare: "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). The heart of the plan is expressed as "Christ in you, the hope of glory." If Christ is in a person, he has hope of glory (the glory that is given in heaven).
 - d. "Without being fitted and qualified in character for that glory none can attain to it, none could enjoy it if it were attained. Christ Jesus as he lived here on earth is the perfect pattern of the life fitted to attain and enjoy that glory with God. Christ within us makes us like Christ in life, like him in fidelity to God and his will. Like him in cherishing humility, love, goodwill, and kindness to man. Like him in seeking happiness by denying self to make others happy. Like him in repressing evil thoughts and desires within our own souls, and cherish those who are pure and true and good. Like him in practicing the principles that dwelt in his own breast. Faith is the means given us by which to lift our souls up to Christ that he may dwell in and work through us. But unless he dwells in our heart through faith, reproducing in our lives the life of the Son of God, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins, we are without God and without hope in the world" (Lipscomb, p.269). See also 2 Peter 1:5-11.
 - e. To speak of Christ being in us is equal to saying that we are in Christ. The point in each statement is that the individual and Christ are united.
 - 1) Deity dwells in us only to the extent that the will of heaven guides and molds us. Ephesians 3:17 states plainly that Christ dwells in the faithful by faith. Faith is developed by the impact of God's word on our hearts (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7).
 - 2) It follows that God and the Holy Spirit dwell in us in the same indirect manner:
 - a) Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the

- Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord (ASV)”
- b) Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
- f. Wallace:
- 1) In the Christian System, on page 49, Campbell writes as follows "Christians are, therefore, clearly and unequivocally temples of the Holy Spirit; and they are quickened, animated, encouraged, and sanctified by the power and influence of the Spirit of God, working in them through the truth"—working in them through the truth.
 - 2) Here the proposition that he affirmed in debate with Rice—in conviction, conversion and sanctification the Holy Spirit operates only through the word—is applied to Christians.
 - 3) There are numerous whole quotations from his pen by which to prove that Campbell did not teach the indwelling of the Holy Spirit apart from the word. Nor did the "majority of the pioneers" so teach, as has been asserted. Alexander Campbell and others have been misrepresented on the Holy Spirit question, by incomplete quotations, as we shall show in a later section of this treatise. (*Gospel For Today*, p.610).
3. Verse 24: “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.”
- a. If one does not love Christ, he will not be obey the gospel of Christ. It is also the case that that same person is likewise disobedient to the word of God. To obey Christ is to obey the Father. To love Christ is to love the Father; to love the Father and the Son can be demonstrated only by doing what they say.
 - 1) “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3).
 - 2) “If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments” (John 14:15, ASV).
 - b. Refusing or neglecting to obey the Lord is produced from a heart that has no love for either the Father or the Son. It is easy for anyone to say, “I love God and I love Christ.” Words are easy to utter, but only obedience shows love.
4. Verses 25-26: “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.”
- a. Through the present section of John (John 14-16), the Lord prepares the apostles for his leaving the earth and returning to his Father. Doubtless, the fact that he was to depart from them raised grave concerns in their hearts. Therefore, he consoled them; he also revealed what would be done for them when the Comforter was sent to them.
 - 1) There were many other thing they needed to learn, but that mass of truth would be beyond their full comprehension: “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 16:12).
 - 2) The Holy Spirit would reveal these things when he began his work with the apostles of Christ beginning on the Pentecost Day of Acts chapter two. “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come” (John 16:13).
 - 3) The revelation would be given to them as certain new information was needed. “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away” (1 Cor. 13:9-10).
 - a) The New Testament was revealed part by part as the need arose and as they were able to grasp and use the new information, until finally the New Covenant had been completely
-

revealed and recorded. It was only after the entirety of the New Testament had been revealed that anyone had unlimited access to the will of Christ.

- b) That which is perfect is placed in contrast with that which is in part. When we determine what is meant by "that which is in part" we shall have learned the meaning of "that which is perfect." See James 1:25.
- b. Quote from Franklin Camp, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, pp.127f):
- 1) The Holy spirit as a Comforter was promised to the apostles to take the place of Christ. During the personal ministry of Christ, Christ was the teacher and guide of the apostles. When Christ returned to the Father, the Holy Spirit came to the apostles to take Christ's place with them. It would be as reasonable to claim that Christ appeared personally to one and trained and instructed him personally, as to pretend that one has the Holy Spirit as a Comforter as promised in these verses.
 - 2) The Holy Spirit as a Comforter was to equip the apostles for receiving the revelation of the gospel. If this promise of the Holy Spirit is to Christians in general, then there is no need for a written revelation. The Holy Spirit would furnish the revelation directly. The very fact that we have a completed, written revelation is proof that the promise of the Holy Spirit was not to Christians in general, nor to preachers of today in particular. One's knowledge of the revealed Word does not come by direct revelation, but through the revealed Word. One gains this knowledge by hearing the Word preached or by study.
 - 3) If these promises of the Holy Spirit applied today, the one who had the Holy Spirit could write a New Testament. This promise qualified the apostles to write the New Testament. Since it enabled the apostles to write a New Testament, it must follow that if one has the Comforter as promised in these verses, he could do the same thing that the apostles did; that is, write a New Testament. If not, why not?
 - 4) This promise of the Holy Spirit was made to the apostles before Pentecost. The promise of the Holy Spirit before Pentecost was the promise of Joel 2 and began at Pentecost. The promise of the Comforter is equal to the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the apostles. It would be just as scriptural today to promise one the baptism of the Holy Spirit as to hold out to him the idea that he could receive the Holy Spirit as a Comforter as based on these passages.
 - 5) Finally, it is vital to realize that the gospel had to be revealed and confirmed. The gospel was a strange and new doctrine in the world. The enemies of the gospel were many in number. The apostles had to face, not only audiences that were angry and turned into mobs, they had to face courts. In the midst of the discussion of the Holy Spirit as a Comforter, Christ reminds His apostles of this opposition: "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" (John 16:1-2).
 - a) When the apostles were called before magistrates for preaching the gospel, far more than the lives of the apostles were at stake. The integrity of the gospel preached by the apostles was also being laid on the line. The defense of the integrity of the gospel preached by the apostles is included in the promise of the Comforter. If the apostles could have been discredited, the gospel would have been discredited also.
 - b) A careful study of the book of Acts and the Epistles will establish this truth. Paul's defense of his apostleship in the Galatian letter was a defense also of the integrity of the gospel he proclaimed. It was this that was in Paul's mind—the integrity of the gospel—when as a prisoner in Rome he said, "I am set for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17). In view of this, notice carefully W.E. Vine's comment on the word "Comforter": "*Parakletos*, lit. called to one's side, i.e., to one's aid, is primarily a verbal adjective and suggests the capability or adaptability for giving aid. It is used in a court of justice to denote one who pleads another's cause, an intercessor, and advocate as in 1 John 2:1 of the Lord Jesus."
-

- c) The Holy Spirit as a Comforter in the apostles furnished the counsel for the defense when the apostles were called into court by the opposition of the Jews. The apostles were not simply defending themselves, but the gospel they preached.
- c. Our present text identifies the Comforter as the Holy Spirit; in this case, it is God who would send the Spirit; in John 15:26, the Lord said he would send the Spirit. In our text, Christ said the Father would send the Spirit in the name of Christ. The three members of the Godhead are perfectly united in all they say or do.
- d. Lipscomb (p.232): He was to teach all things needful to their well-being and to guide them into all truth, and to recall to their remembrance his teaching. Man is forgetful and a divine Monitor is sent to them to call to their memory all things he had taught them. The ground for their reliance on the certainty of the word of God is that the Spirit of God guided them into the truths stated. All departure from the word of God concerning entrance into the church and into Christ come from the idea that the Spirit teaches outside of the word of God. All additions to the church in its order, organization, and work come from the idea that the Spirit dwells in, guides, and directs the church apart from his teaching in and through the word of God. To give up the word of God as the only direction and guidance of the Spirit is to give loose reign to the dreams and imaginations, the reasonings, and philosophies of men as the directions of the Holy Spirit. It is to substitute these for the revelations of God when "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1: 21.)
- e. Wallace [*op cit*, pp.612f].
- 1) It is needless to repeat what no one disputes: That there is an indwelling of the Holy Spirit within the heart of a Christian and which operates in his life. But since no one denies it, the crux of the whole discussion is the *modus operandi*—the mode and the medium, or the how of the indwelling that abides within and the outgoing that flows without into the outward living.
 - 2) The answer is found in the Word of God, for without it we could not know anything about the Holy Spirit at all nor any of his workings, to which repeated references have been made in the less honoring term of "activities," which to me does not comport with the high office and exalted dignity of the Holy Spirit. It has a degrading effect and connotes a condescension incongruent with Deity....
 - 3) There are only two ways that the Holy Spirit could influence men; first, the immediate—it means no intermediary, no medium, a bearing down on the object without any intervening medium; second, the mediate—through an intervening instrument or agent by which a thing is accomplished, not direct. The immediate influence was upon the prophets of God and the apostles of Christ for the purpose of inspiration. The direct indwelling calls for the direct expression—for why a direct indwelling without the direct expression and guidance? The tongues movement is the immediate out-growth of that very thing, and the theory of direct indwelling is responsible for it. But the mediate influence of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of others than the inspired man is through the intervening instrument of the inspired word.

F. John 14:27-31: The Lord Would Leave Peace to Them.

1. Verse 27: "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."
 - a. The word *peace* was a common greeting among the Jewish people; it was also a parting word of good wishes. Johnson: "This is a solemn and affectionate farewell, in view of the cross, a parting benediction. As Isaac, about to depart, bestowed his blessing; as Jacob, 'leaning on the top of his staff,' blessed the twelve patriarchs, so the departing Lord will leave his peace to his disciples" (pp.225f).
 - b. In only a few hours, the Lord would be arrested in the garden, put on trial, condemned, and crucified. He is pronouncing a profound blessing upon the apostles; it was more than saying goodbye, but an invoking of divine protection in their behalf.
 - c. The peace of heaven is much more than we can provide for ourselves in this world. As the apostles went about preaching and teaching the gospel, they frequently met with much harsh opposition.
-

Our Lord had told them in Mark 13:11 that they would be furnished with inspired responses toward their enemies, and would not need to develop what they would say: “And when they lead you to judgment, and deliver you up, be not anxious beforehand what ye shall speak: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit” (Mark 13:11).

- 1) Their messages would be inspired and infallible, and unanswerable; they could be at perfect peace and utter calmness as they had these confrontations. During his personal ministry, Jesus never quailed in the face of hatred and violence; he was able to stand up to the Pharisees and Sadducee, Pilate, Herod and any other foe or mob, with this calm and peaceful demeanor.
 - 2) Luke 23:8-11: “And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.”
- d. Every faithful Christian can partake of this calmness and peace, although not to the degree of Christ and the apostles; we do not have miraculous gifts.
- 1) Philippians 4:6-7: “In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus” (ASV).
 - 2) Ephesians 2:12-17: “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*... And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”
 - 3) What finite mind can comprehend the peace God grants to the faithful saint? In days of persecution, the enemies could not understand how the Christians could face death without terror. In ordinary times, God’s faithful can face their troubles and uncertainties without terror. Peace is a gift of God, but it must be cultivated by the individual.
- e. The Lord told the disciples, and us, that we have nothing to really fear:
- 1) Matthew 10:28: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”
 - 2) Luke 12:4-7: “And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.”
- f. Therefore, as he stated at the beginning of this chapter, Let not your hearts be troubled. Here he also states that our inner being should not be fearful. Faithful, mature Christians are able to stand up to any great problem, without terror, and remain fully at peace within himself. In the days of persecution, we have learned of many saints who faced death with complete calmness. This willingness to die for the Lord had a very powerful effect on the unbelievers! The time may be approaching [today is December 9, 2021] when Christians in America may be called upon to prove their faith in extreme measures.
2. Verse 28: “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.”
 - a. Jesus reminds the disciples that they well remembered that he had announced to them that he was
-

- to return to the Father. They were sufficiently aware of this fact, but were somewhat apprehensive about it. When they learned the fuller truth of the New Covenant, they would then comprehend the operation. But their love for the Master even now should have been greater than it was.
- b. He also reminds them that he would return to them. First notice, that he would be resurrected from the dead three days after his sacrificial death. He would be with them during the forty days between his resurrection and ascension back to heaven; secondly, he would return at the last day to bring all the dead back to life, which would be followed by the great judgment.
 - c. The Lord has already promised them the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who would reveal the full truth to them and empower them to carry out the Great Commission. Believing what they had already been told, they should have developed greater love for Christ, and would rejoice about his return to the Father.
 - d. All of these matters were in complete accord with the will of the Father, who is greater than the Son. These things were, indeed, the will of the Almighty. The sense in which God is greater than the Son is in authority.
 - 1) John 13:16: “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.” Thus, the Father had sent the Son to fulfill the eternal plan.
 - 2) Christ was forever committed to doing the will of God.
 - a) John 8:29: “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.”
 - b) 1 Corinthians 15:26-28: “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”
 - c) Hebrews 10:7-10: “Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”
 - 3) Christ is not inferior to the Father: “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).
3. Verse 29: “And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.”
 - a. Woods: “Though they were not now able fully to grasp the significance of much of that which he taught them, eventually they would understand; when the events of which he had spoken had occurred, they would remember that he had told them of these things before they came to pass and thus be strengthened in their faith. How deeply must these men have probed their memories and reflected on his teaching in the weeks and months following as they observed his predictions, one by one, come to pass!” (p.319).
 - b. 2 Peter 1:19: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” Brother Woods gives the following:
 - 1) “The apostle thus affirms, ‘And we have the prophetic word more sure.’ More sure than what? Many expositors assume that the comparison which the apostle draws is between the transfiguration scene which he had witnessed during the personal ministry of Christ and the prophetic word which he mentions, thus making him to say that these prophecies were more convincing and constituted better evidence of the deity of Jesus than that which he had just related concerning his experiences in the ‘holy mount’
-

- 2) “He saw the light above the brightness of the noonday sun flash about the Saviour. He looked upon the transfigured face of his Lord with his own eyes. He witnessed the appearance of Moses and Elijah....He heard the Voice from heaven identify Jesus as deity. Surely no word of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, or other Old Testament prophet could have supplied more irrefutable and convincing evidence than this” (Commentary on 2 Peter, p.159).
 - c. Perhaps the apostle’s meaning is that the word of prophecy [Old Testament predictions about Christ] was made more sure and further confirmed by what Peter had witnessed; and that he was passing on this eyewitness account of confirmation to his readers.
 - 1) Certainly, the transfiguration scene did serve to support and confirm the testimony of the Old Testament prophets. Thus, in this view, the eye-witness testimony of Peter, James and John made the testimony of the prophets more sure and certain.
 - 2) Our translation says, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy....’ The original text has the definite article the, as given in the ASV: ‘And we have the word of prophecy made more sure....’ Peter has in mind a definite set of prophecies—those found in the Old Testament; these relate to his present subject—the coming and glory of Christ [verses 16-18].
 - 3) The word of prophecy was certain; the miraculous events in the Transfiguration, which Peter here describes as an eyewitness, places God’s supernatural stamp on all that had been predicted about Christ—thus the word of prophecy was made even more sure!
 4. Verses 30-31: “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.”
 - a. The Lord did not have much more time to instruct the apostles, before the prince of this world would dispatch a mob to arrest him in the garden, in only a few hours. The devil works through means, false doctrine, false teachers, and wicked people; for a period of time, he was able to send demons to take over the physical bodies of certain ones—those unfortunate individuals had no way to ward off this intrusion. Using miraculous power, Christ and his Spirit-endowed followers were able to cast out these demons. Demon possession has vanished from the earth.
 - b. Although Satan would bring the Lord into captivity, that did not mean that there was any true charge of which he was guilty.
 - 1) Hebrews 4:15: “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”
 - 2) John 8:46: “Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?” (ASV).
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:21-25: “For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (ASV).
 - c. Woods: The Lord’s denial of any claim upon him by Satan puts to rest once for all the blasphemous view of some theologians that Jesus actually became guilty of the sins of the world and that he was the “worst sinner” who ever lived. It was the penalty of sin, not its guilt, which was laid upon him; he suffered as if he had been guilty; but he was not guilty and his death was a cruel miscarriage of justice by men whom Jehovah used to make possible the forgiveness of the sins of the world. (1 Pet. 2:24.) [p.320].
 - d. *Let us go hence*. The Lord and his disciples did not at that very moment arise from their positions in the upper room, and begin their journey through the crowded, narrow streets of Jerusalem, across the valley to the east of the city, and into the garden of Gethsemane. The contents of chapters 15-17 took place before they entered the garden, but it does not seem possible that he could have
-

communicated the information to the apostles (John 15-16) and prayed (as he did in John 17), if they were traveling through the crowds of the city.

e. Johnson:

- 1) Immediately following these words the Lord continues his discourse as recorded in chapters XV and XVI, and then closes with the touching prayer of chapter XVII. As soon as this prayer is closed it is stated that, "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples, over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, etc."
 - 2) Some judicious authorities hold that at the utterance of the words closing verse 31, the Savior and his disciples left the upper room, that the rest of the discourse was delivered on the way, and that when it is said he "went forth" it is meant that he went out of Jerusalem. I cannot, however, think that the character of the next three chapters is consistent with the view that they were spoken on the way, when the narrow streets of Jerusalem were crowded by the presence of at least a million strangers in attendance at the great festival. Such a prayer as the Lord's prayer in chapter XVII could not have been offered upon the street, amid the confusion of a noisy city. I cannot doubt that when the Lord "lifted up his eyes," he was in the quiet of a room and surrounded only by his disciples.
 - 3) It is far more probable, therefore, that the words, "Arise, let us go hence," were a signal to make ready for departure; that when all had arisen, he continued his discourse as he stood with the little group around him, with their sandals and outer robes girded upon them, and that, when he had closed with the prayer so graven on the heart of all who love him in every age, then "he went forth with his disciples," as is stated in 18: 1. [p.227].
-

John Chapter 15

A. John 15:1-8: The True Vine and the Branches.

1. Verses 1-2: "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."
 - a. Our Lord declares that he is the true (real, genuine, the one and only) vine. As the literal vine bears branches and clusters of grapes, so Christ reports that he likewise bears branches, which also bear fruit. These branches are in him; they derive their life from him. The only proper fruit the branches can bear is consistent with the source, which is Christ.
 - b. He speaks of the Father being the husbandman of the vine, not suggesting that he is the worker who is paid to tend to it, but that he is the owner of the vine.
 - c. The branches of the vine which do not produce fruit, the Father removes. These useless branches are dead; they must be taken away so the vine can have other, more fruitful branches. As we will soon learn, the branches are the individuals who comprise the Lord's church [*aka*, citizens of the kingdom, stones in the spiritual temple, members of his one spiritual body].
 - d. The members of a human physical body are to act in harmony with the mind that directs all of those members. If the mind is deranged, the members of that body are not held accountable for the evil that is done. The mind is defective and cannot be considered responsible. But this is exceptional; human bodies are not ordinarily controlled by faulty, deranged or injured minds.
 - e. Consider these passages:
 - 1) Ephesians 1:19-23: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 12:12-26: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."
 - f. Johnson: "So any branch that ceases to have the life of the true Vine and bear fruit, that becomes lifeless and barren, is cut off. It often dies and drops off from the Church, which is the earthly representative of the True Vine, of its own weight and is lost sight of. Sometimes it is needful to cut it off lest it injure the other branches. Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it. The husbandman prunes and dresses the branches in order that they may be more healthy and fruitful.

The Father cleanses, purifies, frees from sin, all who become branches of the True Vine. This is done, not merely for their own sake, but that they may be fruitful branches. The means employed to cleanse them from sin and impurity is next described" (pp.229f).

g. Woods:

- 1) Some branches do not bear fruit; these, the husbandman (owner) prunes, i.e., severs from the vine. This fact poses an insuperable difficulty for those religious groups which teach the impossibility of apostasy. They seek to avoid it by the ridiculous suggestion that these branches are "suckers" and not real branches! It should be noted, however, that they are in the vine; they draw their vitality from the vine; and, they are attached to the vine in the same way as the fruitful branches.
 - 2) These nonfruit-bearing branches differ from the rest, not in the manner of their existence, nor in the source from which they draw their life, but in their failure to bear fruit. Some people, after obeying the gospel, are active and useful in the Lord's service; others respond in exactly the same way, and are also added to the church (Acts 2:47), but like Demas (2 Tim. 4:10), become unfaithful and are thus nonfruit-bearing branches. These are to be eventually cut off (severed) from the vine. Paul, in his figure of the body and its members, indicates this clearly in his Galatian Letter: "Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace." (Gal. 5:4.)
- h. There is a vast difference between "talking someone into being baptized" and truly converting one to the Savior. A few preachers in recent years have boasted great numbers they have immersed yearly, but the attendance and contribution numbers do not reflect those "immersions." Such "responders" are not added by the Lord to his church or made part of his true vine. So also is the case of those which are accepted into membership on their sectarian "baptisms."
- i. If a true branch allows himself to be infected by the disease of sectarianism or wickedness, it ceases to draw life from the true vine, and dries up and dies and is removed from the vine.
- 1) Faithful branches are guided by teaching, studying, worshiping, dedication to the Lord, and working for the Master. Such are strengthened and made healthy and spiritually profitable. A very powerful story grew out of the experiences of a preacher who travelled a considerable distance to conduct a gospel meeting. On his return, someone asked him how many additions did he have. His reply was excellent: "There were no additions, but we had several subtractions." The querist was shocked and wondered how discouraging that was to him and to the congregation. The preacher replied: "There was no harm done; it don't hurt an apple tree when a few dried-up apples fall off."
 - 2) Those branches which become unfaithful and infected by error or sin, are to be disciplined.
 - a) Matthew 18:15-17: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."
 - b) 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us....And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 5:9-11: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

2. Verse 3: “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”
 - a. Speaking now to the apostles, Christ stated that they had been cleansed from their past sins through the word which he had taught them. Woods:
 - 1) Here, for the moment, the figure is dropped, and the reference is to the spiritual state of the disciples. They were "clean" from past sins, yet needed continuous "cleansing," to keep them justified. To revert to the metaphor, they required regular pruning in order to keep their fruit-bearing at highest efficiency, and yet, by being faithful followers of the Lord, they enjoyed his approval and that of the Father.
 - 2) This cleansing was by means of the word, i.e., through the teaching of the word they were enabled to obtain forgiveness. It is, of course, the Father who forgives, but he does it on condition of faithful obedience to the word. (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21.) It pleases God through the preaching of the word (the gospel) to save men. (1 Cor. 1:21; James 1:18; 1 Cor. 4:15.)
 - b. Important passages from the American Standard Version:
 - 1) Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.”
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.”
 - 3) Acts 2:38: “And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
 - 4) Acts 22:16: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name.”
 - 5) 1 Peter 3:21: “Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”
 - 6) 1 Corinthians 1:21: “For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe.”
 - 7) James 1:18: “Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.”
 - 8) 1 Corinthians 4:15: “For though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel.”
 - c. Faithful obedience to God’s word is essential for every child of God; to be saved from the flood, Noah had to remain in the ark; to take possession of Jericho, Israel had to follow through with God’s full instructions (Josh. 6; Heb. 11:30); to be taken home to Heaven, Christians must remain in the place of safety—in Christ:
 - 1) Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.”
 - 3) Revelation 2:10: “Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.”
 - 4) 1 John 1:7-10: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and

- righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”
- 5) Matthew 28:20: “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”
 - 6) Matthew 10:22: “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”
3. Verses 4-5: “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.”
- a. This passage further emphasizes the demand for obedience. Of course, no one can perfectly keep any law, even the speed limit law. None of us can prevent evil thoughts from popping into our minds, but we can evict them as soon as they appear. As an ancient Chinese proverb states, “We cannot keep birds from flying over our heads, but we can prevent their building a nest in our hair.”
 - b. Continual union with Christ, the true vine, is essential for one to draw the life-giving, soul-saving needs of our inner man. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18; cf. 2 Pet. 1:1-12).
 - c. Lipscomb: “The disciples apart from Jesus were as lifeless and unable to bear fruit as the branches separated from the vine. [Here is the explanation of so much of the inefficiency of the church today. Men and women are not living in vital union with Christ. They go where Christ cannot go with them. They do what Christ cannot see with allowance, and say what he ought not to hear. They drive him away from them. Therefore there are no spiritual fruits.” [Electronic Version].
 - d. The Lord’s statement here repudiates the Calvinistic error which alleges that no one can lose his salvation; Christ requires that we remain in saving contact with the true branch, or else we die. That boldly warns that any follower of the Lord can fall away, can be removed from the vine, and thus go into perdition.
 - e. By retaining our connection with Christ through remaining faithful to him, we not only stay alive spiritually but we are thus able to bear fruit for his glory. “The condition precedent to be kept continuously cleansed as well as effective fruit-bearing is to abide in Christ and that he abide in us. As the life of the branch depends on its connection with the vine, in order to its life and usefulness, so our spiritual life is wholly dependent on our connection with him who is the source of all life, both physical and spiritual” (Woods, p.323).
 - f. It is true that God loves all of humanity, but in order to obtain and keep the benefits of his spiritual blessings for our eternal souls, we must be directly involved in the process: “Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 21).
 - 1) In telling them to keep themselves in the love of God, human response is clearly included in the salvation process. God provides the means and place of salvation; our part is to remain faithful to his word. If a Christian fails to do so, he cuts himself off from the provisions of salvation.
 - 2) Jude sums up the blessings of salvation by his reference to the “mercy of Christ.” Compare: “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (Jas. 5:11).
 - 3) When God completes his purposes in the lives of men and women who serve him, though their lives might have hardships and troubles, yet his aim is to show great mercy and compassion. In the case of some, that result is experienced even in this life; in all cases, the glory and grandeur of heaven is bestowed upon the faithful. God is full of pity [compassionate; tender-hearted]; he is full of mercy. It is hard for us to perceive the purpose God may have for us to fulfill; the difficulties and hardships we must endure in the short-run may becloud his ultimate aim.
 - 4) It is exceedingly important that we come to know God’s word, to obtain as much wisdom as possible, and to trust God to do what is right. If our lives are ordered by his word, the outcome
-

is predictable, despite the short-term problems—we will be blessed, especially in eternity, with far more that we could ever dream! We must love him, trust him, serve him—and all will be well!

- g. It is as ignorant to ask someone, “Of what faith are you?” as to ask him, “Of what branch of the true vine are you?” There is only one faith (Eph. 4:4-6); there is only one true vine (John 15). Individual Christians are the branches of the true vine. There is only one Savior (Acts 4:11-12). There is only one spiritual kingdom, only one spiritual body of Christ, only one family of God, only one location of salvation, spiritual blessings, and hope—in Christ (Eph. 1:3).
- h. “He has already declared (verse 1) that he is the True Vine, but he had not yet declared that every disciple is a branch of the Vine. Had he not declared, ‘Ye are the branches,’ they might have concluded when, a little later, separate congregations were organized in various portions of the earth, that these were the branches; or denominationalism might have a little warrant for speaking of ‘branch churches of Christ;’ but the relation is a much nearer, sweeter one. Every Christian is a branch of the Vine. His life is drawn directly from the Vine. If he clings to the Vine, keeps Christ's words, so that Christ abides in him, and has the life of the Vine, the same bringeth forth much fruit. But the branch that is severed from the vine is not only fruitless but dies. So the disciple, without Christ, can do nothing. Paul declared, ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me’” (Johnson, pp.230f).
- i. As old-time preachers used to say, “Sitting in a hen-house does not make one a chicken, so sitting in a meeting house does not make one a Christian.” A Christian is one who has sincerely obeyed the pure gospel of Christ; the Lord has added him to his church. At this point, that individual's Christian life begins; he cannot stay idle and expect to go to heaven. He must be an active follower of his Lord. If he remains idle, he will dry up and die, and will be removed from the vine.
 - 1) Philippians 2:12: “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”
 - 2) Galatians 5:6: “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”
 - 3) Carefully consider 2 Peter 1:1-12.
4. Vers 6: “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.”
 - a. Prunings from a grape vine are of little use; they are too little to produce enough heat for cooking or warming a house. “The vine is one of the noblest of all trees, and produces the most abundant fruit; but it is one of its peculiarities that all its strength is spent on the fruit, and that its branches are utterly valueless for all other purposes” (Pulpit Commentary).
 - b. Woods: “Here, again, it is made crystal clear that the branch, abiding in the vine, is the faithful disciple in his relationship to Christ. ‘If a man abide not...’ a man, not a church! As fruitless and dead branches are pruned from the vine, gathered up and cast into the fire, so those disciples which are not fruit-bearing are to be severed from Christ (Gal. 5:4), and ultimately cast into the lake of fire which burns with fire and brimstone” (p.324).
 - 1) Matthew 25:41: “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”
 - 2) Revelation 14:10-11: “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”
 - 3) Revelation 21:8: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall

- be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”
- c. “Here, too, is clear and unmistakable evidence of the possibility of apostasy. These branches were connected to the vine and from it received life; (1) they became unfruitful; (2) they were cut from the vine; (3) they were gathered up and (4) cast into the fire. This is a figurative description of the destiny of those who cease to be faithful to the Lord. So great is the danger of apostasy there are more than two thousand warnings of it in the scriptures” (*ibid.*).
5. Verse 7: “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”
- a. It appears to this writer that the primary application of the promise of this verse is to the apostles of Christ, and includes certain miraculous features of the baptism of the Holy Spirit they received. Faith was required on the part of the inspired miracle-worker. The apostles lived in close communion with Christ and the Father. Their great commitment was to do what Heaven directed them to do. Having this fellowship with God and in faithful obedience to his word, they walked in close step with their God and their Savior.
- b. The two basic requirements of this verse, their abiding in him and his words abiding in them, their prayers will surely be heard! That for which they prayed would be fulfilled, of course in keeping with God’s will. “This is far from being an unconditional promise; the blessing is dependent on abiding in Christ and harboring his teaching in the heart. The promise follows because those who keep his words, and live in close union with him, will know to ask, and will desire to ask only that for which he desires us to ask. Those who truly love the Lord do not desire to ask for forbidden things nor will they seek to influence the will of God in that which would not be best. These words of the Lord were especially reassuring to the disciples in view of the fact that they were keenly aware that he would soon leave them” (*ibid.*).
- c. Prayer is powerful.
- 1) James says prayer avails much: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas 5:16). He does not say the full extent of our requests is always given; our requests may not be given when or in the manner we desire. A carefully aimed bullet may miss the exact target, but it still accomplishes something. We cannot track down the full effect of every prayer. Our prayers for the sick, for peace, for the spread of the kingdom, for missionaries, for the lost, for saints may be answered without our being apprised of the details.
 - 2) Elijah’s prayers were powerful. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (Jas 5:17-18). Why did he pray that it might not rain? Not because they had had too much rain, or that the rivers were overflowing, but to cause repentance. The full narrative of this event is found in 1 Kings 17:1—18:40. He prayed again, and rain fell (1 Kings 18:41-45; Jas 5:17-18, 16).
 - 3) James did not say every prayer will be heard and answered. Formal word-speaking prayers are not heard. The prayers of rebellious, disobedient men are not heard. God hears the prayers of righteous people. If we are sick, we do not call for some wicked person, or a hypocrite, or a lukewarm member to pray for us. We want the prayers of the most devout and righteous people. A righteous person must pray fervently, sincerely, and often.
- d. The prayers of a *righteous* [*just*] man avails much. A righteous man (or woman) is one who does right. One who is righteous is one who is obedient to God’s righteous instructions:
- 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
 - 2) Matthew 3:15-17: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it
-

- becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 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."
- 3) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 4) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 5) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - 6) 1 John 2:29: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."
 - 7) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
6. Verse 8: Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."
- a. A great commentary on this verse is Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - 1) Let: not forced; obedience must be done willingly, lovingly (Rom. 6:16-17).
 - 2) Your light: each is responsible for own actions and influence. Your light is the power of your life to influence others. Each is to brighten, not bring gloom and discouragement.
 - 3) So shine before men: So shine as verses 14-15 direct. "So" is adverb of manner. We are to shine for the benefit of others, not for self-glory.
 - 4) Shine: continual radiant glowing, not a flash in the pan. A bright flash gives a strong light for a short time but leaves those who see it in greater darkness after it fades suddenly away. A Christian who is a "flash in the pan" does more harm than good.
 - 5) That they may see: see, not merely hear speculation about, or hear claims about. Professing good works is not enough; words come easy. But let your influence speak for itself through the good works each one can do.
 - 6) See your good works: good works can be seen and appreciated by men. Evil works also are seen and often speak louder to some than good works. Good works are those things which God requires or permits, acts of kindness and love, helpful acts and pure words. They are good words because they are morally and scripturally right, beautiful, orderly, harmonious, and productive. Christians are to have an impact on others by the influence of their godly lives and by their teaching the gospel.
 - 7) Glorify your Father which is in heaven: not for the purpose of glory and honor for the individual Christian, but that others might be encouraged to also bring glory to the Father (Mt. 6:1-6; 1 Pet. 2:12). This is the supreme purpose of man (1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; Rom. 15:5-6; Eph. 5:21; Eccl. 12:13).
 - b. Fruit-bearing encompasses all the many actions, words, attitudes, and influences of a Christian during his faithful life of service to Christ. In addition to the manifold blessing accrued to the benefit of the individual child of God, there is the greater glory that redounds to the Almighty! As Matthew 5:16 expressly declares, the life of even one devoted saint produces glory for the Father.
 - c. 2 Corinthians 4:15: "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God."
 - 1) The things that Paul did, together with the deprivations and persecutions and heartaches he experienced, were for the good of those who believed the gospel. "Therefore I endure all things
-

for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2:10). The phrase all things is limited to the things of the context.

- 2) The apostle's work and the obedience of every believer are for the purpose of bringing forth expressions of gratitude from many unto the glory of God. God is the source of the blessings of the gospel. He devised the plan and brought it to fruition; he deserves the profoundest of thanks. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. 1:17).
- 3) *Redound* is from a Greek word meaning "to turn out abundantly for something," in this case, to the glory of God. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). Compare with *rebound*.

B. John 15:9-15: Continue in My Love.

1. Verse 9: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love."
 - a. We remember that these remarks were made directly to the apostles of Christ. Is it not also evident that these great truths also have meaning to each faithful saint? The Father loved his Son, and Christ also loved his apostles; he likewise loves those who are followers of Christ today. "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" (John 17:20-21).
 - b. Romans 8:35-39: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - c. Lipscomb: "The love that God bestowed on Jesus, Jesus bestowed upon his disciples. They continued in his love by continuing to do his will. [By natural transition he now passes from the manifestations of spiritual life to the cardinal principle thereof, that is, love. If we may be allowed the expression, this is the divine sap which runs from the vine through the branches, and from the branches back through the vine, keeping up the divine circulation which is essential to divine life. But how shall we abide in his love?]" [*ibid.*].
2. Verse 10: "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."
 - a. Again, we are told of the necessity of keeping his word in order to remain in his love; love is shown by obedience to God. See Johnson:
 - 1) He abode in the love of the Father by a life of perfect obedience. So we must abide in his love. The wilful, disobedient disciple cannot dwell there. Only he in whose heart Christ is enthroned as King and who has an absolute empire over the soul.
 - 2) To keep Christ's commandments is, not to obey those that suit us, but to follow him and obey all he says. Some set aside his commandment to be baptized. Such do not keep his commandments. Some obey it faithfully, but fail to observe the other things he has commanded, and especially the great law of love. Such do not keep his commandments.
 - b. It was necessary for Christ to keep the commandments of his Father in order to retain his love, so it is essential that we keep the commandments of Christ to retain his love in its fullness. "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29).
3. Verse 11: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."
 - a. Johnson: Strange words, that one about to be crucified should speak of his joy! His joy was union with and the presence of the Father. He had "anointed him with the oil of gladness above his

fellows." He desired his disciples to have that joy, the constant consolation of the sense of the presence of Christ. If Christ abode in them, his joy would remain in them. All spoken above was that they might have this joy. If this is realized their joy will be fulfilled. They "shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied." The soul that has Christ in it is "full." [p.232].

- b. "Joy" is associated with life, e. g. 1 Thess 3:8,9. Experiences of sorrow prepare for, and enlarge, the capacity for "joy," e. g., John 16:20; Rom 5:3,4; 2 Cor 7:4; 8:2; Heb 10:34; James 1:2. Persecution for Christ's sake enhances "joy," e. g., Matt 5:11,12; Acts 5:41. Other sources of "joy" are faith, Rom 15:13; Phil 1:25; hope, Rom 5:2 (kauchaomai, see B, No. 2); 12:12 (chairō, see B, No. 1); the "joy" of others, 12:15, which is distinctive of Christian sympathy. Cf. 1 Thess 3:9. In the OT and the NT God Himself is the ground and object of the believer's "joy," e. g., Ps 35:9; 43:4; Isa 61:10; Luke 1:47; Rom 5:11; Phil 3:1; 4:4. [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
4. Verse 12: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."
 - a. Love is here stated to be a commandment. An emotion cannot be commanded; the feeling is present or it is not. Love is an action word, just as faith is. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).
 - b. Romans 13:10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."
 - 1) Paul summarizes the point of this passage by saying, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." Stated positively, he teaches that love seeks the best interests of its object. If we love another person as we ought, we will not wish him any harm, we will do him no harm, our words and deeds toward him will be such as we would want for ourself (Matt. 7:12).
 - 2) "The law requires me not to murder my neighbor, not to steal from him, not to commit adultery against him, not to desire his goods; in a word, not to do him harm of any kind; and if I love him, I will not do him any. Hence, the love of my neighbor is the fulfillment of the law towards him" (Lard, Romans, p.406).
 - 3) To love our neighbor as we love ourselves is not all of our duty before God. We must still love him with all our being, which includes and requires that we do all that he demands and wishes us to do.
 - a) John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
 - b) John 15:14: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."
 - c) John 14:23: "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."
 - d) 1 John 5:2-3: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
 - e) If there should be any question as to the identity of our neighbor, let the querist look to the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).
 - c. 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."
 - d. Woods:
 - 1) Love is the basic principle, and its observance the universal law of Christianity. It is this which prompted the Lord to answer the query, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" by saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt. 22:37-39.)
 - 2) One who truly loves, loves in the sense here intended, is more like the Lord than any other because only one who thus loves has really imbibed the spirit and real meaning of Christianity and caught the inner meaning of the Lord's teaching and example.
 - 3) The words, "even as I have loved you," provide the model and serve as the example of our love

for others. It is indeed only by capturing the true meaning of Christ's love for us that we are able to gauge the degree and to determine what the measure of our love for others should be.

- 4) When the warm, devoted and intensely personal love which the Lord has for us is fully grasped and when it is allowed to serve as the measure and motive for us in determining our love for others peace and harmony prevail and all personal difficulties disappear like dew before the morning sun. Love prompts one to keep all of the commandments, whether they relate to God or man. [p.327].
5. Verse 13: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."
 - a. The epitome of love is the willingness of someone to consciously forfeit his life for another. Our Lord is speaking of sacrificial love on the part of his followers. In military situations, there have been many soldiers who threw themselves on a grenade in order to save the lives of other comrades. They thus showed their sincere concern for these other men. Soldiers have often said they fought, not merely for country, but to protect their buddies. A very close bond develops between a group of soldiers who are in battle; they are in a real sense, a band of brothers. But they are fighting in a carnal war.
 - b. Christians are fighting a spiritual war, but in times of persecution, their freedom, their livelihood, and their lives are in real jeopardy.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - 2) Ephesians 6:10-17: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 2:4: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."
 - c. Some cases noted by Fox's Martyrs of some who were persecuted:
 - 1) At the martyrdom of Faustines and Jovita, brothers and citizens of Brescia, their torments were so many, and their patience so great, that Calocerius, a pagan, beholding them, was struck with admiration, and exclaimed in a kind of ecstasy, "Great is the God of the Christians!" for which he was apprehended, and suffered a similar fate.
 - 2) Polycarp....hearing that persons were seeking for him, escaped, but was discovered by a child. After feasting the guards who apprehended him, he desired an hour in prayer, which being allowed, he prayed with such fervency, that his guards repented that they had been instrumental in taking him.
 - a) He was, however, carried before the proconsul, condemned, and burnt in the market place. The proconsul then urged him, saying, "Swear, and I will release thee; — reproach Christ." Polycarp answered, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never once wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King, Who hath saved me?"
 - b) At the stake to which he was only tied, but not nailed as usual, as he assured them he should stand immovable, the flames, on their kindling the fagots, encircled his body, like an arch,

- without touching him; and the executioner, on seeing this, was ordered to pierce him with a sword, when so great a quantity of blood flowed out as extinguished the fire.
- c) But his body, at the instigation of the enemies of the Gospel, especially Jews, was ordered to be consumed in the pile, and the request of his friends, who wished to give it Christian burial, rejected. They nevertheless collected his bones and as much of his remains as possible, and caused them to be decently interred.
- 3) In the year of our Lord 251, the emperor Decius having erected a pagan temple at Ephesus, he commanded all who were in that city to sacrifice to the idols. This order was nobly refused by seven of his own soldiers, viz. Maximianus, Martianus, Joannes, Malchus, Dionysius, Seraion, and Constantinus. The emperor wishing to win these soldiers to renounce their faith by his entreaties and lenity, gave them a considerable respite until he returned from an expedition. During the emperor's absence, they escaped, and hid themselves in a cavern; which the emperor being informed of at his return, the mouth of the cave was closed up, and they all perished with hunger.
- 4) Theodora, a beautiful young lady of Antioch, on refusing to sacrifice to the Roman idols, was condemned to the stews, that her virtue might be sacrificed to the brutality of lust. Didymus, a Christian, disguised himself in the habit of a Roman soldier, went to the house, informed Theodora who he was, and advised her to make her escape in his clothes. This being effected, and a man found in the brothel instead of a beautiful lady, Didymus was taken before the president, to whom confessing the truth, and owning that he was a Christian the sentence of death was immediately pronounced against him. Theodora, hearing that her deliverer was likely to suffer, came to the judge, threw herself at his feet, and begged that the sentence might fall on her as the guilty person; but, deaf to the cries of the innocent, and insensible to the calls of justice, the inflexible judge condemned both; when they were executed accordingly, being first beheaded, and their bodies afterward burnt.
- d. Woods (pp.327f):
- 1) The substitutionary idea is clearly seen here, and it teaches that self-sacrifice is the highest test of love in the human realm. The willingness of one human being to give up life—his most precious earthly possession—in behalf of another is the supreme test of human devotion.
 - 2) History, both sacred and profane, provides examples of this and those who are willing to make the supreme sacrifice earn perpetual earthly fame. David's love for Absalom, Damon's love for Pythias, fathers who have died to save their children from disaster, and mothers who have gladly given their lives that a child might live, afford well-known examples of this principle.
 - 3) Great though this type of love is, and supreme in its area, there is still a greater love shown by our Lord who dies, not only for his friends, but also for his enemies! (Rom. 5:8, 9.)
- e. Christ sacrificed and we are told to follow his example:
- 1) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:20-25: "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."
6. Verses 14-15: "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.”

- a. Brother Woods tells us that “the conditional ‘if’ is highly significant; the genuine test of friendship is to be seen in the readiness of one both to desire and to do the will of the Lord. It is vain to profess to love him; or, for that matter, to be friendly toward him, while refusing to do what he said. It should be noted that Jesus did not make the test of supreme discipleship dying for him. It is easier to die for him than to live for him! Many there are in the church today who would gladly give up their lives for the Lord if the occasion demanded it but who will not fully dedicate their lives to him because of the worldly influences which surround them.”
- b. “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God” (Jas. 2:23). Abraham was called *the Friend of God*. The meaning is not that he regarded God as his friend, but that God regarded Abraham as his friend (this is the significance of the subjective genitive).
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 20:7: “*Art* not thou our God, *who* didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?” God deemed Abraham his friend because he was faithful—he submitted to his will.
 - 2) John 14:15: “If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments” (ASV).
 - 3) John 15:14: “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”
 - 4) Luke 6:46: “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”
- c. If you approve yourselves by your obedience my disciples indeed, *you are my friends*, and shall be treated as friends.” The followers of Christ are the friends of Christ, and he is graciously pleased to call and account them so. Those that do the duty of his servants are admitted and advanced to the dignity of his friends. [See M. Henry].
- d. A good friend to us is one in whom we may safely trust our secrets. A good friend is not a mercenary, who merely pretends to be our friend for what he might obtain from us. Some have been known to cozy-up to entertainers, sports figures, rich men, or even to prominent preachers, for certain bragging rights, and perhaps even for some monetary advantage.
- e. Obviously, we can always trust our Savior, and to the extent of our faithful devotion and service, he can place his trust in us. The leader of an army does not reveal his secret plans for an upcoming campaign to all his men; their capture and torture could reveal his intentions to the enemy. Our Lord did not show his plans to the apostles too early: “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” (John 16:12-13). The full revelation of the eternal heavenly plan for mankind was completed before the end of the first century; it was confirmed by miracles and put in written form; it has been providentially preserved through the centuries.
 - 1) Jude 3: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:3-4: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
- f. Quite obviously also, there are many things concerning the future which are still unknown to mankind. The date of the Second Coming of Christ remains entirely shrouded in mystery; it is unimportant that we know when, and would likely be very disconcerting to many, and would cause a good many to put off obedience to the gospel.
 - 1) Mark 13:31-33: “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. But of

that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.”

- 2) Compare: “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:6-8).
- 3) The apostles of Christ were empowered by the Holy Spirit to receive and infallibly communicate the great Mystery: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they [the apostles, 1:26] were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).

C. John 15:16-27: He That Hateth Me Hateth My Father Also.

1. Verse 16: “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.”
 - a. The Lord addressed these remarks to his apostles, who had been directly and personally chosen by Christ to fulfill a most special office in the Christian Age. This fact says nothing about how alien sinners are saved—that each one is programmed to be saved from eternity, and thus directly and individually selected to be saved [with the non-elect doomed to perdition without having a choice].
 - b. The apostles could not have nominated themselves to the apostolic work; they were specifically picked by the Lord, just as Paul was directly chosen to be the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9; 22; 26).
 - 1) Matthew 19:28: “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” The New Covenant was revealed through the apostles of Christ (the twelve: Acts 1:26) and then Paul a little later. The thrones are not literal throne, but a figurative depiction of the authority the apostles had because they were Apostles of Christ.
 - 2) The apostles were to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5), which would bring back to their remembrance everything the Lord had personally taught them (John 14:26), teach them all things (John 14:26), guide them into all truth (John 16:13), and show them things to come (John 16:13). They would be empowered to act as ambassadors of Christ, binding and loosing his will as he thus guided them (Matt. 16:16; 18:18; 2 Cor. 5:18-20).
 - 3) When this inspired message had been fully revealed and recorded as the New Testament, it formed the basis on which God deals with man in this Christian Age (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3; Heb. 1:1-4; 10:9-10; Rom. 1:16; Acts 4:11-12; John 14:6; Jas. 1:18,21; 1 Pet. 1:24-25).
 - c. The Bible declares in many places that God is not a respecter of persons. Therefore, in the salvation process, every alien sinner has the same plan to obey and be saved: to learn, believe the gospel, repent of past sins, confession of faith in Christ, and baptism into Christ, where all spiritual blessings are located. This gospel was first preached to the Jews, and then to the Gentile world.
 - 1) Acts 10:34-35: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”
 - 2) Acts 17:30-31: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world

- in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”
- 3) Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
 - d. The fruit-bearing done by the apostles would especially be the converts they won to Christ through their preaching, teaching and writing. It was essential for the apostles of Christ to be faithful to their Lord just as every other follower of the Lord must be. Peter fell victim to temptation on a certain occasion, at which Paul rebuked him: “But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Cephas before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” (Gal. 2:11-14, ASV).
 - e. Those chosen to be apostles of Christ were faithful at the time of their selection, but Judas lost his apostleship when he fell into sin; Matthias was chosen to take his place. Compare: “But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. (1 Cor. 9:27, ASV).
2. Verse 17: “These things I command you, that ye love one another.”
 - a. Brother Woods offers these insightful comments:
 - 1) “These things,” being plural, cannot refer to the commandment to love alone and so must embrace the matters earlier spoken in verses 9 through 16, in which the Lord bade the disciples to “abide” in his love, to “keep” his commandments, to “love” one another, and to “bear fruit.” Thus these matters led to, and produced, love for each other....
 - 2) Verse 17 summarizes the matters taught in the verses preceding it, and introduces the theme to be discussed in those following. The apostles needed this instruction because it had been but a few hours since they were engaged in controversy over who among them should be accounted greatest. (Luke 22:24.)
 - b. The *emotion* of love cannot be commanded with any expectation of being heeded. Think about the most disgusting and revolting individual you have ever known (or have ever heard of). Could anyone require you to have a warm, close, cuddly *feeling* toward this person, when you know how sinful, criminal and awful he is? However, Christians are told to love all people; we can love them by wanting to bring salvation to their souls, and food to their barren table and we would never do them evil. Following verse are from the ASV:
 - 1) Matthew 7:12: “All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.”
 - 2) Romans 13:10: “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfilment of the law.”
 - 3) Matthew 5:43-48: “Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
 - c. The Lord is about to show the apostles that they will be hated by the world. What can bind them close together so that their common enemies cannot destroy them? If they are bound with a bond that cannot be broken, they will be successful just as Christ was to be triumphant following his
-

- upcoming ordeal. The Love he had for the Father and those who would obey his gospel, brought success to the Lord. Their love for each other, for their God and Savior, and for the salvation of lost souls, would assure their faithfulness.
3. Verses 18-19: "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."
 - a. The *world* denoted by the Lord included the enemies of God and Truth; also those who were misguided by their own self-deceptions, false doctrines, sinful conduct, and indifference. Some would be so deluded to think they were serving God by murdering the followers of Christ! "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God" (John 16:2, ASV).
 - b. If a student in school refuses to partake of the evil things which are common among the popular crowd, he will not be an acceptable member of that crowd. The same is true within military units; it is likewise also the case with the cliques within a local congregation. Christians who were part of a certain civilian congregation would have association with those who were also members of the military only when it was necessary. Shameful!
 - c. 1 Corinthians 12:25-27: "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."
 - d. "It is the nature of all intelligent persons to love best what is in sympathy with themselves. Christ loves most tenderly the disciples who obey his commandments and seek to be like him. The world loves those best that are in harmony with its ambitions, aims and pleasures. Hence, when the church lowers itself to a worldly standard, is complaisant toward sin, and full of the worldly spirit, it will not come into collision with the world. It is the servants who are "chosen out of the world," who are not of the world and who testify against it, that it hates. This has been illustrated in all ages" [Johnson, p.235]. As a woman can lose the great attributes of womanhood if she tries to be like men, so Christians lose all that matters to their souls when they taint themselves with worldliness!
 4. Verses 20-21: "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."
 - a. The reaction people had toward Christ, would be shown toward the apostles, also. The difference in response would be decided by the attitude people had toward the message of the Gospel of Christ. The majority of mankind has almost always stood against the God of heaven.
 - 1) Exodus 23:2: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest justice" (ASV).
 - 2) Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - 3) When Israel first entered and began to take possession of Canaan, most of them were faithful for a time. "And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel....And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judg. 2:7, 10).
 - b. Prior to the 1970s in America, interest in the gospel ran high. Gospel meetings were well-attended and responses to the gospel invitations were great. Worldliness, false doctrines and practices, and a craze for entertainment made their way into the Lord's church, from a wicked world. The
-

influence of many Christians waned, and indeed, became weak and disastrous. Countless children grew up without being properly taught by their parents and Bible class teachers; the powerful pressure of peer influence became much greater. Movies, Television Programs, literature, prominent in the world, had a strong effect on pliable minds.

- c. The old pattern that had been demonstrated through countless generation of humanity, began to make itself known again. Study the Book of Judges and see the pattern repeated time and again in the history of Israel during the time-frame. One generation would be faithful to the Lord (as in Judges 2:7-10). The next generation would grow up improperly taught and/or weak, ignorant, or apathetic toward the Truth. They would desert the truth, and the next generation would reap the punishment that God's justice demanded.
- d. We can see this same pattern in the history of the Lord's church in this country:
 - 1) By the mid-nineteen-hundreds, the Church of Our Lord had been restored to its first century purity in faith and practice. Before the War Between the States, because of the tremendous response to pure New Testament Christianity, many of our brethren thought that the entire sectarian scene in the country was on the verge of extinction and that virtually the whole nation would be converted to Christ. God's people were faithful and their work was extremely successful!
 - 2) Satan will not allow God's people to go unopposed. Sectional strife between the North and the South was spread and inflamed. Wicked men and women fomented this hatred.
 - a) A terrible war was foisted on the nation. The south was hated by many in the north, and by some in the south. About three-quarters of a million Americans died during the conflict. The south was desolated. Suffering by Southern citizens was incalculable.
 - b) Undoubtedly, there were Christian brethren from the north and the south who fought against each other during the battles.
 - c) Following the war, the northern section enjoyed a period of great prosperity and wealth, which inevitably had a noxious effect on the Lord's people there. Young gospel preachers were then described as carrying gold-headed canes and sporting the latest of fancy fashions. Worldly attitudes will have a deleterious effect on spiritual status. False doctrine and erroneous actions entered into the church.
 - 3) While the gospel was, in the meantime, having a wonderful effect on the southern people. Strong, faithful gospel preachers, suffering from severe hardships, spread the gospel tremendous success. While the church in the north grew spiritually and numerically weaker, it was the opposite in the south, where the Lord's church was strong in the truth and in faithfulness.
 - 4) A great apostasy had come to completion by 1906. The digressive folks took with them most of the property and the membership of the church. But brethren in the south continued to work hard and remained faithful to the Lord; the church experience great growth. But in the North, those who had once been with us, became weaker in number and faithfulness—they had departed from the faith.
 - 5) By the 1970s, the Lord's church had started on the road to apostasy. Over the past fifty years, we can perceive that this latest apostasy has taken place. Again, the digressive group has most of the property and membership (which once belonged to the Lord). Faithful brethren must close ranks, commit themselves to the Truth, and work harmoniously to rebuild the body of Christ in our country. Other generations of saints have done so, we can also succeed.
- e. What was true of the first age of persecution has been true of later ages. The Roman emperor, Diocletian, declared that he "would abolish the Christian name from the face of the earth." The Infidel Convention of France, at the time of the Reign of Terror, tried to destroy all that would recall his name, and there is nothing that excites the animosity of the haters of Christ more intensely than his name. One ground of the intense hatred of the Jews to "the name" was that Jesus proclaimed himself to be the Christ predicted by the prophets, and the use of this "name" was a constant indictment of them for crucifying the "Holy One" of Israel. They had rejected him because

they knew not God, God who had sent Jesus into the world, though they professed to honor him. [see Johnson, p.236).

- f. Woods (pp.332f):
 - 1) That which makes the cause most dear to the followers of the Lord is that which occasions the bitterest opposition by its enemies. It was because of this name that the saints were persecuted most following the establishment of the church and the spread of the gospel over the earth. When Peter and John healed the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, they were arrested and brought before the Jewish court and the question raised was, "By what power or in what name have ye done this?"
 - 2) Peter's answer was direct and forthright, "Be it known unto you all, and to the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole." (Acts 4:1-12.) The apostles were not intimidated by the majesty of the court before whom they stood, nor deterred from the proclamation of the gospel by its threats of punishment. They departed from the presence of the council, "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name." (Acts 5:41.)
 - 3) It was "for the sake of the Name" that the early disciples went forth to bear the glad tidings and when the saints had to meet in total darkness to avoid persecution by the authorities the password to their meetings was the Name. (3 John 7.) The whispered phrase, "in the name!" identified the worshipper as one of his.
 - 4) Unbelieving Jews, though they professed to be faithful to the God of Israel, demonstrated that they did not know him by rejecting the Son whom the Father sent. (John 1:11, 12.) The ones who boasted most of their knowledge of the sacred writings—the scribes and Pharisees—demonstrated their ignorance of God by their repudiation of his will sent to them through his Son.
5. Verse 22: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."
 - a. Perhaps the best comments written on this verse were penned by Guy N. Woods, in his superb book on the Gospel of John. The following information is inserted from his unsurpassed commentary of this passage:
 - 1) The reference is to the unbelieving Jews whom the Lord long and earnestly attempted to teach but whose perversity and hardness of heart had prompted them to close their minds and to exclude from their hearts any semblance of his teaching. Patiently and at great length he tried to teach them that true faith in the Father lead logically to belief in the Son and that if they really loved the Father they would heed his teaching and obey him. Their obduracy he could not overcome and eventually ceased his efforts to turn them from their fatal course. Even now, in the presence of only his disciples, his mind turns again to their fate and to the reasons for it and led him to point out why they were utterly without justification for their unbelief.
 - 2) Those who are blind cannot see; but if the blindness is self-imposed they must bear the responsibility for not seeing though in blindness. If the Lord had not taught his opposers, they would not be guilty of sinning against the light they had never seen; but they had been privileged to walk in the light and this they deliberately refused to do and so their guilt consisted not only in not accepting the truth but also of repudiating it. Here is clear and unmistakable evidence of the fact that men are to be judged in proportion to the opportunities they enjoy. The greater the opportunity, the greater the guilt, and the greater the guilt the greater the punishment awaiting them. (Matt. 11:21-28; Heb. 10:25-28.)
 - 3) Those who obey not the gospel are lost; lost for not obeying it; but, those who have heard it and deliberately rejected it have sinned not only against the truth but also against their own awareness of duty. A knowledge of the truth exhibits the sinfulness of sin (Rom. 7:13), and enables one to see its enormity. Thus, one who rejects Christ, as did those Jews, will not only be lost because of sin but also for having deliberately rejected the Saviour.

- 4) Jesus does not teach that those who have not heard the gospel are wholly without sin of any kind. His statement must be understood in the light of its context. He speaks particularly of their rejection of him; if he had not come into the world and have attempted to teach them they would not have been guilty of rejecting such teaching; inasmuch as he did come and they refused him they were without excuse. [p.333].
- b. Brother Johnson, who wrote during the 1800s, has left us some comments on the verse: There are three principles involved: (1) The degree of sin is determined by the measure of our opportunities. They who are in darkness cannot be blamed for not seeing unless they are responsible for being in the darkness. Those who have had no light from heaven will be lightly judged for breaking laws for which they could have no knowledge. (2) Increased opportunities bring the consciousness of sin. A ray from the noonday sun in the parlor reveals, but does not create, the cobweb. It was there before. So, too, the motions of sin in the soul are imperfectly recognized until the spiritual light shines in, but in that light sin is seen to be sin, and the conscience is alive to it ... So the knowledge of Christ, filling the soul with light, brings sin into full view and takes away all excuse for continuance therein. (3) The sin of all sins is the rejection of Christ. He who refuses him deliberately chooses sin. He not only willfully retains all past sins, but he adds to them the sin of rejecting Christ's offer of mercy as embodied in the gospel. [See Lipscomb].
- c. Luke 12:46-48: "The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
 - 1) Pulpit Commentary: "These verses are easy to understand. They explain the broad principles upon which the foregoing statements, in parable and in direct teaching, are based. Rewards and punishments will be allotted in the coming world with strict justice. To some, great knowledge of the Divine will is given and splendid opportunities of work are afforded; to such, if only they are faithful and true, will indeed a high place in the city of God be allotted; but alas for them in the life to come if they fail, if they miss the splendid chance of being true toilers with and for God! Their portion will be the many stripes. To others a knowledge of the Divine will, scanty compared with these just spoken of, is given, and opportunities of doing high and noble work are here comparatively few; if these use the little knowledge and seize the few opportunities, they will, while occupying a lower grade in the hierarchy of heaven, still enjoy the perfect bliss of friendship with God. The punishment for failure here is designated by the few stripes. In this solemn passage it is notable that degrees or grades in punishment as well as degrees or grades in glory are distinctly spoken of."
 - 2) But notice that the second class of individuals noted by the Lord will still receive "stripes." There will some degree of punishment inflicted upon them.
- d. Statements from the Scriptures [See also Matthew 25:31-46]:
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
 - 2) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - 3) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live,

- saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”
- 4) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”
 - 5) Revelation 20:12-15: “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.”
6. Verse 23: “He that hateth me hateth my Father also.”
- a. Christ has told us that he and the Father are one (John 10:30); he has been correctly described as “God with us”—Matthew 1:20-23; Isaiah 7:14. He is directly addressed by the Father as “God”: “But unto the Son he saith, **Thy throne, O God**, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom” (Heb. 1:8).
 - b. Therefore, we can easily see that if one hates Christ, he also hates the Father. “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.”
 - c. The Jewish religious leaders and their close followers refused to accept the teachings of Christ; their own self-made doctrines were exposed by truth the Lord presented. Because they hated the truth he revealed to them, they hated him also. But since Jesus only spoke what was given to him by the Father, their hatred of necessity extended to the Father.
 - 1) John 17:8: “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.” [Here, the Lord is speaking about his apostles who received the words given to them].
 - 2) John 8:39-43: “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.”
 - 3) John 7:17: “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”
7. Verses 24-25: “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.”
- a. In the preceding verse, our Lord had exposed the sinfulness of his enemies because they had rejected his God-given message. In this passage, he exposed their wickedness because they refused to recognize the significance of his miracles. The meaning of his supernatural works was quite clear! The miracles proved that he came from God, that he spake the truth of God, and that he was the promised Messiah. There was no logical way by which they could explain away his miraculous works.
-

- 1) John 11:47-51: “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.”
 - 2) Acts 4:13-18: “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.”
 - b. “Had those Jews been without knowledge of these works they would not bear the additional guilt of having rejected him in spite of them; but of them they were fully aware and thus this fact greatly increased their guilt.
 - 1) “It is significant that the Lord carefully distinguishes between his own person and that of his Father by speaking of both of them: "Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." Here, as often elsewhere in the scriptures, the distinction between the Father and the Son is clearly asserted, thus showing the "Oneness" position of some religious sects of our day to be wholly false.
 - 2) “The hatred the Jews felt toward the Father and the Son was (1) without cause and (2) thus in fulfillment of prophecy. (Psalm 35:19.) There is irony in the Lord's reference to this prophecy in saying that it was written "in their law," a reference likely resulting from the fact that they boasted of their respect for, and devotion to this law and yet were in opposition to it and thus were condemned by it.
 - 3) “So blinded were they by their traditions that they were unable to see that they were in grave violation of the law which they affected so greatly to respect. So deceptive is Satan and so effective are his devices that many people in this day fall into the same snare which entrapped these Pharisees and other Jewish zealots” (Woods, p.334).
 - c. “These words (Christ's words from verses 21 to 25) are perhaps the most terrible words in the Old or New Testament. No description of divine punishment which is written anywhere can come into the least comparison with them in awfulness or horror. This gratuitous hatred, this hatred of Christ by men because they hate God, this hatred of God because he has manifested himself and proved himself to be love, is something which passes all our conception, and yet which would not mean anything to us if our conscience did not bear witness that the possibility of it lies in ourselves. Such a hatred is only possible to nations which, like the Jewish, is full of religious knowledge and of religious profession —Maurice” [Cited by Johnson, p.237].
8. Verses 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.”
- a. As we shall see in John 16:7, it was necessary for the Lord to go away in order for the Comforter to come upon the apostles: “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.”
 - b. The timing and fulfillment of prophecies were essential before Christ could become King.
-

- 1) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."
 - 2) Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
 - 3) Acts 2:29-36: "Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (ASV).
 - 4) Ephesians 4:8: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." [KJV].
 - 5) Philippians 2:9-11: "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
 - 6) Hebrews 2:9: "But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man."
- c. The promises of Holy Spirit baptism was limited to the apostles. "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." This was spoken only to the apostles (Luke 24:46-49; cf. 24:33-36; Mark 16:14).
- 1) They were to be **endued** with power. The word translated "endued" means "to be clothed with" (Vine, p.29). It is used as a figure of speech to describe their reception of the power indicated.
 - 2) They would be clothed with **power**. Power means "might, or authority." They would receive this might and authority which would enable and authorize them to do certain prescribed things, including those things of Matthew 18:18 and John 20:23.
 - a) Matthew 18:18: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - b) John 20:23: "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained."
 - 3) This clothing with power would originate **from on high** (heaven). This would be the source of this might and authority; it would not be from some earthly source.
 - 4) They were to **tarry in Jerusalem** until this power was received. They were to remain in the city, awaiting the coming of this heaven-sent power. This detail of the promise shows that it
-

was intended only for those personally addressed, for it was only they who could wait in Jerusalem, not us. Being clothed with power from on high and being baptized with the Holy Spirit are different descriptions of the same action. The word baptize means literally to dip, plunge, immerse; and metaphorically, to overwhelm. It is used in this later sense when the baptism of the Holy Spirit is being discussed. "It was not the manner of the Holy Spirit's descent from heaven that constituted the baptism of the Spirit, but their being filled or *overwhelmed*, or *endued*, or *clothed*—it was the result, not the manner of descent, that defines the Holy Spirit baptism, which the apostles only received" (Foy Wallace, *The Gospel For Today*, p.697).

- 5) Acts 1:1-8: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto **the apostles** whom he had chosen: **To whom** also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of **them** forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded **them** that **they** should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, **ye** have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but **ye** shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When **they** therefore were come together, **they** asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto **them**, It is not for **you** to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But **ye** shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon **you**: and **ye** shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
- 6) The apostles are the objects of the promise of verses 5 and 8. Notice the pronouns (whom, them, they, ye) from verses 2-8 and see that the promise of Holy Spirit baptism of verse 5 and the clothing with power of verse 8 are given only to the apostles. The baptism of verse 5 and the clothing with power of verse 8 are identical.
- 7) The promises of Matthew 3:11, Luke 24:49, and Acts 1:5,8 are fulfilled in Acts 1:26-2:1-4: "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven **apostles**. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, **they** were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where **they** were sitting. And there appeared unto **them** cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of **them**. And **they** were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave **them** utterance."
- 8) By following the pronouns from Acts 1:26 through Acts 2:4, the fact is clearly established that only the apostles received the operation described. A pronoun takes the place of a noun. The subject of the sentence is *apostles*; the pronouns used to identify those receiving the Holy Spirit's power (2:4) carry the reader back to the noun *apostles* in Acts 1:26.
 - a) The 120 other disciples of Acts 1:15 are not included, as is seen by the use of the pronouns in Acts 1:26-2:4. They are also excluded by virtue of the fact that they were not included in the promises of Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:5, 8. One of the most basic rules in interpreting any message is to identify those to whom the information is addressed. A love letter addressed to *Sally* is not intended for *Jane*.
 - b) Acts 1:26-2:4 shows that Matthias received the baptism of the Spirit since he met the requirements of becoming an apostle (Acts 1:20-26), and had been selected to take Judas' place.
 - c) It is obvious that Paul later received the baptism of the Holy Spirit since he was specially picked by Christ to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:14-18), and was equal to the other apostles in power and authority (2 Cor. 12:5, 11-12). The details of his reception of this are

not recorded, only that after he was baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16) he began to preach the gospel with great effectiveness in Damascus (Acts 9:17-22).

- d) John chapters 14-16 were spoken only to the apostles at the last supper. Judas had left the room (13:29-30); only the eleven were present. Many details of what the Holy Spirit would do with the apostles are given in these chapters.
 - d. Woods [pp.335f]:
 - 1) Jesus is said to be the one who would send the Comforter; in John 14:25, it is the Father who is said to send him in the name of Christ. The statements are not in conflict; so intimately related were the Father and the Son in all their actions and plans that the act of the one might properly be called the act of the other since all their actions were in unison. The Comforter would proceed from the Father; thus, he differed from the Father in person; he was sent by the Son and so was distinct from him; therefore, any theology which denies the separate and distinct personalities of the godhead is false. The Father was in heaven; the Spirit proceeded from him and came to earth while the Father remained in heaven; the Son was here on earth while both the Father and the Spirit were in heaven thus demonstrating their distinct personalities.
 - 2) The Spirit, in coming to the apostles, would bear witness of Jesus, that is, he would testify of Jesus through them. See, especially, in this connection, Acts 5:32. The Apostles, having been intimately associated with the Lord for more than three years, were in position to testify regarding those matters they had seen and heard; and, additionally, the Spirit through them would provide infallible testimony regarding those matters not known to them personally.
 - e. Acts 10:39-43: "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."
 - 1) God raised him up from the dead on the third day, and showed him openly to the chosen witnesses (the apostles) and other reliable people (1 Cor. 15:1-8). It was not necessary or expedient to show him alive to the Jewish people in general, or to their religious and civil leaders in particular. The general population would have included many who would be unreliable as witnesses due to mental weaknesses or religious prejudice; the leaders had already rejected Christ, and so would have sought to explain away his resurrection even though they had seen him.
 - 2) Thus, God knew that his cause would be better served to show the risen Lord to certain, reliable witnesses, men who were willing to suffer terribly in behalf of their testimony. That their witness was true is seen by their willingness to suffer in its support.
 - 3) These men had eaten with the Lord; they knew him personally. Although most of the population knew of him, not everyone knew him sufficiently to recognize him. The soldiers sent to arrest him had to have someone to point him out (Matt. 26:47-50).
 - 4) The apostles had been commanded to preach to the people; they were to affirm that he is the one who is ordained of God to be the judge of the living and the dead (Acts 17:30-31). He did not suddenly appear without any background, for all the Old Testament prophets spoke beforehand of him. Peter believed in fulfilled prophecy, a matter which sophisticated modernists shun!
 - 5) Peter then gives a summary of the plan of salvation: "that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Sectarians use this verse in a vain attempt to justify their "faith only" doctrine of salvation. But this same apostle stated to believers on Pentecost Day that they must "repent and be baptized" to obtain remission of sins. Hence,
-

believeth is used in a comprehensive sense here to include faith, repentance, confession, and baptism (cf. John 3:16). Faith without obedience is dead (Jas. 2:19-26).

John Chapter 16

A. John 16:1-16: Christ Warns the Apostles About Persecution and Reports the Coming of the Comforter.

1. Verses 1-2: “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” (KJV). “These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be caused to stumble. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God” (ASV).
 - a. The words of warning he had given them [in chapter 15] were intended to prepare them for the troubles which lay ahead; being fore-cautioned, they could be ready for these persecutions. His aim was to keep them from stumbling into sin over these hardships. We are told many times in the Book of Acts that the apostles were able to retain their faith and spiritual strength through many such trials of which the Lord had forewarned them.
 - 1) Vincent: *skandalistheete*. The English Revised Version (1885): "made to stumble." In this Gospel only here and John 6:61. [Our English word “scandalize” grew out of this Greek word— Bob Winton].
 - 2) Johnson: “The weak in faith are likely to give way before the storm, to fancy that the odds are too great, that it is useless for a small minority to contend against mankind. Hence the Lord reveals to his disciples that there is an irrepressible conflict between the sinful world and himself, points out the issues and shows how it will involve his followers, in order that they may expect it, be prepared for it, and when it comes only see in it the fulfillment of his prediction” (p.239).
 - b. As the apostles continued their work of preaching the gospel, their enemies among the Jews would look for every hurtful thing possible to stop their great work. The Sanhedrin warned them to cease their preaching; they beat them with many stripes; they imprisoned them. These brave men refused to quit their God-given mission. When the apostle James was slain by Herod (Acts 12), this pleased these Jewish enemies. Peter was in line also to be murdered, but the Lord intervened. Tradition alleges that each of the apostles, except John, suffered a martyr’s death.
 - c. For a Jew to be forced out of the synagogue was a huge penalty. They were ex-communicated, losing all of the various benefits that were derived from membership in that group. Their very livelihood could be destroyed; their business could be devastated; social contact would be cut off from their friends, neighbors and even their families.
 - d. The extreme punishment was death. The enemy could become so blind that he could think that he was doing some great service to the Father by murdering the followers of Christ. This was the very point of the persecution Saul of Tarsus had when he viciously assaulted the people of Christ.
 - 1) Acts 8:3: “But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.”
 - 2) Acts 9:1-2: “But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”
 - 3) Acts 26:9-11: “I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities.”
 - 4) 1 Timothy 1:12-14: “I thank him that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to his service; though I was before a blasphemer, and a

persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

e. Woods:

- 1) They would be "put out of the synagogues," i.e., expelled from Jewish places of worship, action, in the eyes of unbelieving Jews, extremely grievous, since this would cut them off from association with representatives of the national religion. When the distinction between Judaism and Christianity became clearly distinguishable to the followers of the Lord this would have been of consequence to them only because it closed the door to the use of the facilities of the synagogue for evangelistic purposes; but, the Jewish authorities did not understand this and thus their edict was intended as a grievous and severe injunction.
 - 2) Far more serious was the second specification of the Lord that the time would come when it would be regarded as a mark of the divine favor to kill the disciples in the name of religion. Saul of Tarsus' murderous mission to Damascus is an example of this. (Acts 9:1ff.) Shocking though such is to us it was justified by the Jews on the ground that the Christians were blasphemers and therefore worthy of death. (Acts 6:13; 7:57.) [pp.336f].
2. Verses 3-4: “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.”
- a. The heart of the problem of Christ's Jewish enemies was their ignorance of the Father and of the Son. The Old Testament is filled with information about God, and it contains hundreds of prophetic pictures about the Messiah [the Son of God]. Because of their ignorance, they assaulted Christ, and likewise they would ill-treat the Lord's apostles.
 - b. “‘These things’ are the persecutions even unto death which Jesus had just told his disciples that they would suffer. This was evidently spoken by way of explaining why the world would so severely persecute them. It is but another way of saying there is eternal and uncompromising enmity on the part of those who know not God and his Son Jesus Christ against those who walk with God and believe on the Lord” (Lipscomb).
 - c. The solution to ignorance is knowledge. To obtain information that produces knowledge is to study the Bible. But the purest and best truth cannot be learned unless the student seriously desires to know the truth. One who searches the scriptures only to find support for his already-held notions is not apt to learn the truth. His responses can only be quibbles when he is confronted by the truth.
 - d. A great problem in American society today, and the source of many troubles in the Lord's church in our country, is ignorance of Biblical truth. “Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15, ASV).
 - e. Christ stated that he did not tell them of the upcoming persecution (upon them) while he was in the beginning of his personal ministry, because he was with them; he could defend them as the case required. “Now, however, he was about to leave them and they would need support and encouragement for the trials they were soon to face. Some expositors, assuming that the Lord meant by ‘these things’ no more than the fact of impending persecution, have affected to see a contradiction between what is said here and in Matt. 5:10; 10:17-28, where the Lord, early in his ministry, did indeed warn of persecution. The ‘difficulty’ vanishes however when the context is considered and note is taken of the fact that among ‘these things’ spoken by the Lord is his announcement of departure from the earth, his return to heaven, and the coming of the Comforter” (Woods, p.338)
 - f. Johnson adds: Only gradually had he unfolded to them the dark, rugged and bloody pathway that they should be called to tread. In the beginning of his ministry he did not
-

teach of these things, in the second year of his ministry he began to present the lesson, but only in the hour of departure does he fully reveal the trials before his disciples. The greatest of all their trials, unless the promised Comforter came, would be the departure of the Lord. While he was upon the earth the bolts of hatred would strike him instead of his followers; but when he was gone and they represented him on the earth these bolts would strike them. [p.240].

3. Verse 5: "But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?"
 - a. The Lord speaks of a journey he was very soon to take: it would be by way of the cross, the burial of his dead body, his resurrection from the dead, and a few weeks later, his ascension back to Heaven where he would ever be with Almighty God.
 - 1) Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven" (ASV).
 - 2) Psalm 24:7-10: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory."
 - 3) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 15:20-28: "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming. **Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God**, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, He put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all" (ASV).
 - b. The Lord had been with the apostles since he first chose them to be his special helpers, but now he was soon to leave them. They would not be left without special help, for the Holy Spirit would clothe them with power, authority and special information and guidance. All that is involved in the work of the Comforter would aid them in every necessary way.
 - c. In the present situation, none of the apostles asked him were he was going; he had answered that question well in previous passages, especially in John 14. Some of them had raised that question earlier:

- 1) John 13:36: "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."
 - 2) John 14:5: "Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"
- d. Consider:
- 1) Romans 8:34: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."
 - 2) Christ will not condemn the faithful. God has appointed him to be the Judge (Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 17:30-31; John 5:22). Christ, our Judge, died and rose again, and is at God's right hand; he "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). It is certain that he will not condemn one whom God has justified. There is perfect agreement between members of the Godhead.
4. Verses 6-7: "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."
- a. His work involves reproving the world: "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" (John 16:7-11).
 - b. Jesus knew that his words here spoken would bring sorrow to their hearts. The fearful news about their future persecution, together with the report that he would soon leave them, clearly was sorrowful to these close friends. To this point, he had been able to assist them directly when some difficulty arose.
 - 1) Despite the sad news of his departure, our Lord now showed them that this separation made it possible for the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to come to the apostles to supply for them what the absence of the Lord had been doing.
 - 2) "Because of the grief that filled their hearts in the realization that he was soon to be taken from them, the disciples, instead of rejoicing in the glory that was soon to be his, turned their attention away from him to themselves. In so doing, they were overlooking the blessedness which would come to them in his going. Thenceforth they would have a risen Saviour, at the right hand of the Father to whom ultimately they were themselves to go." [Woods, p.338].
- c. Fourfold Gospel:
- 1) "The disciples had asked the Lord whither he was going (John 13:36; 14:5), but their question had a very different meaning from that which Jesus here suggests to them. They asked it to ascertain whether his departure would involve a separation or whether it would be a withdrawal from the world in which they could accompany him. The question which he suggests has reference to the place to which he was about to journey, that place being the home and presence of his Father....
 - 2) "But even from a selfish standpoint the apostles would have had reason to rejoice because of the advantage which would accrue to them through the Lord's departure, for that departure would result in the advent of the Holy Spirit. Space does not permit us to discuss why the Spirit could not come until the Lord had departed, but the verses which follow give us one good and sufficient reason, for they show that his work had to do with the conviction of human hearts through the preaching of a
-

- completed gospel, and the ascension or return of Christ to heaven, and his enthronement in glory there, are essential parts of that completed gospel.
- d. The Holy Spirit would be working directly and continuously with the apostles; Christ would be in Heaven fulfilling his role as King and Mediator.
5. Verses 8-11: "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."
 - a. Of sin.
 - 1) The Jews rejected Jesus.
 - a) "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."
 - b) Acts 2:23: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."
 - c) Acts 2:36-37: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?"
 - 2) The whole world is involved in sin.
 - a) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - b) 1 John 5:19: "...The whole world lieth in wickedness."
 - b. Of righteousness.
 - 1) He would show the world that Jesus was innocent of wrongdoing; he was not crucified because of any sinful or criminal conduct on his part.
 - 2) He would show the world that righteousness is required of anyone who desires to please God and be admitted into Heaven.
 - c. Of judgment.
 - 1) He would show the Jews and the world that the judgment they had pronounced upon Christ was unjust. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:32-36).
 - 2) Those who are guilty of sin are facing the grim prospect of standing before the judgment seat of Christ in an unprepared state (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:31-46).
 - d. "The three areas in which the Spirit would convict are sin, righteousness and judgment. To convict one of sin is to bring to one's consciousness an awareness of the enormity of it and the tragedy which it brings; of righteousness by showing that only those who work it are accepted of God (Acts 10:34,35), and of judgment by pointing out that it will bring condemnation to all who do not turn in penitence to the Saviour" (Woods, *Commentary on John*, pp.340f).
 - e. "The time will come when the world will be forced to face the fact of judgment and he who is its ruler—the devil—has already been judged, *i.e.*, condemned for this reasonThe power of Satan is very definitely restrained (Heb. 2:14, 15), and will ultimately be ended forevermore" (Woods, p.341).
 - f. The Spirit did this through the message of truth he gave through inspired men.
 6. Verses 12-13: "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.”

- a. Too much information suddenly revealed can overwhelm the most intelligent person. One cannot imagine how having all the knowledge and wisdom essential to being fully qualified to become the chief justice of the United States Supreme Court instantly being set before the mind of a novice? The work of the Supreme Court applies to the affairs of a nation; the work of the apostles directly involved things eternal. Even the most eminent of humanity are subject to the inspired revelations given through the apostles of Christ!
 - b. The apostles were not ready to receive the entire revelation, which had been kept from the minds of angels and men from eternity. The following passages are from the ASV:
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: “But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And which entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words. Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.”
 - 2) Ephesians 3:1-11: “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles, — if so be that ye have heard of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward; how that **by revelation was made known unto me the mystery**, as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generation was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:10: “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.”
 - c. The apostles were still unaware of things concerning the kingdom of God: “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:6-7).
 - d. But the Holy Spirit **guided the apostles into all truth**.
 - 1) John 16:12-13: "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 show you things to come."
 - 2) John 14:26: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things....”
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 7:12 is an example of this: "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him,
-

- not put her away." Christ had not addressed this situation during his personal ministry; it fell to Paul to reveal this particle of truth. It is not his personal view that he was presenting for he wrote by inspiration: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37).
- e. "The original word for 'guide' means to *conduct* or *to lead along a way*.' It is the same word which the eunuch used when he asked Philip, 'How can I, except some man should *guide* me?' (Acts 8:31). Jesus makes it plain that the work of the Spirit would be to see that the disciples understood the truth which already existed, rather than to speak the truth himself The Spirit would, therefore, speak nothing new or different from his teaching: 'for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these things shall he speak'" (Annual Lesson Commentary, 1961, p.43).
 - f. This revelation is perfect; it is able to make us to be spiritual adults (1 Pet. 2:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Pet. 3:18); it was "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17); it provides us all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). It is able to save our souls (Jas. 1:21) and prepare us to live in eternity with our holy God.
 - 1) After all the truth had been revealed, there was no need for this power any more. Since all truth was revealed to and through the apostles, there is no other truth yet to be revealed! We can know, therefore, when someone today announces that God spoke to him and gave him a message, that man is wrong! Since God gave all truth to the inspired apostles and prophets during the first century, there remains no new truth for our day. All modern so-called "revelations" are false doctrines of ignorant or deluded people!
 - 2) "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).
 - 3) "If and man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..." (1 Pet. 4:11). We are strictly warned against adding to, or taking from, the written word (Rev. 22:18-19; 1 Cor. 4:6, ASV; Gal. 1:6ff; 2 John 9-11).
 - g. Of special significance is the statement, "he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak," thus evidencing the fact that the Holy Spirit was not to be the originator of truth, but the revealer of the truth received from the Father and taught by the Son. No new doctrine was to be taught. Some matters the Lord had taught the disciples during his public ministry would be reaffirmed, in order to refresh their memories, and those matters into which he would "guide" them had been fully formulated by the Father and the Son and were in their minds, though not revealed, because of the inability of the apostles to receive them. The Spirit would not of himself originate any truth; his was the work of revelation, not origination. This effectively refutes the allegation that the Holy Spirit is today giving to the world new and formerly unheard of truth, since the revelation which he made through inspired writers is total and complete, completely furnishing to every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16) [Woods, pp.342f].
7. Verses 14-15: "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."
- a. The work the Holy Spirit would do through the apostles would bring glory to Christ. The Spirit would receive the message of the Gospel of Christ, which originated in Heaven, and reveal that message to the apostles; the apostles would thence disseminate that truth
-

to the world of mankind. This they began to do on the day of Pentecost in Acts two. Read again 1 Corinthians 2:9-13.

- b. This was their great commission.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
 - 2) Mark 16:15-20: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”
 - 3) Luke 24:44-47: “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
 - c. This great commission devolves upon those who obey the gospel. Matthew says that the apostles were to teach the converts “to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” One of the things he commanded the apostles was to spread the gospel.
 - d. The entirety of the gospel was revealed by the Spirit through the apostles of Christ to the saints [Christians].
 - 1) “Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was **once for all delivered** unto the saints” (Jude 3, ASV).
 - 2) “But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing” (Jas. 1:25, ASV). The law that provides liberty and which is perfect is the Gospel!
 - e. “And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture [is] inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry” (2 Timothy 3:15—4:5, ASV).
-

- 1) The gospel has been fully revealed; it is complete; it is perfect; nothing was left out; it contains no error; it is pure in every sense; it originated in Heaven and was revealed by the Holy Spirit to and through the apostles of Christ. That Gospel is described in our present text as belonging to Christ [*mine*].
 - 2) Therefore, anyone who alleges that he has received a new revelation from Heaven is saying that the Holy Spirit failed in his work of delivering all the things of Christ to humanity through the apostles—a conclusion which is verily denied by the verses we have cited above.
 - f. The revelation of the gospel was first presented in oral form, by inspired men. It was later committed to written form, otherwise we would have to depend on “word-of-mouth” transmission—an extremely faulty means of communicating accurately. Christ did not even depend on the messages he spoke to the apostles during his public ministry: “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.” (John 14:26). See also John 16:12 and John 16:16.
 - g. Because of the newness and strangeness of the information he was presenting to them, and because of the fallible nature of human memory, the Lord could not, and never intended to, reveal every truth to them prior to their being clothed with power by the Holy Spirit. And even then, every particle of truth was not given to them immediately (1 Cor. 13:9).
 - h. When all truth was revealed, confirmed, and recorded, the finished product was the “perfect law of liberty” (Jas. 1:25). It is called “that which is perfect” in 1 Corinthians 13:10, and is described as “the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God” in Ephesians 4:13. When we read what the inspired apostles and prophets wrote, we learn and understand the truth which was revealed to them by the Spirit (Eph. 3:1-5).
 - 1) This revelation of all the truth is called “the faith which was once [for all time] revealed unto the saints” (Jude 3).
 - 2) This revelation is perfect; it is able to make us to be spiritual adults (1 Pet. 2:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14; 2 Pet. 3:18); it is “given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17); it provides us all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). It is able to save our souls (Jas. 1:21) and prepare us to live in eternity with our holy God.
 - i. Note from brother Woods:
 - 1) It is not likely that an affirmation of our Lord can be found in any of his biographies which more emphatically and unmistakably asserts his deity. *All that the Father has is his*. No man, nor angel, however great and pure, could truthfully assert such a claim. It is to say with Paul that in him dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily (Col. 2:9) and with John that his relationship with the Father is that of an only begotten Son, “who is in the bosom of the Father.” (John 1:18.)
 - 2) Because he and his Father are one in nature that which belongs to the Father is his, that which is his is the Father's and the Spirit, and his revelation would present the truth common to both. That which the Spirit would declare would be his truth and justly identified as such even though jointly originated by him and the Father, since all that the Father possessed belonged to the Son also. [p.344].
 8. Verse 16: “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.”
 - a. On the morrow he would die at the ninth hour; that evening he would be buried, and for “a little while,” three days and nights, they would not see him; then he would rise, and
-

for another "little while," a space of forty days before "he went to his Father," they would see him, while he remained on the earth. When he ascended to his Father they, in a spiritual sense, would "see him coming in the kingdom of God." This is all very plain to us, but the apostles, to whom it was yet future, could not understand it. [Johnson, p.243].

b. Woods:

- 1) In a few hours he would die and death would take him from their sight and from their physical presence. This would involve the period from Friday, the day of his crucifixion, to Sunday morning, the day of his resurrection, that described in the text as "a little while." Following this interval, they would again see him, the first of numerous appearances he would make following his triumph over the grave.
- 2) The verbs are of great significance in this sentence. That translated "behold," in the first clause, means to observe with one's physical eyes; that rendered "see" in the second clause means not only to see physically, but also spiritually.
- 3) Thus, there is more involved in the statement than at first appears. They would again see him; but in a sharper, clearer light than ever before. This began to be fulfilled in the appearances following the resurrection; but it was by no means limited to this; in the coming of the Spirit on Pentecost and in the subsequent revelations made to them they would "see" the Saviour far more vividly than ever before as apostolic Christianity was made to unfold before their spiritual eyes! [pp.344f].

B. John 16:17-28: Jesus Explains Their Question About His Going Away.

1. Verses 17-18: "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."
 - a. At this point the apostles who had been with the Lord daily for a few years could not discern the meaning of his previous statement. What does he mean?
 - b. Woods: They appear to have understood the two verbs in the same sense and thus the statement was to them conflicting and contradictory. And, they were still struggling with an earlier statement from Jesus that he was going to the Father. What had this to do with seeing him after "a little while"? What this meant they could not at the moment decide. Each confessed to another his own lack of understanding, apparently too much in awe to question Jesus directly. We must remember that, at this point, they were without any awareness of the events soon to occur; and these statements of the Lord, later easily understood, were baffling and obscure to the bewildered disciples. [p.345].
 - c. These men were still thinking along materialistic and worldly lines. As the full gospel was later revealed to them, then they could perceive the truth more perfectly.
 2. Verses 19-21: "Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire 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."
 - a. The apostles were in awe of Christ, as they ought to be, and were hesitant to ask him the question that was foremost in their minds. Our Lord brought up the matter, however, he did not directly address their perplexity.
 - b. That very night he would be arrested and brought bound into Jerusalem, to face a series of unlawful trials. He would be scourged and mocked; he would be taken outside the city
-

- to be crucified between two criminals. The apostles would not be in company with the Lord until after his resurrection—this was the little while. Manifestly they would be filled with sorrow during these three days and nights. Compare: “But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done” (Luke 24:21).
- c. “This course he often followed, perhaps because the disciples had demonstrated their inability to grasp the spiritual significance of much that he taught; and also because in a few days, at most, what now seemed incomprehensible to them would become crystal clear” (Woods, p.346).
 - d. The ordeal Jesus was about to suffer would bring tremendous sorrow to the followers of the Lord, including the apostles. While this was their response, the enemies of Jesus would have much joy. Some of them gloated and reproached the Lord as he suffered in agony. See Matthew 27:39-44.
 - e. Undoubtedly, Satan believed that he had defeated the Almighty, by bringing about the crucifixion of Christ. But God was able to bring the very means of execution as overpowering proof that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God! We shall later discuss various prophecies which were fulfilled in his execution.
 - f. The sorrow of the disciples would be turned into joyful happiness when they came to know their Lord had arisen from the dead! He used a common illustration of a woman suffering during the ordeal of giving birth. Agony and crying usually accompany this natural process, but as soon as her baby is delivered, she quickly forgets her severe experience in the joy that she has produced a healthy child.
3. Verses 22: “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.”
- a. The heavy knowledge was bearing down on their hearts at present, for they were aware now that he was soon to be arrested and crucified. This was a hard truth to bear. But when he was raised from the dead, they would have joy that could not be lost.
 - b. Our Lord was here pointing to their seeing him in the events of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit would clothe them with miraculous power—the baptism of the Holy Spirit. From then onward they would carrying out his great mission, daily working with him and he with them.
 - c. Johnson:
 - 1) When the new revelation is fully realized and they enjoy the fulness of the Lord's glorified presence. "That day" refers directly to Pentecost when the new era of joy began. "Ye shall ask me nothing " does not refer to prayer, for the apostles always continued to pray, but means they shall ask him no questions because of their ignorance and misunderstanding.
 - 2) While attending his earthly instruction they were dull of comprehension and often asked questions because they did not understand him, but when the Comforter was come he would teach the apostles all things (14: 26). Enigmas would be solved, mysteries would be clear. [p.245].
 - d. To the Christian, the inspired word gives this parallel report: “Be careful for nothing [*in nothing be anxious*—ASV]; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7).
-

4. Verse 23-24: “And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatso-ever 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.”
 - a. This is pointing to the day of Pentecost and the days following. Jesus would no longer be in their physical presence, thus they would no longer have pressing questions to ask of him, such as they had been presently considering. All the pertinent matters that connected with their work from Pentecost onward could be provided directly by means of their apostleship. The Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth.
 - b. A significant problem is recorded in Acts 15:6-12: “And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter. And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they. And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them.”
 - c. Departing from Lystra, with Timothy coming with them, Paul and his company covered the regions of Phrygia and Galatia. Phrygia included the city of Colosse. The Holy Spirit forbade their preaching in the province of Asia (where Ephesus was located), so they went to Mysia. From there, they endeavored to go into Bithynia, but again the Spirit did not permit them to do so. Consulting a map, we see that they left Lystra in a westerly direction; they were told not to turn to the left (for Asia) or right (for Bithynia). The only route left open to them, unless they headed back home, was to continue northwest, which they did. They passed Mysia and came down to Troas, a city located at the north-west corner of Asia Minor, on the shore of the Aegean Sea.
 - d. This information gives us a glimpse into the mechanics of how inspired men were guided in where they went. It appears that a measure of latitude was granted them to make common-sense decisions, but in the present case, Paul's option was overridden by the Holy Spirit. Having only the territory ahead of them still open, they continued in the direction they were headed.
 - e. Woods: Then, because of the enlightenment received through the coming of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, their knowledge of these matters would be greatly increased and there would be no occasion for further questioning of him by them. The sermon of Peter on Pentecost, the preaching of Peter and John as recorded in Acts 3 and 4, are demonstrations of the fulness of understanding and the assurance with which they would then be possessed. This divine certainty which would be theirs was within the realm of understanding with reference to the things Jesus had been teaching them. There would always be the need of daily bestowal of blessings, physical and temporal, and these the Father would gladly give them when they petitioned the Father for them in the Son's name. To ask "in his name" was to ask by his authority and in harmony with his will.
 - f. Johnson adds:
 - 1) “When he taught his disciples what we are wont to style the Lord's Prayer, he did not direct that the petition should be in his name, for his relation to the Father was not yet unfolded. It was only as the end of his earthly sojourn approached that he directed

- prayer in his name. When he ascended on high he became our Divine Mediator, "our Advocate with the Father," our "High Priest who maketh intercession for us."
- 2) [His] is the only the "only name whereby we must be saved," but through which we have access to the Father. Hence, if our petitions would carry any recommendation they must ascend in the name of the Son. Indeed "whatever we do, all must be done in the name of the Lord Jesus." See also Eph. 1: 21 and Phil. 2: 9, 10. God has determined that his name shall be exalted above every name.
- g. The Holy Spirit [the Comforter promised to the Lord's apostles], would bring to their minds the full revelation of the mystery which had been hidden in the mind of the Almighty from the beginning of the world, and before. "Whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generation was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit" (Eph. 3:4-5, ASV). It was necessary for them to apply the truths of the revealed gospel to their own hearts and lives.
- 1) We remember that Peter, even though an apostle, fell into a sinful condition: "But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Cephas before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal. 2:11-14, ASV).
- 2) Paul also stated about himself: "But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (1 Cor. 9:27, ASV).
- 3) With the full revelation of God's eternal plan revealed through the apostles, and with their full personal compliance with the same, their joy would be complete.
- h. As Christians endure persecution from-time-to-time, they have the happiness of knowing that their prayers were being heard and answered by the Father. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12)" Compare: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Pet. 1:6-9).
5. Verses 25-26: "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."
- a. ASV: "These things have I spoken unto you in dark sayings: the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in dark sayings, but shall tell you plainly of the Father. In that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you."
- b. The *proverbs* of the King James Version, is "dark sayings" in the American Standard. The Lord sometimes spoke to the apostles in words that were difficult for them to grasp, mainly because of their own preconceived notions about the kingdom and the mission of Christ. Their thoughts were far too materialistic and short-sighted. While the Jewish nation was the focal point during the Mosaic Era, the New Testament view encompassed
-

- the entire world of mankind, and was directed to the vastness of the human soul and the unsearchable dimensions of Eternity.
- c. "Here, again, the Lord speaks of the full enlightenment which would be theirs through the coming of the Holy Spirit. In that day they will ask the Father for the things they need and it will not be necessary for the Son to petition the Father in their behalf, because the Father will understand that they are asking in his name, and he will gladly bestow bountiful blessings upon them because he loves them, recognizes that they love his Son and because they believe that he came forth from the Father" (Woods, p.349).
 - d. The Father would give the apostles direct guidance through the work of the Holy Spirit, revealing whatever information they needed and power that was necessary for their present need. The book of Acts is filled with such situations and the epistles frequently note those activities. It would not be necessary for Christ to be with them physically for these matters to be addressed. [See also 1 Corinthians 2:9-14].
 - e. Woods: This is very far from meaning that in this, the Christian age, the Saviour is not an intercessor; it should be noted that these words are limited in application to the apostles; instead of suggesting that their approach to the Father would be independent of him, he is, in effect, saying that because of the close and intimate association subsisting between him and the Father the approach of the apostles in prayer to the Father is by implication necessarily through him. (John 14:6.) His work as a Mediator makes his intercession for all saints automatic. (1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34.) His intercession for his own is continuous and never-failing. [*ibid*].
6. Verses 27-28: "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."
- a. The Apostles of Christ were living faithfully to the Savior, God's Son, thus they were in proper standing with Christ, and therefore were pleasing to the Father. This does not mean they were spiritually mature in knowledge and life; that would come when the Gospel was fully revealed to them.
 - b. Johnson, p.246: "This is the reason why the Father loves us. It is true that he loved the world even while in sin so well as to send his Son to save, but the fulness and sweetness of his love cannot be bestowed upon those who reject his love as manifested in his Son. Those can only enjoy its full fruition who by faith in, and love of, Christ enter into the adoption of the children of God.
 - c. The truths of verse twenty-eight had been taught to the apostles on numerous occasions. He came from the Father; he came into the world; he would leave the world before long and would return to the Father. His entrance into the world was voluntary; he sacrificial death would be voluntary; his ascension to Heaven was fully in keeping with the eternal plan of the Father, and thus was gladly subscribed to by the Son.
- C. John 16:29-33: The Apostles Noticed that Jesus Now Spoke to Them in Plain Words.
1. Verses 29-30: "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."
 - a. NKJ: His disciples said to Him, "See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God."
 - b. The last words uttered seemed to the disciples plain and simple. They thought that they gave the key to all the "proverbs" before spoken. He had come from God, into the world, now he would leave the world, and return to God. That seemed plain. Yet the disciples did not understand so well as they supposed. Their stumbling while the Lord was in the
-

- bands of his enemies, and their fear, and their despair while he lay in the tomb, shows that they did not understand. [Johnson].
- c. The “proverbs” included the rather dark statements of these verses:
 - 1) John 16:16-19: “A little while, and ye behold me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see me. Some of his disciples therefore said one to another, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye behold me not; 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 know not what he saith. Jesus perceived that they were desirous to ask him, and he said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves concerning this, that I said, A little while, and ye behold me not, and again a little while, and ye shall see me?”
 - 2) They said they understood him finally, but that may not be the case. Following his crucifixion they were shocked that he had really died. The disciples the Lord met on the road to Emmaus were still in the dark until Christ explained the truth to them (Luke 24:13-21).
 - d. Notice again these two verses: “They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? We know not what he saith....I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father” (John 16:18, 25). In this light, the apostles could say, “By this we believe that thou camest forth from God.”
2. Verse 31: “Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?”
 - a. The sentence at the end of this verse can be taken either as a question or a statement of fact. The King James and the American Standard translate it as a question, which corresponds with the context.
 - b. The Lord was aware of their incomplete faith and the weakness thereof. “In the very hour that was now at hand it would be tried. Instead of clinging to him they would be scattered, everyone would look out for himself, and would leave him alone in the hands of his enemies. For the fulfillment, read all the accounts of the arrest, trial and crucifixion of the Savior” (see Johnson).
 - c. We do not doubt the faith they had at the time of this conversation, but its weakness is clearly seen when the arrest, trials and crucifixion of the Lord transpired. They forsook him and fled; Peter followed afar off.
 3. Verse 32: “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.”
 - a. Christ here plainly told them that they would soon be scattered; this took place when the mob led by Judas arrested the Lord in the garden, just a few hours later. Peter made a fruitless and foolish gesture of defending Jesus by using the sword against the servant of the High Priest, for which the apostle was rebuked.
 - b. Woods: “It was not the *fact* of their faith which was in doubt but its depth and enduring quality; it simply was not strong enough to enable them to face the trials now near; and, when they saw him whom they had followed suffer himself to be led away to death their self-interests emerged and all the apostles except John abandoned him. Hurt as he would be by this shameful defection, his Father would be with him and would sustain him in those fateful hours. The temporary separation mentioned in Matt. 27:46 is not in conflict with this affirmation, that being essential to the sacrifice he made and resulting from the burden of the world's sins which he bore. Even in that sad hour he could say, ‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit’ in complete awareness of his presence and comfort. (Luke 23:46.)”
-

- c. The Father never left him alone. [The cry Jesus uttered during the throes of crucifixion, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" will be taken up at the end of the chapter.
- 4. Verse 33: "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."
 - a. It is significant that the Lord did not say, "Ye have overcome the world; therefore, peace is yours"; this blessed promise was theirs because he did it. It is true that Christians must overcome the world in resisting its allurements and avoiding its temptations, but there must have been this initial triumph over it by our Saviour and Lord; otherwise, salvation would not have been possible, regardless of any resistance to its evil influences. Thus, the triumph of the Lord was also that of his disciples! The verb in "I have overcome the world," is in the perfect tense, completed action with continuing effects. The Lord's mission into the world was now nearly over and so certain was it of completion that he could speak of it as already having been accomplished. [See Woods, p.351].
 - b. It was the certain case that the sinful world afflicted the apostles of Christ. James the brother of John was first to suffer death (Acts 12), while John lived on for a great many years (cf. John 21). They were imprisoned and beaten on more than one occasion; Paul was not immune to this harsh treatment.
 - c. In the world, the apostles suffered tribulation, but their faithfulness to the Lord would bring a great victory over the world! In the world every faithful child of God faces hardships and persecutions because of his faith, but the great victory is assured as we walk in the light of the gospel of Christ.
 - 1) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - 2) Mark 10:29-30: "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."

“My God, My God Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?”

Matthew 27:46: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

At about the ninth hour, the Lord cried out with a loud voice, raising the wonderful question, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Some have thought that the Lord was merely quoting from Psalm 22:1, which is a Messianic prophecy. But if so, why did he speak the line in such a loud voice? Perhaps so that those who heard him could know that he is the Messiah. But it is more likely that he was actually living out the anguish of which the statement speaks.

"The depth of meaning contained in this bitter outcry can never, we suppose, be fathomed by human thought, yet the word 'forsaken' directs our thought in the right channel. If a good man who has long trusted in God and delighted in his favor could suddenly realize that God had *forsaken* him, he would enter, at least partly, into the Savior's feeling. But the peculiar relation which Jesus sustained to the Father rendered this feeling more intense than human hearts can experience, and at the same time it renders most mysterious to us the forsaking itself. It is enough to know that in it lay the chief bitterness of the Savior's death" (McGarvey, p.246).

Although Christ was utterly sinless, yet he suffered as a sinner—separated from God. But this statement is beyond human comprehension; it enters into the eternal, and has to do with such deep considerations that we are not able to fathom them. This is the only statement of the seven statements from the cross, recorded by more than one writer. "The cry is the result not only of His suffering body, but also from the fact that Jesus is the sin-bearer of the world. God in his holiness could not have fellowship with sin and therefore is removed from the Son (Ex. 33:3; Josh. 7:11-12; Ps. 66:18; Isa. 59:1-2; Isa. 64:7; Hos. 5:6). The Greek verb translated in English translation '*forsaken*,' is in the aorist tense. Therefore, indicating the forsaken state had taken place in that time period in the past (the three hours of darkness), and had now reached its climax, thus the Lord's loud outcry. Paul states that Jesus, by His death had redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). Jesus was our sin offering (II Cor. 5:21). Therefore, Jesus died in our place, that He might bring us near to God" (Laws, *The Book of Matthew*, p.685).

Barnes offered the following thoughts on *My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me*:

This expression is one denoting intense suffering. It has been difficult to understand in what sense Jesus was "forsaken by God." It is certain that God APPROVED his work. It is certain that he was innocent. He had done nothing to forfeit the favor of God. As his own Son—holy, harmless, undefiled, and obedient—God still loved him. In either of these senses God could not have forsaken him. But the expression was probably used in reference to the following circumstances, namely:

His great bodily sufferings on the cross, greatly aggravated by his previous scourging, and by the want of sympathy, and by the revilings of his enemies on the cross. A person suffering thus might address God as if he was forsaken, or given up to extreme anguish.

He himself said that this was "the power of darkness," Luke 22:53. It was the time when his enemies, including the Jews and Satan, were suffered to do their utmost. It was said of the serpent that he should bruise the heel of the seed of the woman, Gen 3:15. By that has

been commonly understood to be meant that, though the Messiah would finally crush and destroy the power of Satan, yet he should himself suffer "through the power of the devil." When he was tempted (Luke 4), it was said that the tempter "departed from him for a season." There is no improbability in supposing that he might be permitted to return at the time of his death, and exercise his power in increasing the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. In what way this might be done can be only conjectured Yet we have reason to think that there was still something more than all this that produced this exclamation. Had there been no deeper and more awful sufferings, it would be difficult to see why Jesus should have shrunk from these sorrows and used such a remarkable expression. Isaiah tells us (Isa 53:4-5) that "he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; that he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; that the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him; that by his stripes we are healed."

He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Gal 3:13); he was made a sin-offering (2 Cor 5:21); he died in our place, on OUR account, that he might bring us near to God. It was this, doubtless, which caused his intense sufferings. It was the manifestation of God's hatred of sin, in some way which he has not explained, that he experienced in that dread hour. It was suffering endured by HIM that was due to US, and suffering by which, and by which alone, we can be saved from eternal death.

“Christ as the Beloved Son in Whom God Was Well Pleased Could Not Be Really Deserted by God. Not only is God physically near to all men, because he is omnipresent, but he is spiritually near to his own people to sustain and save them, even when they are not conscious of his presence. The vision of God is one thing, and his presence is another. We may miss the first without losing the second. Our real state before God does not rest on the shifting sands of our moods of feeling. In the hour of darkness Jesus prayed. This is enough to show that he knew that he was not really and utterly abandoned by his Father. In spiritual deadness, when it is hard to pray at all, the one remedy is in prayer. Our cry can reach God through the darkness, and the darkness will not last forever; often it is the gate to a glorious light. - W.F.A.” [Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved].

Christ suffered in our behalf—he endured the punishment our sins had earned us. He was never guilty of any sin.

John Chapter 17

The Lord's Prayer

A. Introduction.

1. Woods:

- a. The Lord's last discourse, beginning at John 14:1, and continuing through John 16:33, though delivered in the shadow of the cross, ended with this note of triumph, "I have overcome the world." The little band, consisting of Jesus and the eleven apostles, were about to leave the upper room, where the Passover feast had been observed and the Lord's Supper had been instituted and go out into the night, a night the most fateful in all the world's history; but, before they disbanded, the Saviour did not wish to terminate the warm and close association they had enjoyed without a prayer to the Father.
- b. He was soon to experience the bitterness of trial and the agony of crucifixion; the disciples were to suffer disappointment and discouragement in the bewildering events soon to occur; and they needed to be sustained and supported by this petition to their heavenly Father. The prayer is remarkable for the simplicity of its language, the profoundness of its meaning, and the earnestness of its appeal.
- c. These are the very words of our Lord, recorded in the order in which they were delivered by the Holy Spirit through his inspired writer, John. It is the real "Lord's Prayer"; the prayer of Matt. 6:9-13, beginning, "Our Father who art in heaven...." is, more properly styled, "The prayer which Jesus taught the disciples to pray."
- d. Coffman:
 - 1) This whole chapter records the prayer that Jesus offered on the betrayal night in contemplation of the cross. There is the prayer for himself (John 17:1-5), for the apostles (John 17:6-19), and for those of all generations who would believe on him through the apostles' word (John 17:20-26).
 - 2) Hester said: John 17 is the real Lord's prayer. In this deeply moving experience he prays: first for himself, for his disciples, and for the whole world—all believers in all ages.
 - 3) Dummelow called it "Christ's high priestly prayer, because in it he solemnly consecrates himself to be priest and victim in the approaching sacrifice."
 - 4) Barnes commented that "It is the longest prayer recorded in the New Testament.
 - 5) Westcott called it "The Prayer of Consecration."
 - 6) Robertson called it "Christ's Intercessory Prayer."
 - 7) Some have called it "The Prayer for Unity." As Morgan said: I would ever be careful lest I should appear to differentiate between the value of one part of the Holy Scripture and another, but no one will deny that when we come to this chapter we are at the center of all the sanctities
- e. Our exegesis on this chapter does not pretend to be exhaustive, the chapter being, in fact, inexhaustible. As Gaebelien said: No complete exposition can be given. Three of the Puritan preachers expounded this chapter: Manton's sermons on it make a volume of 400 pages; Newton's exposition nearly 600 pages; and Burgess' sermons comprise 700 large pages! We shall content ourselves with picking up a truth here and there! These things spake Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee. (John 17:1)
- f. If this prayer is searched for implications bearing upon the prayers offered by Christians, the thing that stands out is the priority of God's glory. Before any earthly desire, the desire for the glory of God comes first. In this, it corresponds with Matthew 6:9.

B. John 17:1-5: Christ Prays About His Glorification.

1. Verse 1: "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."
 - a. When the Lord completed the foregoing discourses, we are told that he lifted up his eyes toward heaven and began to pray. Some have thought that this took place as he and his band were walking to the Garden of Gethsemane, but that would hardly comport to a prayer while walking through the city or even standing along a street or in a large crowd. [We remember that a very large number of Jews from afar plus the local population were in and around Jerusalem during this feast season].
 - b. It was after the discourses and the prayer of this chapter that Christ and his apostles sang a hymn that they left the upper room. He instituted the Supper before they sang the song: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matt. 26:26-30).
 - c. They were still in the upper room at the table when our Lord lifted up his eyes to heaven and prayed. He began his pray just as he had taught his disciples to pray in the model prayer: "After this manner therefore pray ye: **Our Father** which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9). Our prayers are to be addressed to the Father, not to Christ or to the Holy Spirit. We pray to God the Father through Christ the Son, in harmony with the Spirit's inspired instructions. In the Lord's prayer, both the nature of his words and the attitude of his body indicate reverence.
 - d. Did the Lord here pray audibly? There is no reason to assume that his words were spoken only in his mind. Hannah's prayer was offered silently, and was acceptable to God (1 Sam. 1). Our silent prayers are likewise acceptable. He had been speaking with audible words to the apostles in the foregoing instructions, and there is no reason to think he stopped speak-ing audibly as he went directly into his prayer.
 - e. He mentioned that the hour had arrived for his great, timeless sacrifice to be accomplished. Before leaving Heaven on this earthly mission, he had accepted the hardships, sufferings, sorrows, and shame that he was about to endure. Regarding these, he prayed in the Garden: "And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). He had already committed himself to this grievous ordeal.
 - f. Christ asked the Father to "glorify thy son." This glorification of the Son of God was done in a variety of ways, including his resurrection, his ascension, his receiving the throne of the everlasting kingdom, his soul-saving message which would result in the conversion and sanctification of countless Christians. The glory he would receive would redound to the Father. *Redound* is from a Greek word meaning "to turn out abundantly for something," in this case, to the glory of God. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).
 - g. Woods: The "hour" which he said had come was the sacrificial death he was soon to suffer, the culmination, the crowning event of his mission into the world. In it he was to redeem mankind from the guilt, the power, and ultimately the presence of sin. Through this, the Son would be glorified; and the glorification of the Son would redound to the glory of the Father also. His death would glorify the Father and the Son by
-

- revealing even more clearly the Lord's work on earth and the accomplishment of his purpose in coming into the world. [p.353].
2. Verses 2-3: "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."
 - a. The authority that Christ had received over "all flesh" refers to the Jews and the Gentiles.
 - 1) Acts 2:38-39: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."
 - 2) Ephesians 3:3-6: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."
 - 3) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b. Our Lord was also given the authority to provide eternal life to his followers, but that does not mean that one obtains eternal the instant he is baptized into Christ.
 - 1) Mark 10:30: "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." Eternal life given to us in the next world, eternity.
 - 2) Titus 1:2: "**In hope of eternal life**, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." We live in hope of receiving eternal life. Paul tells us that we are saved by hope: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24-25).
 - 3) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the **promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.**" We have eternal life in promise, not in actuality in this life.
 - c. Romans 8:24-25: "For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (ASV).
 - 1) Hope is pictured in Hebrews 6:19-20 as the anchor of the soul. Our hope is firmly set in heaven, lending stability and confidence to our souls as we are tossed upon the sea of life. Hope gives us the strength to endure until heaven is realized. Hope has to do with the future, and finds its realization in something which we do not presently possess.
 - 2) Hope is able to sustain us when all around us is gloom and trouble (Rom. 8:18; Heb. 11:10; 13:10; Ps. 16:11; Rev.21:4; Phil. 3:20-21). The spiritual blessings we have now, give us a foretaste of heaven.
 - a) Psalms 16:11: "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore."
 - b) Romans 8:18: "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."
 - c) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that
-

- it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
- d) Hebrews 11:10: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God."
 - e) Hebrews 13:10: "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle."
 - f) Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
- 3) A Christian's citizenship (Phil. 3:20) and treasure (Matt. 6:19-21) are in heaven; his name is recorded there (Luke 10:20); his Lord is there (Heb. 6:19-20); his affections are set on heaven (Col. 3:1-4); his mansion is built there (John 14:1-3). It is clear that our reward is not on earth, even though there are many pleasant memories here.
- d. Compare: "And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. 2:13). Following is from author's material on Hebrews:
- 1) A prophetic utterance by Isaiah is cited: "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me *are* for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion" (Isa. 8:18).
 - 2) "This is only a part of the passage in Isaiah, and seems to have been partially quoted because the point of the quotation consisted in the fact that he sustained to them somewhat of the relation of a parent toward his children—as having the same nature, and as being identified with them in interest and feeling....He became one of them, and he had in them all the interest which a father has in his sons....The point is, that he was a man; that since those who were to be redeemed partook of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same (vers. 14), and thus identified himself with them" (Barnes, p.70).
 - 3) It seems strange somehow to think of Christ in the role of *father*. However, having disciples who have obeyed his gospel and become his devoted followers, places him in the position of authority, a supremacy that is motivated by loving concern.
 - a) His children are described in verse eleven as his brethren, so the relationship is spiritual. Elsewhere, we are portrayed as his *joint*-heirs. "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" (Rom. 8:17). Of course, this does not make us equal to him; in this case, he is the elder brother. In ancient cultures, the elder brother (the firstborn) received the primary inheritance from the father, with the other sons obtaining lesser awards. In heaven, obviously Christ will still be part of the Godhead, and we will be subservient to him, even as we are under his authority now.
 - b) Our Lord is depicted in prophecy as "Everlasting Father." "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, **The everlasting Father**, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:6-7).
- e. Woods:
- 1) "This authority he could not exercise in harmony with his will and that of his Father without returning to his former glory and heavenly home. It was therefore expedient that he go away. All mankind was given him so that he might offer to that part of
-

- humanity which would surrender to his will, eternal life. To no others is it available. (Heb. 5:8, 9.) He gives eternal life to his sheep (representative of his followers), and only to such sheep of his which hear his voice and follow him. (John 10:27, 28.)
- 2) "The Calvinistic view is that Jesus takes goats and makes sheep out of them by giving them eternal life in the process of saving them! This is grave error. Eternal life is not a present possession but a future promise. (Mark 10:30; Titus 1:2, and 1 John 2:25.) Since one does not hope for that already possessed (Rom. 8:24), those passages asserting the possession of eternal life here (John 3:16; 5:24) must be understood as prospective in significance" (p.53f).
- f. All humanity was given to Christ; every accountable individual among mankind is subject to the call of the Gospel; each has the right to respond to the Gospel and thus to receive all of the blessings offered thereby.
- 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - 3) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - 4) Acts 8:1, 4: "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles....Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 5) Galatians 3:26-27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - a) "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (ASV).
 - b) It is by the faith (the gospel system) that we now become children of God. This passage is not speaking about personal faith in Christ, but states that we are God's children by the faith (the word "the" is in the original).
 - 6) We are children of God by the faith, and we are in Christ. Sonship is located within Christ, not outside of Christ.
 - a) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 - b) Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."
 - c) Romans 8:14-18: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 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."
-

- g. Knowledge of God and his message is the first step to salvation from our alien sins and for our hope of eternal life. That knowledge cannot be learned from a study of nature or of the wisdom of men (1 Cor. 2:9-14). Mere knowledge of God's word is not sufficient of itself to bring salvation and eternal life.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 8:1-3: "Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 1:12-14: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."
 - 3) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness."
3. Verse 4: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."
- a. The work Christ had done in his personal mission to earth had been toward bringing greater glory to the Father. His work was now virtually completed; what was left was his arrest, trials, the beating and insults brought on his innocent person, the horrendous execution on the cross, the burial of his body for three days and nights, and his glorious resurrection.
 - b. These events changed the of history mankind. His magnificent ascension back to Heaven enabled him to send the Holy Spirit upon the apostles through whom the eternal gospel was delivered. Countless numbers of precious souls have been delivered from the guilt of sin, ceased the practice of sin, and received the grand promise and hope of eternal life!
 - c. Truly the Messiah had glorified the Father through his earthly mission, which was finalized by his crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, and return to heaven. Think of all those folks who continually take the name of God and the name of Christ in vain—giving no thought to the awfulness of their scandalous words! Is there any word worse that anyone could ever say than to profane the holy names of Deity! Yet even little children are allowed to do so with not a word of correction!
 - d. Woods: "So certain was he that he would carry the mission through to completion that he speaks of it as already accomplished. This evidences the fact that he saw at this moment the whole of his career in panorama, and the last hours, which would involve his suffering and death, as constituent elements of his work which began more than three years before. Thus Jesus regarded his death as the consummation of his labors and so forevermore refutes the false allegation of unbelieving writers that his mission ended in failure and that he died a disappointed and frustrated man!" (pp.354f).
4. Verse 5: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."
- a. Philippians 2:5-11: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient
-

even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (ASV). See also Hebrews 2:9-18.

- b. Hebrews 10:5-10: “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, But a body didst thou prepare for me; In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure: Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God. Saying above, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (the which are offered according to the law), then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (ASV).
- c. Our Lord was willing to give up his glorious status he had in Heaven in order to take upon himself a human body, to live among sinful men, teaching them of their grievous state, and offering the only hope of redemption that would ever be possible.

C. John 17:6-19: The Prayer of Christ.

- 1. Verse 6: “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.”
 - a. The Lord in his prayer now turns to speak of the men [the apostles] who had become his immediate helpers. He states that these men had been given to him by the Father. God is said to be the father of our spirits (Heb. 12:9).
 - 1) Our fleshly bodies came from our parents in accordance with God’s natural laws. But God is the progenitor of our spirits. "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and **formeth the spirit of man within him**" (Zech. 12:1).
 - 2) Every human being living today, and all who have ever lived on earth, descended from Adam and Eve, and these two were miraculously created by the Father. To begin our ancestry to a later point in human history, all living today have as our ancestor, Noah and his wife, through one or another of their sons.
 - 3) In a real sense, every human is an offspring of God and thus belongs to him. Compare: “ For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device” (Acts 17:28-29).
 - b. Christ had personally selected the twelve apostles; each had the choice to accept the call or reject it; each had the right remain faithful to the Lord or turn away from him. The Father was in fully agreement with the men his Son chose; indeed, he had permitted these choices. Each member of the Godhead [The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit] are perfectly in harmony with what each of the three do.
 - c. Our Lord affirms that he had revealed the Father to the apostles. His life was fully in keeping with the nature of the Father (cf. John 14:9). His teachings were from the Father, who originated these truths (John 17:8). The apostles were expected to be obedient to all that they had been taught. But, again, they had to choose to obey or disobey. To become and remain the followers of the Son, they had to come out from the world.

- d. Jesus stated that they had kept the word of God he had taught them. Even Judas was faithful for a time. Peter later allowed himself to be led astray when he was at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14).
 - e. While the Lord hand-picked his apostles, Christians become saved people when they answer the invitation of the Gospel:
 - 1) Acts 10:34-35: "And Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:14-15: "Whereunto he **called you through our gospel**, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions [Note: *Inspired traditions—bw*] which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours" (ASV).
 - 3) Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: **he that will**, let him take the water of life freely" (ASV).
 - f. Woods: "These disciples the Father had given to Jesus, not by an arbitrary selection, but because all humanity belongs to him; and these enjoyed the divine approval because "they have kept thy word!" It is in this manner the Lord predestinates, and in no other, respecting salvation. Judas was among those given to the Son by the Father and in exactly the same way as the others; but he differed from them because he did not keep the Father's word" (p.356).
2. Verses 7-8: "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."
 - a. The Lord states in his prayer, which undoubtedly was audible, that he had delivered to the apostles that which he had received from the Father. By this time, they had come to grasp much of the Lord's mission, although the fullness of his purposes would be revealed after the Holy Spirit had come upon them on the first Pentecost after the Lord's resurrection.
 - b. They still struggled with materialist concepts of the nature of the eternal kingdom (of Dan. 2:44; 7:13-14; cf. Acts 1:6) until the full revelation was unfolded.
 - c. The fact that Paul and the Colossians had been translated into the kingdom, proves that the kingdom was in existence! The establishment of the kingdom was not future; it was present in fact. John stated that he was in the kingdom.
 - 1) Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - 2) John also stated that Christ's followers comprise a kingdom. "And he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:6, ASV).
 - d. The kingdom of Christ is identical to the church of Christ. When the Lord gave the promise to build his church, he also spoke of the church as the kingdom, using the two terms interchangeably.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my **church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the **kingdom of heaven**: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be
-

- loosed in heaven." The church is also identified as the body of Christ. See Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 1:22-23.
- 2) The picture of being translated into the kingdom of Christ is equal to the picture of being added to the church. "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).
 - 3) Since the church came into existence on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2, the kingdom came into being on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2; the kingdom and the church are identical.
3. Verses 9-10: "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."
- a. We need to keep in mind the subject of the Lord's prayer—his apostles. In verse six, he identifies the apostles as the subject of this part of his prayer. He states that they had kept God's word. They had been given God's words (vs. 6). The next verse shows that these men had received the information the Messiah was directed to reveal to them. They are then identified as those whom the Father had given to Jesus.
 - b. Therefore, we must not err in applying these matters to ourselves. Remember that John 14-16 tells of special powers and rights the apostles would receive, which things were given to them: Acts 1:26—Acts 2:4. Only the apostles received these things. Jesus did not personally and directly teach us anything; none of us has ever seen, touched or heard the Lord with our own senses.
 - c. What did Jesus mean when he said he prayed, not for the world, but for "those whom thou hast given me"? In verse twenty-one, he did indeed pray for those who would learn and believe on the Savior. Obviously, his apostles were to shoulder the greatest burden and task which has ever been given to any small group of men. Noah and his sons were required to construct a great boat, but most likely they hired the labors of many others in this work.
 - d. The apostles of Christ bore a singular responsibility, which could not be passed on to others. As time continued and their work became highly successful, there were various of the new converts who were deemed qualified to have an apostle lay his hands upon them, thereby giving unto those individuals certain supernatural powers. Only an apostle had the right and power to confer such gifts. Romans 8:14-18; Romans 1:11; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.
 - e. The apostles of Christ, excluding Judas, and including Matthias and Paul, comprised a very special link in the revelation of the eternal mystery which originated with the Father in eternity, before the beginning of time. Where would lost humanity be if the work of the apostles had not been done?
 - 1) Mark 16:15-20: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen."
 - 2) Romans 10:13-18: "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 whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without
-

a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things! But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. But I say, Did they not hear? Yea, verily, Their sound went out into all the earth, And their words unto the ends of the world” (ASV).

- 3) Colossians 1:5-6, 23: “Because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you; even as it is also in all the world bearing fruit and increasing, as it doth in you also, since the day ye heard and knew the grace of God in truth...If so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister” (ASV).
 4. Verse 11: “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.”
 - a. Christ had invited the special twelve into his immediate company. He had enriched their knowledge by teaching them the early truths concerning the kingdom [Matt. 4:17; 16:16-19] and its nature [Matt. 13]. They learned about the kind of people they were to become [Cf. Matt. 5-7] and the great mission they were to fulfill [John 14-16; Mark 16:15-16].
 - b. While he was with them, he provided the guidance and direct instructions they needed, but he was soon to return to his Father’s house in heaven. He next expressed in his prayer the request that his Holy Father keep them through or in God’s name. After his return to God, they could approach God through the Son; and when the Spirit was sent upon them, they would receive direct guidance and authority from this third member of the Godhead.
 - c. Manifestly, it was the will of the Lord that these twelve men should be perfectly united. Any division would weaken the performance of their mission. "Nothing moves the indignation of men more than to know that one of a company of equals is plotting to get an undue advantage over the others. It was now necessary that Jesus should interfere as a peacemaker" (*Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, McGarvey, p.177).
 - d. The others were "much displeased" over this move on the part of James and John (Mark 10:41). The devil had used human ambition and anger to divide the apostles on this occasion. Unless Jesus could bring about a reconciliation, his great mission was in jeopardy. During their travels with the Lord, there were certain contentions which arose.
 5. Verse 12-13: “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.”
 - a. Jesus speaks of his time with the apostles in the world, referring back to his earthly ministry in which the twelve took a direct part. The identity of those the Lord is speaking about is clearly shown in this passage. It was the group of which Judas was a part—the original Twelve. Eleven of these apostles were kept, they did not fall into temptation and apostasy, as Judas did. This one is described as “the son of perdition.” See Acts 1:16.
 - b. Acts 1:17: "For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry." This is still part of Peter's remarks. Judas was numbered with *us*, the apostles, and because of that, he partook of the ministry to which the Lord had called them.
 - c. Woods:
-

- 1) “The phrase, ‘son of perdition,’ applied to Judas signifies son of perishing, and there is thus a play on words, none perished except the perishing one. This means simply that Judas' destiny was to perish, the reference being to the destruction of his soul by his perfidy. In his fall the scripture was fulfilled. (Psalm 41:9.)
 - 2) This does not mean that Judas sinned so that the scripture might be fulfilled as if his condemnation was a predestined and predetermined action; the meaning is that when he fell it proved to be the act which the scripture had anticipated. Judas willingly performed the deed which fulfilled the prediction. The choice was his; his wicked and perverse heart led him to follow a course resulting in the loss of his life—both physical and spiritual.
 - 3) “Some expositors, anxious to see in the case of Judas an instance of reprobation, the result of an arbitrary decree predestined to this end from the beginning, refuse to the faithless disciple the same relationship with Christ they accord the other apostles. In so doing, they deny the facts involved as well as the affirmation of the text.
 - 4) We have seen that Judas was selected in the same fashion as were the others; in verse 12 Jesus affirms that all of them (1) had been given to him by the Father; (2) had been kept by him under careful observation; (3) and had been taught by him (verse 8); of these, not one had perished except Judas who was, by his own design (and not by divine decree), destined to destruction. Judas was the exception only if he had been given to Christ by the Father, instructed, guarded and warned as were the rest. His is a case of apostasy, not reprobation by irrevocable decree” (p.359).
- d. John 12:4-6 reports that Judas carried “the bag” and was “a thief.” This indicates that Judas was the treasurer for the group, and that he stole from the money he was entrusted to keep.
- e. If a Christian turns back to his former evil ways in one wicked matter, that first step naturally and easily can lead to another such step, which is likely to quickly lead to many other acts of sin. The heart is thus hardened by degrees, and the person is back where he used to be! This describes the falling away of Judas.
- f. “And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves” (John 17:13).
- 1) Again the Lord speaks of his returning to the Father and that the apostles would still need heavenly assistance. As Jesus had so-guided them that they could remain faithful in their work, so our Lord prayed that the Father would likewise aid them to stay faithful to Christ.
 - 2) This could be done by the revelation they were soon to receive, beginning on the first Pentecost Day following the Lord’s ascension. It was incumbent on the apostles to apply the gospel to themselves, as it is for every child of God.
 - 3) Matthew 28:20: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - 4) An inner contentment [joy, happiness] results when a Christian grows to spiritual adulthood, even when he faces hardship or persecution because of his faithfulness.
 - a) Matthew 5:10-12 Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you” (ASV).
 - b) Philippians 4:4-7: “Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say rejoice In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God,
-

which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus” (ASV).

6. Verses 14-15: “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” (KJV). “I have given them thy word; and the world 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 from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one” (ASV).
 - a. Why did Jesus deliver to his apostles God’s word? They were to learn it, to meditate on it, to believe it, follow it personally, and teach it to the world. As they traveled with the Lord in his daily work among the Jews, they saw how the religious leaders and others opposed Christ; as they carried out their limited commission, they experienced to some degree of the same kind of opposition.
 - b. There were some who had already held hatred toward them. They could expect a far greater degree and more wide-spread amount of hatred because they taught the full counsel of God. The world has never wanted to have their sins noticed and condemned. But that is what the Bible does! Before anyone can be brought to repentance, he must first learn that he is in sin (in rebellion against the creator).
 - 1) Sin is defined as “missing the mark.” Recall that an archer may launch his arrow, but because his aim was faulty in some way, it misses the mark he wants to hit. A human being may try to do what he thinks is right, but due to his own weakness, poor effort, or because he is following a false standard, he misses the mark.
 - a) “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). This connects with the concluding remark of verse 22. Why is there no difference in the method by which Jews and Gentiles are saved? Because all (both Gentile and Jew) have sinned.
 - b) The tenses of the verbs **sinned** and **come short** demonstrate the universal extent of sin. “Sinned” (*hemarton*) is second aorist active indicative, gnomic or timeless; it shows that sin has always been a problem for the whole human race.
 - 2) Sin is also denoted as transgression: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). “*Every one who committeth sin habitually, committeth also the transgression of law habitually. For sin is the transgression of law, and will be severely punished, whatever the false teachers may pretend*” (Macknight, p.67). Whoever practices sin is a lawless person; he is sinful. The apostle penned this in order to expose the error of false teachers. The Gnostics of that time thought their “superior knowledge” enabled them to practice sin without being tainted by guilt. But John points out that any sin is a disobedience of the law of God. One guilty of such falls under the condemnation of God.
 - c. The Lord and his apostles were hated because they did not live like the world lived; and they taught the people of the world that they were in sin and must accept the truth and to be saved—which the world refused to do. The only difference between the Lord and his people of the first century and later and the faithful ones of today in America, is the degree of hatred that is expressed: in those ancient time, physical persecution and even prison and death were often the result; in our case, we suffer much less punishment now [e.g., harsh words, ostracism, attacks against our character, etc.]. What about the future?
 - d. Christ would have been working at cross purposes if he had asked the Father to remove the apostles from this sin-filled world. His very mission to the world’s population was to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). To have taken the apostles directly to heaven

- before their great work began would have kept them from the awful persecution that was impending, but the world would have remained in a lost and **un**-savable condition.
- e. Why were they not left on earth?
 - 1) For same reason he does not take a new Christian immediately to heaven.
 - 2) To die as newborn saint gain glory and miss evil temptations pains struggles.
 - 3) John 17:18: purposes assigned for them and us on earth.
 - 4) Christianity would die without faithful saints here.
 - 5) Overall purpose summed up in 1 Corinthians 10:31b: “Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”
 - 6) Chief aim of worship is to glorify, praise, exalt God.
 - 7) Primary purpose of our work, pure life, obedience is to glorify God—Which is to our benefit!
 - f. They and we are to preach the gospel to the world.
 - 1) Commanded of us all (Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 8:4).
 - 2) Christ works through agents (Acts 8:26-29; 2 Cor. 4:7); His body is on earth; Head of body is in heaven.
 - 3) Awesome responsibility: we are only ones to proclaim gospel!
 - 4) We were taught, to teach what we know (2 Tim. 2:2).
 - g. The apostles and we are expected to grow spiritually.
 - 1) Would worry if baby did not grow; seek doctor's aid.
 - 2) Extremely important that we grow spiritually: “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Heb. 5:12).
 - 3) Grow spiritually by becoming more Christ-like:
 - a) “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 John 2:6).
 - b) “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him glory both now and for ever’ (2 Pet. 3:18).
 - c) 2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”
 - h. Sometimes we fall into sin or may be about to do so. Temptations come in many forms and degrees: persecution, hardship, loss.
 - i. If we would sustain and preserve the hope we possess, we must continue to purify ourselves; a failure to do so is to lapse into a life of sin; and a life of sin is lawlessness.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 7:1: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”
 - 2) 1 John 3:2-3: “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. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”
7. Verses 16-17: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”
- a. Although the apostles were in the world, they were not of the world. As the enemies in the world were to execute the Lord in only a few hours, and were to be deadly foes of these men, and would before long seek to persecute and slay them, they still had a
-

- powerful job of work to do for their Master. Christ asked the Father **to sanctify** his apostles.
- b. Woods:
 - 1) “The Greek word so translated means to consecrate; its corresponding Hebrew word is used repeatedly in the Old Testament for the consecration of persons and things to the service of Jehovah. There, the process was achieved through ritual and ceremonial observance; here, the Lord makes it clear that it is to be reached through the truth, as embodied in his word, i.e., by means of the truth operating in the life the consecration of the entire person will be achieved. Thus, the people of God are sanctified, consecrated, dedicated to his service through obedience to the truth which has in it all that is necessary to enable them to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. (Titus 2:11, 12.)
 - 2) “It is therefore an impeachment of the all-sufficiency of his word to urge that additional influences, wrought by the Holy Spirit, are necessary to the sanctification of the body, soul and spirit of man. (1 Thess. 5:23.) The Spirit provided the word (1 Cor. 2:8-13); to urge that it cannot produce the sanctification for which the Lord prays is to limit the power of the Spirit himself as well as to deny the truth of the Lord's affirmation here. The ‘word’ is ‘truth’ because it is the sum of our information regarding God's will for us today. We become all that God wants us to be through faithful obedience to his word. This is the sanctification for which Jesus prayed” (pp.361f).
 - c. Sanctification is accomplished by the Holy Spirit; he uses the inspired word of God to bring this spiritual condition to pass. It is not an action done by the Spirit in a direct, miraculous way; it is not done independent of our will.
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:2: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."
 - 2) The Spirit's work is accomplished through the message he revealed to inspired men, and which he caused to be recorded as the New Testament. See 1 Corinthians 2:9-14; 2 Timothy 3:15-17.
 - d. The part the individual plays in the great spiritual drama of sanctification is to hear, believe, and obey the Spirit-given message.
 - 1) Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
8. Verses 18-19: “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.”
- a. The Father sent the Son into the world to fulfill the eternal purpose of God. Christ now is sending his apostles into the world to accomplish this timeless mission [Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8].
 - b. Christ had dedicated himself to fulfill the mission to earth that the Father had given to him; he willingly left heaven for earth, according God's plan. “Have this mind in you,
-

which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:5-11, ASV).

- c. Christ had sanctified himself. He did this when he left heaven for his earthly ministry.
 - 1) Hebrews 10:7, 9: “ Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God....then hath he said, Lo, I am come to do thy will. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second” (ASV).
 - 2) Verse nine affirms again that Christ came to do the will of God. One of the things he did was to remove the first covenant, in order to establish the second covenant. It was God’s will that the Old Law be removed, and that the New Testament be given in its place.
 - 3) It was not his will that Moses’ Law should continue forever; it is not God’s will that the old law should be re-instated, as the millennialists assert. Contradictory speed limits cannot both be enforced for the same stretch of road; the Old Covenant and the New Covenant cannot both be enforced at the same time.
 - 4) When the Mosaic Law was removed, and the New Testament took effect, polygamy, incense, burnt offerings, divorce for any cause, and a host of other matters were removed. See Colossians 2:12-17.\

D. John 17:20-26: Christ Prayers for Others.

- 1. Verses 20-21: “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.”
 - a. The perfect unity which exists between the Father and the Son is shown all through this chapter. As the Father and Son are one, all the followers of the Savior should be one—united. Of course it was necessary for the apostles of Christ also to be one. Before the Lord’s crucifixion, the twelve were at odds with each other, as we have noticed earlier. But after the events on the Pentecost Day of Acts Two, the apostles did not try to exalt or debase each other.
 - 1) They served the same Master, they followed the same gospel, they preached and taught the same truths, they were citizens of the same spiritual kingdom.
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:15-16: “And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”
 - b. Our Lord prayed that those who would believe on him through the world the apostles would preach, that they all would be one—fully united, with no schism among them. Notice also that faith would be engendered in others by the faithful word of the gospel.
 - 1) Romans 10:17: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” This is a very clear statement of how faith is produced in the human heart. The parable of the sower illustrates it with equal clarity (Matt. 13; Mark 4; Luke 8).
 - 2) Acts 15:7: “And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.”

- c. It is in direct opposition to the Lord's prayer and eternal will for Christians to divide themselves into warring denominations! It is likewise sinful for local congregations of the Lord's people to be divided into factions cliques. An old report from earlier days, a local church divided; each group still used the same meeting place, but at different times. Each group had its one separate pile of coal, with which the building was heated. This gave rise to a trite statement: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism—but two coal-piles!"
- 1) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
 - 2) Ephesians 4:3-6: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."
 - 3) If two or more faithful Christians are in one place, they will be at peace with each other; their knowledge, faithfulness, and dedication to the truth will insure this happy condition. It is sad, however, that where two or more people (even saints) are together, there is a possibility that some spark of dissension can be struck! But mature saints will be able and willing to solve whatever difference may arise—each one will want it so.
- d. Division among the saints will surely cause the world to close its mind to the truth. But if the brethren are perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment, each one seeking the good of the other saints, the people of the world are more likely to open their minds to the truth.
- e. Woods (p.364):
- 1) The unity of life and spirit for which Jesus prayed had as its design the conversion of the world: "That the world may believe that thou didst send me." The greatest barrier to the conversion of all mankind is the disunity which prevails in the religious world. The only really effective argument the infidel has against what is called the Christian religion is the disgraceful divisions which fracture and weaken it.
 - 2) Though denominational devotees freely concede that their organizations are human in origin and offer nothing peculiar to them that is essential to salvation, they nonetheless persist in maintaining them, thus perpetuating the division which our Lord deplored.
2. Verses 22-23: "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."
- a. Coffman:
- 1) Not the apostles only, but all Christians, partake of the glory of God from Christ. They are partakers of his holiness (Hebrews 12:10), "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4), and have received the reconciliation (Romans 5:11).
 - 2) The perfect unity flows out of perfect submission to the total will of God in Christ, resulting in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, etc." (Ephesians 4:4-5). God's love of Christ means God's love of Christ's body, which is his church.
- b. Glory is defined in part by Vine in these words: doxa (NT:1391), "glory" (from dokeo, "to seem"), primarily signifies an opinion, estimate, and hence, the honor resulting from a good opinion. It is used (I) (a) of the nature and acts of God in self-manifestation, i. e., what He essentially is and does, as exhibited in whatever way he reveals Himself in
-

these respects, and particularly in the person of Christ, in whom essentially His "glory" has ever shone forth and ever will do, John 17:5,24; Heb 1:3. [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].

3. Verse 24: "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."
 - a. Anything that the Son could wish was more than a mere expression of momentary want. His standing with the Father was such that this was a strong petition in behalf of the apostles. His desire would also be the desire of the Father, since they are perfectly unity in plan and purpose.
 - b. Peter, James and John had beheld a manifestation of his glory when he was transfigured before them (Matt. 17:1-5). "For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount" (2 Pet. 1:17-18).
 - 1) Peter directly connects his statements here with the transfiguration. It was on that occasion that God's voice sounded forth from on high, acknowledging Jesus as his beloved Son in whom he was well pleased. Verse eighteen will pinpoint the location of this event as being on the holy mount. This shows that the reference was not to the baptismal scene, when God also spoke from Heaven.
 - 2) Luke's account reports that the fashion of his countenance was altered. "*Transfigured* means *changed in form*, yet the description indicates only a change in the appearance of his person. Though 'his face did shine as the sun,' we suppose that the features maintained their natural form; and though 'his raiment was white as light'— that is, light reflected from some polished surface—we suppose it was unchanged in other particulars. It is impossible for us to realize his appearance until we shall be like him and see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)" (McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, p.150). The same word is used in Romans 12:2 to describe the change which is effected in Christians as they imbibe the principles of the gospel. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).
 - c. 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 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. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
 - 1) We are the children of God *now* despite the attitude the world has toward us. The fact that we do not now know what we shall be does not change our present status. Our knowledge about the details of our promised condition in eternity is incomplete; we have been given all the information that we are able to grasp, and all that we need to know. Many of the facts revealed in the Bible about Heaven are negative, showing that our situation there will not be like it is here—it will be vastly improved!
 - 2) Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and

- undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”
- d. This truth has a strong motivating effect on those who are sincere in their faith. It is powerful enough to urge us to make even greater progress in developing our Christian character, and prod us to be more and more active in his service. To see him in his real being and to be like him! What a beautiful thought! He does not inhabit the same physical body he possessed as he lived on earth; flesh and blood cannot live in the home of the soul: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Cor. 15:50).
4. Verses 25-26: “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.”
- a. NKJ: “O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”
- b. Woods:
- 1) In verse 11, the Lord appealed to the Father on the basis of his holiness; here, on the ground of his righteousness; the one resulted from the other; and both assured that the Father would gladly grant the petitions made. The world, because it did not know the Father (that is, did not approve of his will and way, this being demonstrated in the fact that they rejected his Son whom he sent into the world), repudiated the teaching of the Lord by which alone they could have really come to know the Father; but his beloved disciples had been able, through this teaching, to know him and to recognize the fact that the Father had sent Jesus into the world.
 - 2) By this revelation, and through obedience thereto, men would be able to see and to know the Father and be privileged to go where he is at the end of this age. Earlier, he had prayed that the unity which he and the Father enjoyed might also be possessed by the disciples; here, he longs for the love which binds him to the Father to possess them also.
 - 3) Here, this remarkable prayer ends. The simplicity of its style, the child-like faith of him who utters it, the humility which occasions every petition, the utter absence of any awareness of weakness, the unselfishness which it breathes in every word are but a few of the characteristics which make it the most sensitive and sublime prayer ever offered.
 - 4) Two of the five petitions are for the unity of the Lord's people and while the divisions which today rend the body of Christ thwart the consummation of his earnest desire for his people, may we hope and pray and labor to the end that all who wear the name of Christ may ultimately be one and that all schisms, divisions, contentions, alienations, with all strife and bitterness may forevermore cease and that those who profess to be his followers may put on display before the world the blessed unity for which he prayed! [pp.366f].
- c. Four Fold Gospel:
- 1) “While Jesus prays that his disciples may enter the heavenly state, that state is not expressed as the end desired. He wishes them to be in that state that they may behold his glory. The glory of Christ is his Sonship, and the love which accompanies that relationship. To behold this is the height of spiritual exaltation. To know God is life eternal, and to behold God is joy ineffable. God is truly beheld subjectively. We must be like him to see him as he is (1 John 3:2). The second petition of Jesus, therefore, in no way savors of a vainglorious desire that his disciples may behold him to lead
-

them to admire him, but a wish that they may participate in the heavenly state, and know the Sonship of Jesus and all its attendant blessedness by, in some measure, participating in it.]

- 2) "In these closing sentences Jesus blends his present and his future disciples. To his present disciples he had made known the Father's name, and to the future ones he would make it known. The knowledge which he had of the Father had been imparted to the disciples, and they had received it, and had thereby been in some measure fitted for the revelation of the glory for which he had just prayed.
 - 3) "The world, on the contrary, had rejected Christ's revelation, and had refused to know God, and had thus become unworthy of the privilege here asked for the disciples. Jesus had revealed the Father while on earth that men might attain to the revelation of God in the hereafter, thus participating in the love which the Father has for the Son because the Son is spiritually in them. It is a significant fact that the two of the five petitions of this prayer are for Christian unity. It may be said generally of all the petitions that they ask the Father to complete that which the Son has already begun and completed to the limit of his present circumscribed power."
-

John Chapter 18

A. John 18:1: Jesus and the Eleven Went Out to the Garden of Gethsamane.

1. Verse 1: “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.” ASV: “When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into which he entered, himself and his disciples.”
 - a. Matthew 26:30, 36: “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the mount of Olives Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray.”
 - b. John tells us in this first verse that the long presentation our Lord gave was done while they were in the upper room, and not as they traveled out of Jerusalem toward Gethsemane.
2. Barnes:
 - a. This was a small stream that flowed to the east of Jerusalem, through the valley of Jehoshaphat, and divided the city from the Mount of Olives. It was also called Kidron and Kedron. In summer it is almost dry [T]he idea is that of a stream that was swollen by rain or by the melting of the snow (Passow, Lexicon).
 - b. This small rivulet runs along on the east of Jerusalem until it is joined by the water of the pool of Siloam, and the water that flows down on the west side of the city through the valley of Jehoshaphat, and then goes off in a southeast direction to the Dead Sea. (See the map of the environs of Jerusalem.) Over this brook David passed when he fled from Absalom, 2 Sam 15:23. It is often mentioned in the Old Testament, 1 Kings 15:13; 2 Chron 15:16; 30:14; 2 Kings 23:6,12.
3. Gethsemane: “an oil-press), a small "farm," Matt 26:36; Mark 14:32, situated across the brook Kedron John 18:1, probably at the foot of Mount Olivet, Luke 22:39, to the northwest and about one-half or three quarters of a mile English from the walls of Jerusalem, and 100 yards east of the bridge over the Kedron.
 - a. “There was a ‘garden,’ or rather orchard, attached to it, to which the olive, fig and pomegranate doubtless invited resort by their hospitable shade. And we know from the evangelists Luke 22:39. And John 18:2, that our Lord oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.
 - b. “But Gethsemane has not come down to us as a scene of mirth; its inexhaustible associations are the offspring of a single event — the agony of the Son of God on the evening preceding his passion
 - c. “Against the contemporary antiquity of the olive trees it has been urged that Titus cut down all the trees about Jerusalem. The probability would seem to be that they were planted by Christian hands to mark the spot unless, like the sacred olive of the Acropolis, they may have reproduced themselves. [Smith's Bible Dictionary, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved].

B. John 18:2-9: Judas Leads His Band to Gethsemane.

1. Verse 2: “And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.”
 - a. The movements of Judas, after the Last Supper, we may readily picture to ourselves in their outline. Going immediately to Caiaphas, or to some other leading member of the Sanhedrin, he informs him where Jesus is, and announces that he is ready to fulfill his compact, and at once to make the arrest. It was not the intention to arrest Christ during the feast, lest there should be a popular tumult (Matt. 26:5); but, now that an opportunity
-

- offered of seizing him secretly at dead of night, when all were asleep or engaged at the paschal meal, his enemies could not hesitate. Judas knew the place, for it was a frequent resort of Jesus with his disciples. He had been there oftentimes. No hallowed associations with that sacred spot deterred his treason for one moment. [See Johnson, p.281].
- b. It was necessary for Judas to identify Jesus directly, for the garden would be dark and his exact location within the garden would be unknown to the posse. Not everyone had been close enough to Jesus to quickly identify him.
 - c. Christ did not seek out this out-of-the way site to conceal himself from his enemies. They had already made an agreement with Judas to deliver the Lord into their hands.
 - 1) Matthew 26:1-5: “And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.”
 - 2) Matthew 26:14-16: “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.”
 - d. Judas knew where the Lord would most likely be, and thus he fulfilled his evil agreement with the chief priests.
 - 1) Matthew 26:47-50: “And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.”
 - 2) Luke 22:39: “And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.”
 - 3) Matthew 26:55-56: “In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.”
 - e. One of the deficiencies of character of Judas was avarice. The apostle John revealed when he wrote his account of the gospel toward the end of the first century, that Judas was a thief: “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” (John 12:3-6).
2. Verse 3: “Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.”
 - a. Matthew notes that the band who came with Judas was “a great multitude” (26:47). Johnson observed (p.261):
 - 1) It consisted (1) of the band (John 18 :3,12), or Roman cohort, which, consisting of 300 to 600 men, was quartered in the tower of Antonia, overlooking the temple, and ever ready to put down any tumult or arrest any disturber. Probably so much of the band as could be spared was present. (2) There were the captains of the temple (Luke 22 : 52), with their men, who guarded the temple and kept order. (3) Some of the
-

- chief priests and elders (Luke 22 : 52). (4) And, finally, their servants, such as Malchus.
- 2) The priests, ignorant of the spirit and purposes of Jesus, expected resistance. The "lanterns and torches" show that they expected that he might hide in the dark shadows of the valleys and crags. Otherwise they would not have been required when there was the full passover moon.
 - b. It might have been the case that Judas and his posse checked the upper room first, for this was where the Lord had been when sinful disciple left to get his little army. But knowing that usual place where Jesus and the apostles often resorted to spend the night, he went on to Gethsemane.
 - 1) It appears that Judas was now so perverted in his mind that he felt no pain of conscience at this time. Later, he became so overwhelmed with sorrow that he hanged himself.
 - 2) Matthew 27:3-5: "Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."
 - c. The identifying sign by which Judas would reveal Jesus to his mob was a kiss.
 - 1) Luke 22:47: "And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him."
 - 2) Matthew 26:48-49: "Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him."
 - d. Woods: "The participation of the Roman cohort along with the Jewish council (the Sanhedrin) in the arrest of Jesus, thus involved both Jew and Gentile in this wicked scheme to destroy him who alone could give the world the peace and joy for which it yearns but will not seek in the proper way" (p.370).
3. Verse 4: "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?"
- a. Our Lord was fully appraised of what was about to befall him. He knew it before he left Heaven for his earthly mission. He had asked the Father whether this ordeal could be avoided (Matt. 26:39), but was perfectly committed to doing the will of the Almighty, since there was no other way that lost humanity could be reclaimed.
 - b. He did not try to conceal his identity from Judas and the unholy mob. He stepped forth so he could be seen and asked, "Whom seek ye?" The Lord was not caught; he rather exposed himself to the will of the cohort.
 - c. "Knowing their objects and all that he had to endure on the morrow. He submitted of his own will, and after the troubled hour of Gethsemane, is as calm as the unruffled sea. Jesus "went forth" from the shadow of the trees into the moonlight, or from the garden walls, advancing in front of his disciples, in order to save them from arrest (verse 8), and asked whom they sought" (Johnson pp.261f).
4. Verses 5-6: "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."
- a. The spokesman for the mob answered, that they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth. Notice that the Lord did not try to hide his identity; he stepped forth and identified himself. In fact, there would have been no need for the kiss from the depraved betrayer.
 - b. Jesus fearlessly acknowledged that he was the one they sought. He showed no the least particle of fear! The Lord's supernatural powers were not unknown to this multitude;
-

this would explain the terror that caused the men to go backward and fell on the ground. We are also told that Judas was standing there with them.

- 1) "Was standing with them ... suggests that John could still remember, over the gulf of years, the traitor, standing there in the flickering torchlight, his very presence with the Lord's enemies stabbing the hearts of them who had been his friends" (Coffman).
 - 2) Because inspiration placed him directly on the scene, as the guide to them who came for the Lord, he could not cut himself off from his complicity and guilt!
- c. The strength of his reputation of Jesus likely contributed to the fear with which the men were overcome. Judas certainly knew of the miraculous powers the Lord had shown on many occasions. He may have expected the Lord to defend himself with some powerful miracle.
 - d. This remarkable out-flashing of Jesus' power explains why the arresting party so readily consented to permit the apostles to leave without being arrested. It was perfectly clear to that entire company that Jesus could do anything, and therefore they allowed his arrest upon his own terms, not theirs. Can there be any other possible explanation of why the whole group was not arrested? It will be further noted that Jesus referred to his prevention of their arrest as a fulfillment of his prophetic words in the great prayer (John 17:12); and from this the deduction stands that if the apostles had been arrested they might have been killed also. [Coffman].
 - e. Then follows a scene designed to show all the world that the Lord laid down his own life. His foemen were powerless in his hands. As he answers, either his majesty and their own terror so impressed them, that, awed, they fell backward to the earth, or his divine power was exerted to prostrate them. Then the Lord submitted himself "as a lamb to the slaughter," and his power is not again exerted until he rises from the tomb, except to heal the smitten servant of the high priest. [Johnson, p.262).
 - f. We must not overlook the wise comment by Brother Woods in this place: "The divine demeanor, the simple majesty of his bearing, his bold exhibition of innocence filled their hearts with terror and they instinctively shrank from him, the entire group swaying backward and then falling to the ground. The darkness of the night, the deeper shadows of the trees and of the overhanging mount contributed to the awesomeness of the scene."
 - g. Notice also the comment from *The Pulpit Commentary* :J
 - 1) Whether this was a supernatural event, or allied to the sublime force of moral greatness flashing in his eye or echoing in the tone of his voice, we cannot say, but associating it with other events in his history, the supernatural in his case becomes perfectly natural.
 - 2) It was so that he whose "I am he" had hushed the waves and cast out the devil, and before whose glance and word John and Paul fell to the earth, as if struck with lightning, did perhaps allow his very captors (prepared by Judas for some display of his might) to feel how powerless they were against him. It is remarkable that our narrative should place between the "I am he" and its effect, the tautologous remark if there be nothing to explain it.
 - h. This experience reminds us of what happen to Saul of Tarsus when he was confronted by Jesus in the miraculous vision he beheld as he journeyed toward Damascus:
 - 1) Acts 9:3-8: "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless,
-

- hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.”
- 2) Acts 22:5-8: “As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.”
 - 3) Acts 26:11-16: “And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;.”
5. Verses 7-9: “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.”
- a. The Lord asked the company who it was they were seeking. They answered again that they sought Jesus of Nazareth. This would not be a case of mistaken identity! Jesus remind them that he had already identified himself as Jesus of Nazareth. There would be no need for further investigation.
 - b. Christ asked the mob the same question, which revived them to a consciousness of the moment. Their terror had given them a hard shaking!
 - c. Jesus next made an effort to shield his apostles from arrest. “You have the person you were seeking; therefore, let these men go away without any harm.” The identity of those the Lord is speaking about is clearly shown in this passage. It was the group of which Judas was a part—the original Twelve. Eleven of these apostles were kept, they did not fall into temp-tation and apostasy, as Judas did. This one is described as “the son of perdition.”
 - d. God never left any particle of prophecy unfulfilled. The fact that the apostles were not taken into custody in the present circumstances is such a case:
 - 1) John 18:9: “That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.”
 - 2) John 17:12 : “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.”
 - 3) Matthew 5:18: “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Christ did abolish the law when he died on the cross (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; Rom. 7:1-7). Not one iota of the law was annulled "until all of it reached fulfillment, till the whole purpose of the law had been accomplished. And this was done at the cross" (Wallace, p.30). "...The
-

necessary inference is that when the law was fulfilled every jot and every tittle did pass—the whole law ended" (ibid.).

- 4) Luke 16:17: "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

C. John 18:10-11: The Episode of Peter Wielding a Sword in the Lord's Defense.

1. Verse 10: "Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear."

a. Other passages contribute more information.

- 1) Luke 22:33: "And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." This was Peter speaking.
- 2) Luke 22:38: "And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough" Peter had one of these weapons.
- 3) Luke 22:47-53: "And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."
- 4) Prior to the events on the Pentecost day following the Lord's resurrection, Peter was known as being forward and impetuous, quick to speak and to act.

b. Woods:

- 1) From Luke we learn that following the deceitful kiss of Judas the question was raised, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" and very likely before the Saviour replied Peter promptly slashed out with it thus severing the ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest. Peter's purpose is clear; he intended to cut the man's head off and would have but for the fact that Malchus dodged to the left thus causing the sharp blade of the weapon to come between the head and the ear.
- 2) The detail of this narrative is remarkable, rendering it impossible to have been contrived. In undesigned coincidence, the possession of the sword is explained; the name of the apostle who wielded it given; the identity of the person Peter struck is mentioned; his relationship to the high priest is included and the fact that it was the right ear which was cut off is not overlooked. This is the report of an eyewitness.
- 3) The possession of the sword itself, during the feast, was in violation of Jewish law but the apostle undoubtedly justified it because of the imminent peril the entire company of disciples felt. The action was rash, in conflict with the nature and purpose of the Lord's mission and threatened its future.
- 4) Jesus quickly acted to counteract its effects. Luke informs us that Jesus touched the ear of Malchus and "healed him," thus replacing it. There is some reason to conclude that the ear, though severed, was still attached by the skin to Malchus' face from the fact that Jesus, in performing the miracle, is said to have touched it in the act of restoring it.

- c. We are not inclined to speculate about what happened to Malchus in the time following this important event in his life. We are not told any more about his life going forward than we are told about Barrabas after he was released from custody by Pilate (Matt. 27:20-26). We would have been told about these matters if there was anything important for us to know.
-

- d. “Abbott surmises that the attack on the guard followed their sudden terror. .All the disciples were eager to make it (Luke 22:49), though Peter was the only one who carried the will into action. In Luke 22: 49, Peter first asks if they shall fight. He waits not for the answer, but impelled by the natural courage of his heart, and taking no heed of the odds against him, aims a blow at one, probably the foremost of the band, the first that was daring to lay profane hands on the sacred person of the Lord” (Johnson, pp.262f).
2. Verse 11: “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?”
 - a. We are given the name of the high priest’s servant—Malchus. John reports that it was this man’s right ear that was injured, which Luke tells us the Lord healed.
 - b. Instead of receiving a commendation from Jesus, Peter was rebuked for his impulsive act. He did not tell the apostle to destroy or throw away the sword, but to return it to its sheath.
 - c. Matthew adds this: “And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” (26:51-54).
 - d. McGarvey:
 - 1) "As it is not true in history that all *individuals* who take the sword perish with the sword we must understand this remark rather of organized communities of men, both political and religious. In this sense the statement has proved true, so far as history has had time to test it. Every kingdom which was built up in ancient times by violence has perished, and doubtless those of modern times will. Popery, also, which established itself by the sword and the fagot, has been compelled at last to succumb to military power, and will probably be eventually overthrown by the same instrumentality. So with Moham-medanism.
 - 2) “It should be further observed here, that the reason for commanding Peter to put up his sword, was not drawn from the circumstances of the case. It was not because the use of the sword would prevent Jesus from dying for the world; nor because its use was wrong in the cause of Jesus but innocent in other causes; but because '*all* who take the sword shall perish with the sword.' The universality of the proposition made it applicable to the case of Peter. The statement has the form of a prediction, and the force of a prohibition in reference to appeals to the sword, whether by churches, nations, or other organized bodies of men" (McGarvey, pp.232f).
 - e. The Lord never intended for his cause to be propagated or defended by carnal weapons; he never intended that his people avenge themselves on their enemies by the use of such means (Rom. 12:17-21; 2 Cor. 10:4-5). But notice that the Lord did not tell Peter to throw away the sword; he simply told him to put it back in its place. This suggests that there is a proper place for the sword (Rom. 13:1ff; 1 Pet. 2:13-17).
 - 1) Romans 12:17-21: “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: “(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and

every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

- 3) 1 Peter 2:13-17: “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.”

f. Woods:

- 1) “Rivers of blood have been shed by great armies in defence of religion and in defiance of this edict of the Saviour. His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36); and it is, therefore, not to be propagated by worldly means.
- 2) “This includes, but is by no means limited to the use of the munitions of war; it embraces every human device to which men may resort as substitutes for the gospel which alone is God's power to save. (Rom. 1:16.) Ornate and expensive church buildings, detailed and complex organizational efforts and psychological schemes are all under the ban of him who ordained that it is by the preaching of the gospel that men are to believe. (1 Cor. 1:21)” (p.373).

g. The Lord mentioned here the “cup” of which he shortly prayed to the Father, that it might be removed—if it was God’s will. Brother Woods wrote:

- 1) The "cup" to which the Saviour refers was the suffering he would experience in order to accomplish the atonement he would make for the sins of the world. It is represented as a bitter potion put into a cup he would be required to drink. The question, "The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" is rhetorical and says, in effect, "Shall I oppose the will of my Father and refuse to carry out his plans in the world?"
- 2) It was the Father who gave it to him; it was therefore the Father's will that he should suffer; any effort to avoid this, such as the physical defense Peter foolishly attempted, would contravene that plan.
- 3) There were at least four reasons assigned by the Lord why Peter's method was inappropriate:
- a) It was the Father's will that he should go "by way of the cross."
 - b) The use of violence prompts to opposing violence and they that take the sword shall perish by it.
 - c) Peter's pitiful effort could not possibly achieve its purpose; were such a proper defense Jesus could call twelve legions of angels to his side.
 - d) The plan must proceed so that the scriptures may be fulfilled since in them is revealed the immutable counsel of God. [*ibid.*].

D. John 18:12-14: Jesus is Taken First to Annas.

1. Verses 12-13: “Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.”
- a. “So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him, and led him to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year” (ASV).
 - b. “The disciples ‘all forsook him and fled’ (Mark 14: 50), probably at this moment, and the soldiers of the Roman band, and the Jewish temple officers, rough, cruel men, seized and bound the Son of God. The terror inspired by the gentle but mighty Jesus is shown in the
-

- fact that all unite to seize him and to bind him. While they were binding him the disciples had an opportunity to escape” (Johnson, p.263).
- c. The large group seized the Lord, not knowing whether he would personally resist. Their puny bonds could not keep him under their control any more than the various bonds were able to control Samson.
 - 1) Judges 16:9: “Now there were men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known.”
 - 2) Judges 16:12: “Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And there were liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread.”
 - 3) What kept Jesus bound as he was led into Jerusalem was the same thing that kept him on the cross: His determination to do the will of the Father!
 - d. “Though not mentioned by John, and for the details of another tragic action we must look to Matthew and Mark, it was at this point that not only Peter, but the rest of the disciples, with the possible exception of John, took to their heels and fled.
 - 1) “This evidences the fact that they simply were not psychologically prepared for the events of this tragic night. In view of their confusion of mind, the vagueness with which they viewed the work and mission of the Lord, and the surprising turn of events culminating in the seizure of their Leader, it is not surprising that each, thinking of his own safety, determined to put himself beyond the reach of the authorities.
 - 2) “They had been forbidden to defend the Lord; at the moment, their choice seemed to be either to remain close to the Saviour and thus submit to possible arrest themselves or to escape while they could; and they may have drawn from the words of Jesus in verse 8 that this is what he expected them to do” (Woods, pp.374f).
 - e. Notice this depiction of Annas from Edersheim’s *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*:
 - 1) “No figure is better known in contemporary Jewish history than that of Annas; no person deemed more fortunate or successful, but none also more generally execrated than the late High-Priest. He had held the Pontificate for only six or seven years; but it was filled by not fewer than five of his sons, by his son-in-law Caiaphas, and by a grandson. And in those days it was, at least for one of Annas' disposition, much better to have been than to be High-Priest. He enjoyed all the dignity of the office, and all its influence also, since he was able to promote to it those most closely connected with him. And, while they acted publicly, he really directed affairs, without either the responsibility or the restraints which the office imposed.
 - 2) “His influence with the Romans he owed to the religious views which he professed. to his open partisanship of the foreigner, and to his enormous wealth. The Sadducean Annas was an eminently safe Churchman, not troubled with any special convictions nor with Jewish fanaticism, a pleasant and a useful man also who was able to furnish his friends in the Praetorium with large sums of money. We have seen what immense revenues the family of Annas must have derived from the Temple-booths, and how nefarious and unpopular was the traffic. The names of those bold, licentious, unscrupulous, degenerate sons of Aaron were spoken with whispered curses.
 - 3) “Without referring to Christ's interference with that Temple-traffic, which, if His authority had prevailed, would, of course, have been fatal to it, we can understand how antithetic in every respect a Messiah, and such a Messiah as Jesus, must have
-

been to Annas. He was as resolutely bent on His Death as his son-in-law, though with his characteristic cunning and coolness, not in the hasty, bluff manner of Caiaphas.

- 4) "It was probably from a desire that Annas might have the conduct of the business, or from the active, leading part which Annas took in the matter; perhaps for even more prosaic and practical reasons, such as that the Palace of Annas was nearer to the place of Jesus' capture, and that it was desirable to dismiss the Roman soldiery as quickly as possible, that Christ was first brought to Annas, and not to the actual High-Priest."
2. Verse 14: "Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people."
 - a. The apostle reminds us that Caiaphas was the one who gave certain counsel to the Jews: "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" (John 11:48-50).
 - 1) If such a condition of religious unrest developed, their Roman overlords might take harsh steps that could cause these religious and civil leaders to lose their places. Conditions might reach such a state that their whole nation might be dismantled. Their final decision was to remove Jesus by execution.
 - 2) Although Annas was the official high priest, he had incurred the anger of the Romans, who replaced him with Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas. This man held the office as High Priest during this momentous time. Caiaphas berated the rest of the council, saying they were totally ignorant!
 - 3) Their great fear was in losing their positions and their nation. By removing Jesus from the equation through chicanery, they sought to eliminate this danger. But in a few years, in 70 A.D., the Romans invaded Palestine with a great army, besieged Jerusalem, destroyed its walls, its great houses, and the great temple. Their scheme was faulty; they suffered the greatest disaster of their long history as a nation.
 - b. Johnson:
 - 1) "Caiaphas had already committed himself to the policy of condemnation (John 11:50). He was appointed high priest by the Roman procurator about 27 A. D., held the office during the whole administration of Pilate, was deposed 36 or 37 A. D. Both Annas and Caiaphas were creatures of the Roman court; both belonged to the Saddusaic party; both, that is, were openly infidel concerning some of the fundamental truths of the Hebrew faith.
 - 2) "Originally the high priest was appointed for life but the Romans set him aside and appointed a successor whenever they wished. Annas had been thus deposed, but was probably still regarded as the real high priest by many of the Jews" (p.263).
 - c. What John recorded about Caiaphas (11:49-50) does not reflect kindly on that wicked and deceitful man. John also pointed out it was Caiaphas who was high priest during that awful time, when our Lord was arrested, falsely tried, condemned to die on the cross, and bring such heartache upon the followers of Christ. This man and his cohorts live in infamy, while our Lord shines the more brighter.

E. John 18:15-18: Peter Followed Jesus into Jerusalem.

1. Verse 15: "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."
 - a. Edersheim:
 - 1) "Remembering that the High-Priest's Palace was built on the slope of the hill, and that there was an outer court, from which a door led into the inner court, we can, in some measure, realize the scene. As previously stated, Peter had followed as far as

that inner door, while John had entered with the guard. When he missed his fellow-disciple, who was left outside this inner door, John 'went out,' and, having probably told the waiting-maid that this was a friend of his, procured his admission.

- 2) "While John now hurried up to be in the Palace, and as near Christ as he might, Peter advanced into the middle of the court, where, in the chill spring night, a coal fire had been lighted. The glow of the charcoal, around which occasionally a blue flame played, threw a peculiar sheen on the bearded faces of the men as they crowded around it, and talked of the events of that night, describing, with Eastern volubility, to those who had not been there what had passed in the Garden, and exchanging, as is the manner of such serving-men and officials, opinions and exaggerated denunciations concerning Him Who had been captured with such unexpected ease, and was now their master's safe Prisoner. As the red light glowed and flickered, it threw the long shadows of these men across the inner court, up the walls towards the gallery that ran round, up there, where the lamps and lights within, or as they moved along apartments and corridors, revealed other faces: there, where, in an inner audience-chamber, the Prisoner was confronted by His enemy, accuser, and judge.
 - 3) "What a contrast it all seemed between the Purification of the Temple only a few days before, when the same Jesus had overturned the trafficking tables of the High-Priest, and as He now stood, a bound Prisoner before him, at the mercy of every menial who might carry favour by wantonly insulting Him? It was a chill night when Peter, down 'beneath,' looked up to the lighted windows. There, among the serving-men in the court, he was in every sense 'without.' He approached the group around the fire. He would hear what they had to say; besides, it was not safe to stand apart; he might be recognised as one of those who had only escaped capture in the Garden by hasty flight. And then it was chill, and not only to the body, the chill had struck to his soul...." [PC Study Bible].
- b. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia about Caiaphas:
- 1) Caiaphas took a leading part in the trial and condemnation of Jesus. It was in his court or palace that the chief priests (Sadducees) and Pharisees, who together constituted the Sanhedrin, assembled "that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him" (compare Mt 26:3-4; Joh 11:49).
 - 2) The regal claims of the new Messiah and the growing fame of His works had made them to dread both the vengeance of imperial Rome upon their nation, and the loss of their own personal authority and prestige (compare Joh 11:48). But Caiaphas pointed a way out of their dilemma: let them bide their time till the momentary enthusiasm of the populace was spent (compare Mt 26:5), and then by the single sacrifice of Jesus they could at once get rid of a dangerous rival and propitiate the frowns of Rome (compare Joh 11:49-50; 18:14).
 - 3) The commentary of John upon this (Joh 11:51-52) indicates how the death of Jesus was indeed to prove a blessing not only for Israel but also for all the children of God; but not in the manner which the cold-blooded statecraft of Caiaphas intended. The advice of the high priest was accepted by the Sanhedrin (Joh 11:53), and they succeeded in arresting Jesus. After being led "to Annas first" (Joh 18:13), Jesus was conducted thence in bonds to Caiaphas (Joh 18:24), According to Mt He was led immediately upon His arrest to Caiaphas (Mt 26:57). Mk and Lk do not refer to Caiaphas by name. His conduct at this preliminary trial of Jesus (Mt 26:57-68), its time and its procedure, were almost entirely illegal from the standpoint of then existing Jewish law....
 - 4) False witnesses were first called, and when Jesus refused to reply to their charges, Caiaphas asked of Him if He were "the Christ, the Son of God" (Mt 26:63). Upon our
-

Lord's answering "Thou hast said" (Mt 26:64), Caiaphas "rent his garments, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard the blasphemy" (Mt 26:65). Upon this charge was Jesus found "worthy of death" (Mt 26:66). Caiaphas is also mentioned in Ac 4:6 as being among those who presided over the trial of Peter and John. [Electronic Version].

2. Verse 16: "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."
 - a. Peter followed far behind the band which had arrested the Lord; when he came to the palace, he went in and sat with the servants.
 - b. John 18:15-18 shows that another disciple (John) preceded him into the place since he was known by the High Priest: "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."
 - c. At first, Peter stood outside until John went to the entrance and spoke to the lady at the door, who permitted Peter to enter the courtyard where the servants and officers were gathered. They were all assembled around a fire for it was cold. Peter was convinced that the Lord's end was imminent, but at least he was willing to be in the near vicinity of the trial to see the end.
3. Verse 17: "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."
 - a. Matthew says a damsel came to Peter and asserted that he was with Jesus of Galilee. Mark says that a maid of the high priest saw Peter warming himself, looked at him, and stated that he was with Jesus of Nazareth; and that the cock crew when Peter denied the allegation.
 - b. Luke writes that a certain maid looked at Peter and announced, "This man was also with him." John merely states that some of those around the fire asked Peter whether he was one of the Lord's disciples. Our present text reports that the young lady who kept the door was one of those who charged him with being a disciple of Jesus.
 - c. "Art thou also ... indicates that John was openly known as a disciple of Jesus, and there is no evidence that Peter would have suffered any inconvenience by an open admission of his discipleship. However, it should be remembered that Peter had cut off Malchus' ear a little earlier; and, if his identity as the perpetrator of that act had been known, there would have been solid grounds for his arrest. If this entered into Peter's thinking, it would show how one wrong act inevitably leads to another wrong act" (Coffman).
4. Verse 18: "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."
 - a. Johnson:
 - 1) As we learn from Mark 14:66, the fire was made in the court, the open space "oft in the center for light and ventilation around which the building was constructed, and which was reached by an arched way called (Matt. 26: 71) "the porch."
 - 2) The court within, which was a common feature of great houses, was paved. The fire was of charcoal. As a general rule the nights of Palestine at the season of the passover were warm throughout, and the cold is named as unusual. Peter, having denied his Master, probably thought he was less likely to be suspected if he threw himself in the

midst of his enemies and hence he "stood and warmed himself," while John seems to have pressed on after his Lord" (p.266).

- b. "It was now about midnight, growing cold, and the servants of the priests and those who waited in the court had built a fire to warm and Peter stood with them warming himself" (Lipscomb).

F. John 18:19-23: Jesus Before Annas.

1. Verse 19: "The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine."
 - a. Our Lord answered in majesty and in anger. There is no question about the anger in this. That is proven by the action of the officer who struck Him. It was the tone in which He spoke which provoked the act. In what He said, the emphasis was on the personal pronoun. The "I" is emphatic. "I have spoken openly to the world ; I ever taught in the synagogues, and in the Temple, where all the Jews come together ; and in secret spake I nothing."
 - 1) The declaration was a contrast between His method, and that of His enemies. A secret plotting against Him had been going forward, of which He was aware. He said, Why do you ask? You know. Or, if you do want to know, ask these who are all round about Me. I have spoken in public, I have spoken openly ; I have not been having secret meetings; I have not been plotting against any earthly government.
 - 2) All I have done is in the open. Because of the anger manifest in this reply an officer said, " Answerest Thou the high priest so?" Mark the " so." He was rebuking Annas, and the officer smote Him. He did not answer the officer concerning the method of His speech, but, again referring to all His teaching, all that which He said had been spoken openly, He said, " If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me ?" It was over. Annas had no more to say. The next thing was to bind Him again, and to send Him to Caiaphas. [G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to John*].
2. Verse 20: "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."
 - a. Jesus well knew that the wily old hypocrite, Annas, was merely on a fishing expedition and quite properly refused to tell him anything. Besides that, Annas was not the legal high priest; and Jesus had already decided to make his formal testimony concerning his Messiahship before the Sanhedrin in formal assembly. In addition, the Pharisees' spies had been following Jesus diligently for months; and everything that Jesus had publicly stated was, in all probability, already known to Annas, as was also Caiaphas' determination to put Jesus to death. [Coffman]. [To the Romans, Caiaphas was the high priest they recognized, but to the Jews, Annas was the right one.
 - b. Jesus well knew that the wily old hypocrite, Annas, was merely on a fishing expedition and quite properly refused to tell him anything. Besides that, Annas was not the legal high priest; and Jesus had already decided to make his formal testimony concerning his Messiahship before the Sanhedrin in formal assembly. In addition, the Pharisees' spies had been following Jesus diligently for months; and everything that Jesus had publicly stated was, in all probability, already known to Annas, as was also Caiaphas' determination to put Jesus to death. [Johnson].
3. Verse 21: "Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said."
 - a. Our Lord's reply here was right and proper. He was being asked to incriminate himself, a violation of the Jewish legal system. American jurisprudence developed into the best civil legal system, perhaps in all of history. However, it has been corrupted in the past fifty years so that many in previous times might not recognize it.

- b. Jesus had always been open with his teachings, and though the Jews did not always grasp its import, what he taught was available to public knowledge. Of course there were some things which he related in parabolic form. Parables were used in the Bible for several excellent purposes:
- 1) To *reveal* truth. "And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:26-29).
 - 2) To *embalm* the truth (to fasten it tightly to the heart so that it would ever be remembered). The parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates this facet of parables very well (Luke 10:30-37).
 - 3) To *conceal* the truth from those who would abuse it. This is the reason the Lord had to explain to the apostles why he spoke in parables: "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Matt. 13:13-17).
 - 4) "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25).
- c. Matthew 13:16-17: "But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*."
- 1) "Here we have a cheering contrast between the spiritual condition of the disciples, and that of the unbelieving multitude. They were seeing with profit, and hearing with delight, not only that which the prophets and righteous men of many generations had desired to see and had not seen. The disciples, doubtless, failed to realize the full measure of their blessedness, so little do the men of any generation know their own privileges" (McGarvey, p.119).
 - 2) The twelve disciples were blessed on account of their privileges which were far greater than any of the earlier generations. Though Enoch walked with God and was translated directly into eternity, though Noah saw the awesome sights connected with the great flood, though Abraham was the friend of God and obtained many very special and wonderful blessings from Jehovah, yet none of these men had the privileges which the apostles received!
 - 3) Those Old Testament worthies did not live to see the unfolding and revealing of God's timeless plan; but these apostles saw it, and received it, and communicated it to the world. Today we have the great privilege of learning it, receiving its blessings, and seeing the manifold wisdom of God (cf. Rom. 16:25-27; Eph. 3:1-11; 1 Peter 1:3-16).
-

- d. “Abraham saw the day of Christ (John 8:56), but only in the dim picture characteristic of the development of God’s plan at that time; the gospel was preached to him (Gal. 3:8), but only in the obscure statement that in Abraham’s seed would all nations be blessed.
4. Verse 22: “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?”
 - a. One of the officers perceived that Jesus had violated the dignity of the high priest, so he slapped the Lord with the palm of his hand. A slap is thought to be more demeaning than a blow with the fist.
 - b. This man did not know who Jesus really was! Saul of Tarsus had done even worse things to the followers of Jesus than this man here had done. When Saul learned the identity of the Lord, he quickly changed the course of his life.
 - c. Whether this officer ever became a believer in Christ, we cannot know; but when he died and his spirit entered the spiritual world, no doubt he would have had occasion to regret his foolish assault!
 5. Verse 23: “Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?”
 - a. The Lord showed the officer the error of his blow. He struck Jesus instantly, as perhaps was a common practice. Police officials have been known to abuse prisoners under their control. Physical abuse and torture have long been used to force people to confess, even when they are without guilt. Peter the Great of Russia thought his son had raised an insurrection against him; he had the young man tortured to force our a confession—the son died as a result of this evil treatment.
 - b. Our Lord stood up for his rights under the Jewish civil code. He asked the offending man why he struck him; if he was guilty of some crime, what was that crime? The officer could not have proved a criminal act in the statement he had made to the high priest. The question he demanded of the officer remains unanswered through the centuries.
 - c. 1 Peter 2:19-23: “For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (ASV). Our Lord did not violate this passage by his conduct and words of our text.
 - 1) Despite being so harshly and criminally treated, our Lord did not commit sin by retaliating or by using any deceitful speech. He did not resist those who arrested him, scourged him, insulted him, and falsely accused him. He rebuked Peter for using a sword in an attempt to defend the Lord: “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” (John 18:10-12).
 - 2) In his arrest and trials, the Lord did not commit a single act of sin, and neither did he resort to guile in trying to deliver himself. But he was totally without sin and guile throughout his public ministry; neither did he do any sin or speak any guile before he began his ministry. His life was sinless; his teachings are all truthful. This could not be said about any other accountable person!

- a) He did not revile those who reviled [literally, they kept on reviling] him. False charges were placed against him at his trials; and as he suffered on the cross, some of the most vile and hate-filled statements imaginable were hurled at him.
- b) Matthew 27:39-44: “And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.”
- c) His enemies continually reviled him during his ministry; their aim was to destroy his influence, while clinging to their weakening positions before the people. They knew that their prestige and power would suffer to the extent of the success of Jesus.
- d. It is not wrong for a Christian to stand up for his rights under civil law. Both Christ and Paul did so. The sufferings we are called on to endure are those which are heaped upon us because we are living right, and are hated and oppressed on that account.
 - 1) The persecution is not that which arises from other causes, such as being hated because of sinful conduct, our race or nationality, the language we speak, the accent of our speech, or our political views. But the persecution indicated is that which occurs as a direct result of our faithfulness to Christ. This persecution is not for our own folly, or for being self-righteous, or for being over-zealous, or from questionable acts or words. It is persecution for righteousness' sake.
 - 2) A loyal Christian is different from the worldly-minded person. The world sees the distinction between itself and the faithful. A sinner realizes saints are holier than he, and resents it. But instead of making the needed changes, he rather makes charges (1 Pet. 4:4; Acts 13:45-46; John 15:18-20). A Christian's holy life rebukes sinners. Sometimes this influences some to obey the gospel; often it hardens sinners against us and the truth.

G. John 18:24-27: Jesus Was Brought to Caiaphas.

- 1. Verse 24: “Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.”
 - a. Annas had not been able to get Jesus to confess voluntarily to any wrong-doing. As we noted before, since the Romans had removed Annas and replaced him in the high priesthood by his son-in-law, Caiaphas, the Jews would consider Annas as the official high priest; to the Romans, Caiaphas was the one that was approved.
 - b. Jesus had given a strong reply to the officer who struck him and to Annas who allowed this act of violence to go unrebuked. The high priest must have felt embarrassed to by this. He dispatched the Lord to Caiaphas without further delay.
 - 2. Verse 25: “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.”
 - a. At this point, the Holy Spirit reverted to the matter that had been mentioned in verse 18, about the apostle Peter warming himself by the “devil’s” fire.
 - b. Coffman:
 - 1) “One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter therefore denied again: and straightway the cock crew.
 - 2) “The additional element provided by John in this episode is that of the introduction of an eyewitness of Peter's association with the Lord in the garden. The synoptics mention the Galilean accent; but, in the circumstance of one of Malchus' kinsmen
-

having actually seen him with Jesus, there was hardly any way Peter could deny it. Therefore, he did so with an oath, which has ever been the support of lame propositions. John softened the account of Peter's denial by leaving out any mention of the oath."

- c. "He was without as regards the apartment in which the Sanhedrin was in session, but within as regards the palace; for he was in the open court around which the palace was built" (McGarvey, p.236). John 18:15-18 shows that John was known to the high priest and entered his palace with Jesus; he then got Peter admitted. Mark's account places Peter "beneath" in the palace, suggesting that Jesus was inside the palace perhaps in a higher room. Matthew defines Peter's location as "without." Luke identifies the location as "in the midst of the hall" and that it was there the fire had been built. The Lord had earlier in Matthew 27 predicted Peter's denial; this section gives the fulfillment of the prophecy.
 - 1) "That the fall of Peter is recorded by all the evangelists is high proof of the honesty and candor of our sacred historians. They were willing to mention their own faults without attempting to appear better than they were. An uninspired historian would have omitted the fall of Peter and mentioned only his good qualities. This shows the difference between an inspired and an uninspired historian and is strong evidence that the Bible is from God" (C.E.W. Dorris, *Commentary on Gospel of John*, p.354).
 - 2) Inspired writers did not heap any bitter words upon Judas for his betrayal; they did not spend many words in describing the martyrdom of James; and Peter's denial is described in a simple, straight-forward manner.
 - 3) Matthew says a damsel came to Peter and asserted that he was with Jesus of Galilee. Mark says that a maid of the high priest saw Peter warming himself, looked at him, and stated that he was with Jesus of Nazareth; and that the cock crew when Peter denied the allegation. Luke writes that a certain maid looked at Peter and announced, "This man was also with him." John merely states that some of those around the fire asked Peter whether he was one of the Lord's disciples. John 18:17 shows that the young lady who kept the door was one of those who charged him with being a disciple of Jesus.
 - 4) The Lord's prophecy was that before the cock would crow twice, Peter would have denied him thrice (Mark 14:30; Mt. 26:34). All four of the gospel writers give a report of his denial.
 - d. "Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew" (Matt. 26:74), Peter began to curse and swear. Mark's account uses the Greek word *anathematizo* which is translated "curse." This word means "to declare anathema, i.e., devoted to destruction, accursed, to curse (Mark 14:71), or to bind by a curse (Acts 23:12,14,21)" (Vine, p.262).
 - 1) Matthew's account uses *katanathematizo*, a strengthened form of the word Mark used. This word "denotes to utter curses against" (ibid.). To swear (*omnumi* or *omnuo*) is used of affirming or denying by an oath (cf. Mark 6:23; Luke 1:73; Heb. 3:11,18; 4:3; 7:21). (Vine, p.98).
 - 2) It does not necessarily follow that he was using profanity, but was very strongly denying his knowledge of Jesus. His denial constituted sin: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 10:32-33). Perhaps Peter had now become angry; he was certainly desperate and fearful. One can only wonder why he did not remember the words the Lord had spoken to him just hours earlier about his forthcoming denial.
-

- e. "And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:75). Peter remembered the Lord's words now, but a statement in Luke 22:60-62 gives the reason for his sudden remembrance—after the third denial, Jesus turned and looked at him.
- 1) Obviously, the Lord was now visible, and perhaps during the whole trial before Caiaphas, had been visible to Peter and the others in the courtyard. At any rate, the Lord was where he could see Peter now. How this look, no animosity or reproof is suggested by Luke's description, must have pierced the soul of this apostle. It was sufficient to drive home the full extent of his cowardly acts.
 - 2) Luke 22:60-62: "And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. 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."
3. Verses 26-27: "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."
- a. This servant, whose name was Malchus, would surely recognize Peter as the one who had used a sword to cut off his ear! Though the events in the Garden took place at night, we are told that at that time of the year, the moon was shining.
 - b. "The previous charges Peter met by simple denials; the questioners made it easy for him to do so by the form in which the query was made. Here, however, the situation becomes vastly more grave and the fearful apostle is not confronted by an eye-witness who was prepared to testify that he was indeed in the company of Jesus in the garden and had attempted to defend him with the sword Peter thus found himself in imminent peril of being arrested not only for being a disciple of Jesus but also for his assault to kill Malchus, the servant of the high priest" (Woods, p.381).
 - c. Johnson:
 - 1) "As the oaths were sullyng the lips of him who had declared that he would die for the Master, the cock crew the second time to herald the approach of day. At that very moment the Lord, probably now being led to the meeting of the Sanhedrim which Luke tells us met at daylight, turned and looked on Peter with a look that pierced his soul.
 - 2) "The recreant disciple went out into the night, like Judas; broken down, however, by repentance instead of remorse, and 'wept bitterly' (Matt. 26: 75). 'They upon whom Jesus looks mourn their misdeeds. Peter at first denied and wept not, for the Lord had not looked upon him. He a second time denied, yet wept not; for the Lord hitherto had not looked on him. He denied a third time, and Jesus looked on him and then he wept most bitterly.'—Ambrose" (p.269).
 - d. Upon this denial by Peter, the sounding of the rooster was heard.
- H. John 18:28-32: The Lord is Next Taken to Pilate.
1. Verse 28: "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."
 - a. The transference of the trial from the Sanhedrin to the "judgment seat" of Pontius Pilate was made necessary by the political condition of Judea. One badge of the servitude of the Jewish nation to the Roman yoke was, that while the Jewish courts were permitted to try and to punish minor offenses, the final judgment of all capital offenses was reserved for the Roman tribunals. A Roman judge must sign the warrant before the condemned person could be led to execution, and the punishment was then inflicted by the Roman officials. These capital cases at Jerusalem were usually brought up at the
-

- great feasts, at which time the Roman Governor came up from his home at Cesarea to the Jewish capital. [See Johnson].
- b. The Jewish leaders refused to enter Pilate's judgment hall to avoid being contaminated by being that close to things Roman. This defilement would prevent them from participating in the religious events of the Passover and the Unleavened feasts. They had no qualms about putting an innocent person to death, but they would not fraternize with the Romans.
 - c. They often emphasized the "smaller" items and ignored the "greater" matters.
 - 1) Matthew 23:15-18: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty."
 - 2) Matthew 23:23: "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."
 - a) His criticism of them was in their omission of weightier matters—Judgment, Mercy, and Faith. Judgment—treating their fellowman with justice. This was required of the Israelites (Ps. 82:3; Mic. 6:8). They perverted justice to their own ends, as they were about to do in the case of Jesus.
 - b) Mercy—forbearance, kindness, and compassion toward others. "These wicked religionists would ignore a sick person, a leper, an outcast; but they were very diligent in taking a tithe of their garden herbs and walking away with a mark of piety and self-satisfaction on their hypocritical faces" (Smith, *Book of Matthew*, pp.592f). (Cf. Matt. 5:7; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12).
 - c) The third weighty matter is faith. Faith is both the belief of the truth and the habitual manifestation of that belief in the life of the individual (McGarvey). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). It was not wrong for them to pay tithes of these three common herbs, but they ought to have given greater priority to justice, mercy, and faith.
2. Verse 29: "Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?"
 - a. Since the Lord's accusers would not enter the Judgment Hall, it was incumbent on Pilate to go outside the building to meet with the Jews. We might suppose that this would have made the governor disinclined to hear their case.
 - b. Pilate knew the volatile nature of the Jews. There were very quick, on the weakest of cause, to start a riot. With all the multitudes present for this religious season, it would have been easy to tumult.
 - c. The leaders were known for their rabble-rousing talents:
 - 1) Matthew 27:20: "But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus."
 - 2) Mark 15:11-13: "But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him."
 3. Verse 30: "They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee."
-

- a. Notice their unwillingness to plainly state the charges they had against Jesus. They foolishly stated that if he was not guilty of some heinous crime, they would not have brought him before Pilate.
 - b. They should have known that this weak statement would not gain the Governor's agreement to hear the case. They knew that their real accusations against the Lord would carry no weight with Pilate. The Romans allowed local authorities to deal with matters of their own religion.
4. Verse 31: "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."
- a. Answering the Jews in the same tone they had used in the preceding verse, Pilate told them to judge the Lord according to their law. There appears to be a bit of sarcasm in his reply. He knew enough about the case to see that nothing was involved to interest Roman law.
 - b. The governor knew as well as the Jews did, that the Romans did not permit them to execute a criminal; they reserved that important matter to themselves. The Jewish leaders referred to this fact in their response.
 - c. Johnson: "They had judged and condemned according to their own law and Pilate, on their refusal to state their charges, bade them proceed according to their own laws. They answered that this could not be done for 'it was not lawful for them to put any man to death.' The Roman laws forbade it. The power of life and death had been taken away from them as a subject people" (p.272).
5. Verse 32: "That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die."
- a. "The sacred writer assigns still another reason, though neither known to the Jews or to Pilate, why the events followed this course. Jesus had prophetically indicated the manner of death he would die (John 12:32; Matt. 20:19) by crucifixion; when the Jews had earlier administered the death penalty, it was by stoning; the Roman method of capital punishment was by crucifixion; the Romans, therefore would be his executioners, not the Jews. It is remarkable that Jesus had earlier seen and recorded for history the interchange between the Jews and the Romans involving the details of his death. In consequence, they, not he, were really on trial!" (Woods, p.384).
 - b. Although the Jews did not have the authority to execute anyone, Stephen was nevertheless stoned to death (Acts 7). This was done by a riotous, out-of-control mob! How could any-one be singled out for punishment?
- I. John 18:33-40: Jesus Stands Before Pilate.
1. Verses 33-34: "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?"
 - a. Woods:
 - 1) From Mark's report we learn that Jesus answered, "Thou sayest" (14:3-5), a Hebrew way of expressing an affirmation; and this he followed with the question of our text which, by implication, made clear to Pilate that Jesus did not claim to be a king in any way which would constitute any threat to Roman power. It said, in effect, "Does this inquiry stem from personal knowledge that I have made such claims or were you prompted to this by others?"
 - 2) It was vitally important to the Lord's cause that it be made clear in what sense the phrase, "king of the Jews," was being used. Was it as the Romans would use it, or as the Jews did? ... Moreover, the question pinpointed the fact that his accusers were Jews, not Romans, the latter having no interest in the claims of Jesus. (pp.385f).
 - b. The Jewish leaders were envious and fearful of Jesus.
-

- 1) John 11:47-48 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.”
 - 2) Mark 15:10: “For he [Pilate] knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.”
 - 3) John 12:19: “The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.”
 - c. It was never in the eternal plan for Christ to be a king or any kind of earthly ruler. Indeed, he will shortly declare that his kingdom was not of this world. Therefore, he was not threat or rival of Rome’s authority.
 - d. It was in God’s eternal plan for Christ to be king over an eternal, spiritual kingdom. This kingdom would be not menace toward any worldly political entity. Having great interest in spiritual values, the kingdom over which the Lord would rule, would pertain to the spirit of man.
 - 1) Colossians 1:13-14: [God] “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”
 - 2) Hebrews 12:28: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”
2. Verse 35: “Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?”
- a. “There is scorn in the testy Roman's reply.....It was not something in which he, or his people would have inquired; the charge originated with the Jews; his only concern was to learn enough about the present case to know what decision to make; of the issues involved he cared nothing; he only needed to know what the action of Jesus had been that prompted the charge in order to determine whether to dismiss the case on the spot. Pilate was not unacquainted with the deceit, hypocrisy and political dealings of the Jewish authorities and their accusations carried little weight with him” (Woods, p.386).
 - b. If a Roman had preferred the charge of insurrection, it might be examined, but when did the Jews find fault with a man who sought to free them? Pilate knew well how restive they were under the Roman yoke, how ready to rebel, and the very hate shown Christ was proof that he was not aiming to be such a King as they desired. Pilate comprehends the point, for he exclaims at once, “Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me.” That disproves their charge. But what hast thou done? [See Johnson].
 - c. Those who brought charges against Jesus before the Roman ruler were the Jews, the nation’s representatives. Romans had not done so. What crime have you committed that you should be brought before me? Pilate was between a granite rock and a chunk of anthracite coal. Neither would collapse! Certainly he did not want this situation to morph into a full-blown rebellion, of the Jews rising against Rome.
 - d. He did not even want a small incident which might reflect badly on his record. He could not ignore the matter; he could not wash his hands and turn away from the problem. Ideally, he would be happy to render justice to Jesus without incurring the wrath of the population. But the Jewish leaders refused to allow this solution. Pilate had to make a decision, just as every accountable human being must, in regards to the Christ, the anointed one of God!
3. Verse 36: “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.”
- a. Our Lord plainly declared that his kingdom was not of this world; it would pose no trouble for the rule of Rome; he was to reign over his kingdom, thus he would be a real
-

- King. His realm would be over the souls of the citizens of his kingdom.
- b. Military and political movements exert control over their subjects even when those people do not want to be subservient. These operations often conquer territories and cities by main force. Religious movement, such as Islam, conquer and forcibly control their adherents. They did not give their “members” any choice in the matter.
 - c. But the kingdom of Christ is not forced upon anyone! The citizens are not under physical restraint to remain in the kingdom. The call to mankind is, “Whose ever will.” It is always announced as an invitation. Following passages are from ASV:
 - 1) Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.”
 - 3) Luke 24:46-47: “And he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”
 - 4) Romans 10:13-18: “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 whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things! But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. But I say, Did they not hear? Yea, verily, Their sound went out into all the earth, And their words unto the ends of the world.
 - 5) Revelation 22:17: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely.”
 - d. Jesus told Pilate that if his kingdom were of this world, then his servants would resist his being delivered up to death by the Jews. But his kingdom is not of this world! The Roman governor perhaps did not know what the Lord had said to Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane when that earnest disciple used a sword to defend Jesus. “And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Mat. 26:51-54).
 - 1) The Lord rebuked Peter for this attempted defense. He declared that those who take the sword would perish with the sword. "As it is not true in history that all *individuals* who take the sword perish with the sword we must understand this remark rather of organized communities of men, both political and religious. In this sense the statement has proved true, so far as history has had time to test it.
 - 2) “Every kingdom which was built up in ancient times by violence has perished, and doubtless those of modern times will. Popery, also, which established itself by the sword and the fagot, has been compelled at last to succumb to military power, and will probably be eventually overthrown by the same instrumentality. So with Moham-
-

medanism.

- a) "It should be further observed here, that the reason for commanding Peter to put up his sword, was not drawn from the circumstances of the case. It was not because the use of the sword would prevent Jesus from dying for the world; nor because its use was wrong in the cause of Jesus but innocent in other causes; but because '*all* who take the sword shall perish with the sword.'
 - b) "The universality of the proposition made it applicable to the case of Peter. The statement has the form of a prediction, and the force of a prohibition in reference to appeals to the sword, whether by churches, nations, or other organized bodies of men" (McGarvey, pp.232f).
- e. The Lord never intended for his cause to be propagated or defended by carnal weapons; he never intended that his people avenge themselves on their enemies by the use of such means:
- 1) Romans 12:17-21: "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
- f. Millennial theorists try to make a play on the word **now** in the clause, "but **now** is my kingdom not from hence." They twist the statement to mean that there will be a time when his kingdom will be from hence" [*i.e.*, of the world]. Notice how the same Greek word is used elsewhere:
- 1) John 17:5: "And **now**, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."
 - 2) Acts 3:17: "And **now**, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."
- g. Open-minded studies about the Kingdom of God show that it is spiritual in nature and was never planned to be an earthly, material kingdom.
- 1) It was part of the eternal plan for Christ to serve as both king and priest while sitting on his throne (Zech. 6:13):
 - a) But he could not serve as a priest on earth: "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. (Heb. 7:14).
 - b) But he could not serve as a king on earth: "Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man *that* shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. 22:30). No descendant of Coniah could serve as king on earth; Coniah was an ancestor of Jesus (Matt. 1:11-16). Coniah was also known as Jechoniah and Jehoiachin.
 - 2) "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1).
 - a) The power was to come on the apostles when the Holy Spirit came. "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord,
-

- wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:5-8).
- b) The Holy Spirit gave the power to the apostles on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2. Therefore, it was on this day that the kingdom came! "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).
 - c) It would come during the lifetime of some of those who were standing nearby when the Lord gave the statement. We have these three alternatives: The Lord was wrong when he said it could come while those men were living; Or, some of those men are still living; Or the kingdom was established just as the Lord said.
 - d) Since the kingdom has come (Col. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:9; Heb. 12:28), their twisting of our text is a great error (cf. 2 Pet. 3:15-17).
4. Verse 37: "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."
- a. Pilate bluntly asked Jesus if he was a king. He had spoken in the previous verse that he had a kingdom. This was a question that the governor need to have answered. If he was a king, then he must have a kingdom. Where is it? What is it?
 - 1) "There must have been in the Roman's countenance an amused and scornful look. He sought to involve the Lord in an inconsistency. He said, in effect, 'You deny being king of the Jewish nation; yet, you speak of your kingdom; you must then be some kind of a king!'" (Woods, pp.387f).
 - 2) The Lord had also said there that his kingdom was not of this world—it was to be a material kingdom, the kind that is so familiar to the history of mankind.
 - b. Our Lord also stated that he had been born into this world to become a king. Obviously from things already stated, his kingdom was not to be an earthly kingdom, with actual territory, literal citizens, etc.
 - c. Our Lord also affirmed that he had come into the world to bear witness to the truth. There is such a thing as truth and Jesus was capable of testifying in behalf of the truth. Not at any time had he denied being a king; he had, indeed, positively affirmed this in verse 36. He was not such a king as the Jews charged him with seeking to be and around which they had built their case of sedition against Rome. Pilate's persistence made it necessary for Jesus to speak more in detail regarding his mission" (*ibid.*).
 - d. God's word, the Bible, is Truth; it is the will of God for each accountable person to learn, believe, love, and obey the truth, as the following passages teach:
 - 1) 1 Timothy 2:4: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." The only way we can know the mind of God is through the revelation he gave.
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man,
-

- but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
- 3) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 4) Hebrews 10:9-10: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*."
 - 5) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (KJV). "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (NKJ).
 - 6) John 8:30-32: "As he spake these words, many believed on him. 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."
 - 7) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (cf. 2 Thess. 2:10-12).
 - 8) Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
 - 9) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
- e. It is manifestly clear that God loves the precious souls of the men, even those who are steeped in sin. It is also clear that we must have a love for lost souls, and be willing to do what we can to effect their salvation. This was the example of Paul: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).
- 1) Romans 1:14-16: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
 - 2) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 9:16-27: "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation *of the gospel* is committed unto me. What is my reward then? *Verily* that, when I preach the
-

- gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To
- 4) Jude 23: "But others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh" (NKJ).
5. Verse 38: "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."
 - a. "It matters not whether his question was sincere, or in pity of one whom he may have thought an enthusiast, it is evident that he was profoundly impressed, for at once he stepped out of the hall to the street, where the priests were waiting, and declared, I find in him no fault at all. It is his formal acquittal in the face of the Sanhedrim, Unless he had been profoundly stirred, he, a bloody, unscrupulous man, would not have cleared a helpless prisoner in the face of the Jewish nation which sought to destroy him" (Johnson, p274).
 - b. Under ordinary circumstances, Pilate could have and should have declared the innocence of Jesus and freed him forthwith! He did not have the moral courage to do what was right, and he stands condemned by history as a weak man and an unstable ruler.
 - c. But over-shadowing all of the powerful events of that tremendous occasion, was the the eternal plan of God. The Almighty had been working through many centuries to bring about the sacrificial death of the Messiah. This was the day when these efforts were to be brought to the conclusion. The Savior would die on the cross that very day, his body would be placed in a new tomb, his spirit would enter the Paradise of the Hadean Realm; he would be raised from the dead three days later, on the first day of the week!
 6. Verses 39-40: "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."
 - a. The Romans had established a long-held practice of releasing, during this religious season of the Jews, some notable prisoner. This was intended to be a sop to the population, to help keep them from becoming restive against the rule of Rome.
 - b. Pilate's purpose was to secure the agreement of the Jewish leaders for the release of Jesus. That he was innocent of a crime against the Empire was obvious. The charges which had been brought upon Christ were based in the religion of the Jews. The instigators of the present difficulty, and grew out of their envy of the huge success of Jesus [Matt. 17:18].
 - c. Woods:
 - 1) From Mark we learn that Barabbas had been a member of a band who participated in an insurrection against the government and had committed murder in so doing. Matthew refers to him as "a notable prisoner," thus indicating that he had attained to considerable notoriety because of his crimes. Him they chose instead of Jesus; and thus, by a strange irony of fate they caused to be released a man actually guilty of the crime with which they had falsely charged Christ—treason and sedition.
 - 2) Jews, in general, were sympathetic toward such insurrectionary movements because they bitterly resented the presence of the Romans who occupied their land and Barabbas had done that which Jesus refused to do—oppose by political means the Roman power. The Jews accused Jesus of being a dangerous man to the Romans when he was not and they asked for the release of Barabbas who was!
 - 3) The bitterness of this angry and vengeful crowd beggars description. Led on by corrupt and malignant priests and civil officers the stupified people joined in the
-

shout, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Gone was any remembrance of his gentle life, his gracious words and his marvelous works of mercy; spewing forth from the volcanic vortex of their corrupt and hardened hearts was the wild passion of hate, malignancy and consuming desire for his death; and they had neither eyes to see nor ears to hear any alternative to the murderous mission they were bent on bringing to completion.

- 4) The light which had once radiated through them as keepers of the oracles of God was now darkness and the favored position they once held as the chosen people they had long since forfeited. Never did human beings sink so low as these professedly religious leaders when they deliberately chose to have a murderer released so that the sinless Son of God might die.
 - 5) It is little wonder that when the blessed Lord was experiencing the shame and ignominy of those last hours and then suffered the horrors of crucifixion, the earth became darkened and the sun refused to shine upon a race whose leaders had fiendishly sought and secured the death of the noblest, purest and most precious person who ever lived upon the earth.
 - 6) Humanity must collectively bow its head in shame that the cry, "not this man, but Barabbas," should have brought it so low. The chief actors of this tragic drama live only in the sombre darkness of their evil deeds; Pilate, the Jewish authorities, the Roman soldiers, the sullen mob; they have long since gone the way of all the earth, and live in the memories of men largely because of the inhuman disposition and conduct they exhibited, while he whose destruction they desired and eventually accomplished came forth from the grave, ascended in triumph into the heavens, from which he will one day return to claim his own and to administer just punishment to his tormentors.
 - 7) Tragically, many people of the world are still choosing the world rather than Jesus, thus not in word, but in deed, also saying, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Their myopic eyes are resistant to spiritual light and their dull ears are out of resonance with the clear, sweet voice of truth and thus they see only what is material and hear only the alluring sounds of the world, their hearts being hardened to the appeals of a higher, nobler nature. Sadly, these, too, like the rebellious Jews of old, will discover their error only when it is too late. [pp.289f].
-

John Chapter 19

A. John 19:1-7: Pilate Scourges Jesus.

1. The events leading up to the crucifixion of our Lord: This listing may not be precise in the chronology:
 - a. First there was the trial before Annas, recorded only by John (18:1:3-24); this man sent Jesus, bound, to Caiaphas.
 - b. Jesus next faced a preliminary examination conducted by Caiaphas aided by a section of the Sanhedrin [Matt. 26: 57-68; Mark 14: 55-65].
 - c. We are told by Luke about the formal meeting of the great Sanhedrin, at about daybreak [Luke 22:66-71).
 - d. Then came the formal accusation before Pilate, which all of the accounts report.
 - e. The interview between Christ and Pilate is recorded in John 18:33-38.
 - f. Pilate's first acquittal; further charges; Christ's silence [Matt. 27: 12-14; Mark 15: 3-5; Luke 23: 4-5].
 - g. Pilate sent the case to Herod (Luke 23:6-12).
 - h. Our Lord is then sent back to Pilate, where the second acquittal is declared [Luke 23: 13-16].
 - i. Pilate then offered to release Jesus or Barabbas [Matt. 27:15-18; Mark 15:6-10].
 - j. Pilate's wife sent her husband a message warning him to have nothing to do with "this just man" [Matt. 27:19].
 - k. The Jews stirred the multitude to demand that Barabbas be released [Matt. 27:20-22; Mark 15:11-13].
 - l. The governor made further attempts to convince the Jews that Jesus should be released [Matt. 27:20-22; Mark 11-13].
 - m. Pilate washed his hands, thinking to absolve himself of any crime [Matt. 27:24].
 - n. Barabbas released, to the cries of "Crucify him"—meaning Jesus [Matt. 27:26].
 - o. Jesus is given over to the hands of the soldiers to be crucified [Mark 15:15; Luke 23:24-25).
 - p. Pilate made still other efforts to secure the Jewish approval to release him [John 19:4-16].
 - q. Following the mocking and scourging, Jesus is led away to the crucifixion site [Matt. 27:31; Mark 15 : 20].
2. Johnson:
 - a. "The great tragedy moves rapidly on. The chief priests, members of the Sanhedrin, and Jewish leaders, had prepared their plans well; so well that Pilate, with all his well-meant endeavors, found himself unable to frustrate them. A great crowd of their creatures surrounded his palace and met every expostulation against the injustice of murdering Jesus with hoarse remonstrances, loud cries and ferocious threats.
 - 1) "Accustomed to the inflammatory temper of the Jewish population he feared an uprising at a time when the passover had brought two or three millions of people to the city and when it would be easy to overwhelm the little Roman garrison of 600 men.
 - 2) "He feared still more the accusations against him that they proposed to despatch to Caesar, for he had already learned by their victory over him in a former collision that they were not without influence at Home. Hence, rather than sacrifice himself, he begins to yield to demands to which he is bitterly opposed and knows to be cruel and unjust. His attempt to relieve himself of responsibility by sending the prisoners to Herod had failed Verse 1: "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him"

(pp.276f).

- b. Woods:
 - 1) "Pilate had heard the charges against Christ and had interviewed him about the accusations. There was nothing on which the Lord could be condemned. In order to placate and in an attempt to elicit some degree of compassion from the Jews, the governor ordered that Jesus be scourged.
 - 2) "This scourging was a horrible ordeal, often causing the death of the victim. "The scourge was a whip with leather thongs, the ends fastened to lead balls or sharp spikes. The victim was usually bound to a stake naked and made to bend over thus tightening the skin which usually split open at the first blow.
 - 3) This terrible scourging was likely the cause of our Lord's not being able to bear up under the cross (John 9:17; Matt. 27:32). Also, he had been without sleep the night before, and he had undergone an ordeal in the trials and false accusations.
3. Verse 1: "Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him."
 - a. This scourging was a horrible ordeal, even causing the death of the victim. "The scourge was a whip with leather thongs, the ends fastened to lead balls or sharp spikes. The victim was usually bound to a stake naked and made to bend over thus tightening the skin which usually split open at the first blow. When it was over often the sufferer was unconscious, a bleeding mass of torn flesh. It is quite possible that the reason Jesus was unable to bear up under the weight of his cross was due to the terrible beating he had but recently suffered" (Woods, p.391).
 - b. The governor knew what was involved in scourging; he also knew of the innocence of Jesus; yet he turned the Lord over to his cruel soldiers for this horrible experience! How could any person with any grain of sympathy and sense of justice thus condemn an innocent man to this unspeakable ordeal? It would take more than a pan of water to cleanse his evil heart.
4. Verses 2-3: "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."
 - a. Compare other gospel accounts:
 - 1) Matthew 27:27-31: "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him."
 - 2) Mark 15:15-20: "And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him."
 - b. These soldiers had the items at hand with which to torture and ridicule the King of Glory. They platted a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head. We do not visualize this as a gentle action. Not only was this a means of mockery but of torture. The sharp spines of the thorns would easily penetrate the skin and more than a little blood would

- be emitted. Mark reported that they smote him on the head with the reed—the pain would have been harsh.
- c. Mark also tells us that the whole band of soldiers were at hand to participate in the cruelty and mockery that followed. The life of a Roman soldier was certainly harsh and brutal; they met with all kinds of adversities in the field and in battle which would have hardened them against the gentle qualities of life. It is hard to picture them as having any compassion for our Lord. Perhaps they were competing with each other as to which forms of torture and mockery to use!
 - d. They put on him a purple robe, usually worn only by royalty. “And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate” (Luke 23:11). It might well be this same purple robe which Pilate’s men put on the Lord. One of the first thing they did to Jesus was to stripe off the clothing he wore. We are not told that Herod’s men removed the robe they had used in their mockery.
 - e. The soldiers of Pilate bowed before their victim, who had been dressed in a robe of royalty and crowned with a crown of thorns. Mockery can be exceedingly painful to the inner man. No one likes to be made fun of. As the old truism declares, “Sticks and stones might break my bones, but names will never harm me!”
 - f. They laughingly saluted him as “King of the Jews.” These men were stationed in Palestine among a population which they controlled by brute force. They hated the Jews and the Jews hated them. The prominent exception to this rule was Cornelius (Acts 10:2, 22).
 - g. They smote the Lord with their hands and spat upon him. These are especially insulting to the usual victim, but doubtless Jesus was enured to their beatings and insults.
 - 1) When Jesus was arrested, he stated that there was unlimited power available to defend him, if he had so-chosen: “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matt. 27:53).
 - 2) That great power was still as his call—but these men had no conception of who it was they were tormenting! Compare: “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do....” (Luke 23:34). This brief prayer was answered only for those who would later obey the Gospel of Christ—Acts 2:36-47.
 - h. At the last day, these same men are slated to hear the final pronouncement of their last fate, to be given by this same One.
 - 1) Matthew 25:41: “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”
 - 2) Matthew 25:46: “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”
5. Verses 4-5: “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!”
- a. Our Lord was returned to Pilate in the most pitiable condition we could imagine. Doubtless, the prophet Isaiah was describing the Suffering Savior when he penned this declaration: “As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men” (Isa. 52:14). Immediately after this statement, the prophet delivers the wondrous material of chapter fifty-three.
 - b. Pilate went outside to once again confront the Jewish enemies of Jesus. Brother Woods:
 - 1) “Three times on that fateful Friday morning Pilate asserted and declared the innocence of Jesus, innocence he had determined by thorough examination. He had tolerated the mockery of the crown perhaps because it was in keeping with the impression he had that the claims of Jesus were too absurd to merit serious consideration and he hoped that this contemptuous treatment might be sufficient to prompt
-

- the Jewish leaders to drop their demands of his prisoner's death....
- 2) "The meekness with which Jesus suffered the evil-treatment of his accusers must have made considerable impression on Pilate and to have reenforced his view that Jesus was deserving of no punishment, not having committed any crime. That he would allow the bitter mockery to be directed at his prisoner and order him to be scourged evidences how devoid of shame and how little regard Pilate had for the basic principles of justice and right.
 - 3) "His utterance, "Behold the man!" *Ecce Homo!* was his weak and ineffective effort to appeal to the better nature of the crowd, a nature which no longer existed, having long since been submerged in the bitterness and spiteful hate they felt toward Jesus. The exclamation has lived in history as Pilate's unconscious and unintended tribute to the greatest character of the ages" (pp.392f).
- c. Jesus underwent this dreadful punishment. Pilate's intent in the scourging inflicted upon Jesus was an attempt to evoke sympathy in his accusers toward him so that they might agree to his release.
- 1) Luke 23:22 "And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let *him* go."
 - 2) Isaiah 52:14 "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."
 - 3) John 19:1-5 "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!**"
6. Verse 6: "When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him."
- a. Pilate's "own heart is touched. He no longer speaks of him as King, but points to him as a human sufferer. Pilate, unconsciously, described the sufferer aright. That mocked and despised prisoner, with the thorny crown and the streams of blood trickling down from his brow, humiliated, beaten and insulted, was THE MAN, the one perfect man of the human race, the type of ideal manhood. To him all ages point and exclaim, *Ecce homo!* Behold the man" (Johnson, p.278).
 - b. It is hard to envision men more cruel or hearts more depleted of compassion than these wicked Jewish leaders! As was the case of the Roman soldiers who tormented Jesus, these despicable men have had long centuries in eternity to bemoan their own evil hearts, words and actions!
 - c. The governor was ready to their demands, but stated that he had found no fault in him. "Take ye him, and crucify him." You wanted him executed on the cross; take him and carry out your demands.
7. Verse 7: "The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."
- a. These evil men are now themselves stripped of their sophistry! They claimed Jesus had tried to incite an insurrection against Rome, but obviously that was untrue. They now admitted to their real accusation: "He made himself the Son of God!" Roman law had no concern with such a religious matter.
 - b. Notice that the Lord's enemies did not examine his Divine Sonship, to try to disprove it. They had made many quibbles, but refused to consider the obvious proof of his miracles!
-

- 1) John concluded chapter twenty of his account with these words: "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).
- 2) John 14:8-11: "Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew 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, Shew 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."
- c. "We have a law!"
 - 1) The real reason they wanted to destroy Jesus was that he had violated their false views of the Mosaic Law.
 - 2) They feared that if he succeeded in his efforts, the great majority of the Jews would go to his side, and they would lose their exalted positions, fame, fortune and success.
 - 3) They also feared that he might cause a tumult which would bring the Romans against them.
 - 4) In 70 A.D., the Romans indeed came, but not because of anything that the Lord had done; it was because that the Jewish leaders rebelled against the Empire. They lost far more than they could have foreseen!
 - 5) On the other hand, had these leaders themselves received the Gospel of Christ, and urged the population to do so, the outcome might have been entirely different.
- d. Let it not be forgotten that the Sanhedrin condemned Jesus to death because he declared that he was the Son of God, and now when other means had failed they make the same charge before the Roman tribunal. Jesus died for the "good confession." [Johnson, p.279]. See 1 Timothy 6:13.

B. John 19:8-12: Pilate Questions Jesus.

1. Verse 8: "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid."
 - a. Pilate had been fearful that this trouble concerning Jesus would arouse a huge tumult by the Jews, which would come to the attention of his superiors; he might be removed from office and perhaps face charges himself.
 - b. He was able to keep an insurrection from developing by submitting to the demands of the Jewish hierarchy. Thus, he made for himself a weak reputation, and earned the historical name which rivaled that of Judas, for infamy.
 - c. "Nevertheless, fear of an uprising in Jerusalem forced Pilate to accede to the demand of the populace, and Jesus was executed. Pilate was recalled to Rome in 36. According to theologian and church historian Eusebius of Caesarea, Pilate later committed suicide" [*Encarta*, © 1993-2003 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved].
 - d. Despite his honest dealings with Jesus, for the most part, and his machinations with the Jewish leaders, he lost his position and later took his own life.
 2. Verse 9: "And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer." NKJ: Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.
 - a. "The calmness and majesty of the prisoner had profoundly moved the stern Roman. Man had never endured with such patience and kingly dignity. Now when he heard the statement that he had said that he was the Son of God, he thought at once of all those stories in his heathen mythology, of the gods taking human form. What if this marvelous prisoner was the son of one the gods? He was alarmed. He retired into the judgment hall
-

- with Jesus for a fresh examination” (Johnson).
- b. Pilate: “Where did you come from?” Are you a creature of earth or did you come from Heaven? This question grew out of the statement by the Jews, that he made himself the son of God. This gives some insight into why Pilate became “more afraid.” There might be something more to this man Jesus; he may be more than a Jew who had incurred the fury of the Jewish leaders.
 - c. Pilate’s demand received no reply from our Lord. In the previous chapter, Jesus had told the governor that his kingdom was not of this world; therefore, he represented no danger to the Roman rule. His kingdom partook of the spiritual realm. At the time then present, his kingdom had not yet been established (John 18:36; Mark 9:1; Acts 2:14-47).
 - d. After it came into existence, its influence would be felt throughout the empire of Rome; the citizens of this new spiritual kingdom would be a blessing to the Empire by lifting up the population, directly and indirectly.
 - 1) The citizens of the Kingdom of Christ would be taught to pray for and be obedient to the rulers in the Empire of Rome (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:17; 1 Tim. 2:1-2).
 - 2) The influence of Christians would exert a powerful effect for good.
 - a) Matthew 5:13-16: “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”
 - b) Compare: “Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives” (1 Pet. 3:1, NKJ). The influence of a godly wife can win her husband to the gospel, thus bring salvation and a good influence to him. That being the case, the influence of Christianity (as each Christian lives right) would have an excellent effect on society and the nation.
 - e. At this point, Jesus knew that an answer was unnecessary, but after the question of the next verse, a direct and clear answer was important.
3. Verse 10: “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?”
 - a. Pilate was irritated when his first question went unnoticed. His dignity of office had been defied. Anyone who repulsed his authority would be placing himself in peril.
 - b. The governor quickly made a definite threat to the Lord. “Don’t you know that I have the authority to crucify or release you? Answer my question!”
 - c. This attitude we would expect from one in authority toward a prisoner who had refused to respond. He took it as a personal affront to his important office.
 4. Verse 11: “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.”
 - a. Jesus provided a direct response to this question, but it was totally unexpected by Pilate. As governor, appointed by the Emperor, he held sway over the province of Judah; all of the citizens were under his authority and subject to his rule.
 - b. It appears that Pilate was somewhat boastful of the power of his position. He thought he only had to answer to the Emperor in Rome. Authority from Rome gave him the power to condemn and execute convicted criminals.
 - c. But there was an even greater power, far above that of the Empire. Jesus told him that he would have no power against Jesus except that which had originated from above—from Heaven. God’s eternal plan called for the crucifixion of Christ; those plans were
-

firm and far-reaching, and had a impact on every accountable human being. Of course, this would have been beyond the grasp of Pilate.

d. God had originated the principle of civil authority. This was for the good of mankind. If everyone is in charge, then no one is in charge. For an ordered, productive and safe society, a duly appointed government was essential.

1) Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." Murder must not be committed without penalty; so also with other principles of right and wrong.

2) Romans 13:1-3: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same."

e. Civil authority has the right to punish law-breakers. This is a God-given principle. The Roman governor has authority to carry out this responsibility. Of course, the guilt of the individual must be established.

f. Having noted that proper function of civil rulers, Jesus pointed out that those who had made the false charges against him had the greater sin. Pilate had allowed himself to be coerced into allowing the Lord's crucifixion; he knew Jesus was an innocent man, but he permitted the execution. Those who were behind the charges were more guilty.

g. "Human government exists at the will of, and by powers derived from God; and those who dispense it are accountable to God for the manner in which they administer law. Pilate, though guilty, was not as much so as the high priest and the Sanhedrin who had vastly more knowledge of the divine will than Pilate. Their prophecies abounded with references to the Messiah, and pointed unerringly to Jesus as the fulfillment thereof. They sinned against greater light than Pilate and thus were guilty of greater sin than was he. Thus, without rancor, and with infinite patience and kindness, Jesus judged his judges!" (Woods, p. 396).

5. Verse 12: "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."

a. The governor still wanted to pronounce Jesus an innocent man and release him. This brought howls of fury and hatred from the Lord's enemies.

b. These enemies of all righteousness then made a veiled threat against Pilate. "If you turn Jesus loose, you are not serving Caesar." Does not this represent a warning to Pilate that if he releases Jesus, they would make an appeal to Caesar?

c. "This means that he will be accused before Caesar's tribunal of overlooking treason. The Caesar then on the throne was Tiberius, dark, suspicious, cruel in character. Such a charge from the representatives of the Jewish nation at Rome would probably prove fatal to Pilate; would certainly end his career as a public man. The risk is too great. He would rather sacrifice an innocent man than himself. Hence he at once surrenders. The struggle is over" (Johnson, p.280).

C. John 19:13-18: Pilate Delivered Jesus to be Crucified.

1. Verse 13: "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."

a. "Under this threat of the Jews, Pilate cowardly brought Jesus out and took his seat in the hall where he was accustomed to deliver his judgments and decisions" (Lipscomb).

b. The governor instantly saw that his future was more important than the life a Jew. His verdict was obvious.

- c. “He had sat in the judgment seat before and had acquitted Jesus. Now he is brought forth again and Pilate takes the judgment seat in order to condemn him. The judgment seat was a raised platform, a kind of throne, from whence judicial decisions were rendered. John marks the spot where this, the most momentous of earthly decisions, was rendered. It was a spot called the Pavement, probably a square with mosaic pavement in front of the tower of Antonia. Here the seat of judgment was placed” (Johnson, p.280).
2. Verse 14: “And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!”
- a. Woods:
- 1) We shall give here the *results* of our studies on these matters without detailing the manner in which they were reached. The "preparation day" was the day preceding the beginning of the seven days' feast of unleavened bread—Friday. "Passover" (Greek *pascha*) signifies the entire period of the feast, the first day of which was the sabbath. John 19:31, 42; Mark 15:42; Matt. 27:62; Luke 23:54.
 - a) John 19:31: “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”
 - b) John 19:42: “There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.”
 - c) Mark 15:42: “And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath.”
 - d) Matthew 27:62: “Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate.”
 - e) Luke 23:54: “And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.”
 - 2) The "sixth hour" was 6 a.m., according to Roman reckoning which John followed, and is in complete harmony with Mark's statement (Mark 15:25), that Jesus was crucified at the third hour, by Jewish computation (which Mark followed), was 9 a.m.
 - 3) Under Roman law, sentence could not be pronounced earlier than 6 a.m. and it is therefore likely that this is the reason the time is designated. The proceedings against Jesus began at 6 a.m.; it is probable that an hour or so elapsed before the court proceedings were completed and Jesus was delivered up to be crucified. (pp.397f).
- b. But Pilate's first move was to introduce the scourged and bloody Jesus as their king. This set the Lord's enemies up for an affirmation that they could not live down.
- c. To acknowledge Jesus as their King was the last thing they would accept! They had called for the release of Barrabas, a known criminal; that evil man was more preferred to them than the sinless Son of God, the long-promised Messiah.
3. Verse 15: “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.”
- a. Remember that the chief priests had stirred up the multitude: “But the chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them” (Mark 15:11, ASV). A mob can easily be incited and kept in that highly emotional state.
- b. Therefore they cried “Crucify him, Crucify him!” Remember the out-of-control mob at Ephesus: “But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians” (Acts 19:34).
- c. “The senseless fury of the raging mob reached its highest pitch at these words of the governor and by it and their hatred for Jesus they were driven to the denial of their own hopes and expectations — their hope for a reigning Messiah!” (Woods, p.399).
- d. “When they reply with the cruel shout, ‘Crucify him, crucify him!’ he asks with a sneer, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ To this they reply: ‘We have no king but Caesar.’ They had
-

- not now. They had rejected the divine King, had chosen Barabbas instead, for life, and now make choice of Caesar as their king instead of the Lord's Anointed. To Caesars tender mercies they commit themselves, and in about a generation Caesar will trample them in the wine press of wrath" (Johnson, p.281).
- e. Pilate had insulted the crowd by referring to Jesus as their king, but this scorn did not improve the heart and fury of the senseless mob. Consider the physical condition and dress of Jesus after being scourged and mocked by the Roman soldiers! Him a king!
 - f. Woods: "There was far more truth in their statement than they intended; they did indeed by this denial of Jesus shut themselves off from his kingdom and sealed their own doom. The Jewish system committed suicide on that fateful morning when it renounced its heavenly King for Caesar.
 - 1) It is of interest to note that when Israel, in the long ago, renounced the government of God, under Samuel, for a king, in order that they might be like the nations around them, they were warned of the hardships which would be theirs as the result of their foolish and senseless choice; similarly.
 - 2) Jesus warned the Jews of their own destruction at the hands of Caesar (Luke 19:41-44; 23:27-31), the fulfillment of which, detailed by Jesus, reached its climax in the siege and fall of Jerusalem and the end of their civil and religious state" (*ibid*).
4. Verses 16-17: "Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. 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*."
- a. Reaching the end of his efforts to free Jesus, Pilate turned him over to be crucified. He acceded to the Jewish demands; the soldiers took the Lord out of Jerusalem to a place called *Golgotha*.
 - b. There were many people in the procession which led from Jerusalem to the crucifixion site. The Roman soldiers, some of the Jewish leaders, the two thieves, and a great company of women and others (Luke 23:27). The trip would have taken quite some time.
 - c. Woods:
 - 1) On the way to the place of crucifixion Jesus stumbled under the weight of his cross, his strength greatly weakened from the long hours of torture, scourging and lack of rest; and the soldiers seized a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, compelling him to take up the cross in Jesus' stead.
 - 2) Eventually, the procession arrived at the place of execution called *Golgotha*, a Hebrew word meaning, "the place of a skull." The word "Calvary" is the Latin equivalent of the Hebrew word, and from it comes our English word *Calvary*. This was beyond the city gate (Heb. 13:12), since the law of Moses forbade capital punishment within the confines of the city (1 Kings 21:13; Acts 7:58; Lev. 24:14; Num. 15:35).
 - 3) There is today a natural formation in rock on the side of a hill not far from the Garden tomb bearing great resemblance to a skull, and it is very possible that this was the site of the crucifixion. [p,401].
5. Verse 18: "Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst."
- a. Why was Jesus placed between the two criminals? From the viewpoint of his enemies, perhaps to show some measure of scorn to the Lord. Isaiah 53:9 predicted that his death and burial would somehow involve the wicked and the rich. He was executed between two criminals and was buried in a rich man's new tomb.
 - b. Crucifixion was the terrible means of execution practiced by the Romans. Bible dictionaries and Encyclopedias give many details regarding crucifixion, including the following information.
-

- 1) It was unanimously considered the most horrible form of death, even worse than burning. Aside from the physical agony, it denoted an awful shame. One prominent reason the Jewish leaders sought crucifixion for Jesus was to destroy his influence among the Jews, for a curse and shame was pronounced upon one who was executed on a tree—in the thinking of the Jews. The Gentiles reserved crucifixion for slaves and criminals. The Jews had a revulsion for it since the Law placed a curse on one who was thus executed.
 - a) Deuteronomy 21:23: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged *is* accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance."
 - b) Galatians 3:13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree."
 - 2) Crucifixion usually began with scourging, a terrible ordeal of itself. This scourging was a horrible affliction, often causing the death of the victim. Jesus underwent this dreaded punishment. Pilate's intent in the scourging inflicted upon Jesus was an attempt to evoke sympathy in his accusers toward him so that they might agree to his release.
 - a) Luke 23:22 "And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let *him* go."
 - b) Isaiah 52:14 "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."
 - c. The victim was usually forced to carry his cross, and sometimes even goaded and beaten on the way. The execution site was in some public place, often along a prominent road, or on a hill where the victim could be easily seen. The victim was stripped naked, with perhaps a loin cloth being allowed.
 - d. The cross was in the usual shape we envision, or formed as a "T", or in the form of an "X." The victim was laid upon the cross and nails were driven through his hands and feet. Sometimes thongs were also used to prevent the body slipping from the cross if the flesh should tear. The cross was erected so that the feet of the subject was only a foot or two above the ground.
 - e. A large nail was driven through each hand, and another through each foot or one nail through both feet. A wooden rod was sometimes inserted between the legs as support for the sagging body to prevent the nails from tearing from the hands and feet.
 - 1) Psalms 22:16: "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet."
 - 2) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - 3) John 20:24-28: "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."
 - f. One of the very few acts of mercy attendant to crucifixion was the practice of giving the subject a drink of medication, wine mingled with myrrh and gall, which would induce grogginess, and deaden the pain. Christ refused to accept this drink so that he might
-

fully taste death (Mark 15:23; Matt. 27:23; Heb. 2:9). He later was offered a drink of vinegar in a sponge, which the Lord accepted (John 19:28-30). This was a mixture of sour wine and water which was used by the soldiers. The hyssop stalk (reed) grew from one and a half to three feet in length.

- g. The wounds of crucifixion did not result in a great loss of blood, and were not directly fatal. The cause of death is given as follows:
- 1) The unnatural position and violent tension of the body caused great pain from even a small movement.
 - 2) The nails were driven through the hands and feet where a great number of nerves are located, hence agony ensued.
 - 3) The exposure of the many wounds and lacerations, including those from the scourging, brings on inflammation; the pain thus increases moment by moment. The injuries caused by scourging to the back would cause further pain when the back was pressed against the cross.
 - 4) "In the distended parts of the body more blood flows through the arteries than can be carried back into the veins: hence too much blood finds its way from the aorta into the head and stomach, and the blood-vessels of the head become pressed and swollen. The general obstruction of circulation which ensues causes an internal excitement, exertion, and anxiety, more intolerable than death itself" (*Smith's Dictionary of The Bible*, p.514).
 - 5) The gradually increasing and lingering agony, and unbearable thirst, and the difficulty in breathing, eventually brought about death. Depending on the constitution and condition of the subject, death might be several days in coming. McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia reports the case of a young Turkish slave named Mameluke who lasted from Friday to Sunday during his crucifixion, and he was noted for being an exceptionally rugged individual.
 - 6) Woods described the process of crucifixion with these words: "As unspeakably inhuman as this mode of execution was, it stopped just short of producing merciful death and delivery from its agony and those thus executed often lingered for days on the cross unable to live, unable to die. The wretched position made every movement one of agony; the pierced hands and feet soon became inflamed and then infected, arteries were distended and blocked, fever shot upward, intolerable headaches often drove those thus being put to death into insanity. It was to such a death that our Lord was condemned, and this by men who affected to be the guardians of the truth and the favored of Jehovah!" (*Commentary on John*, p.402).

D. John 19:19-24: The Placard on the Lord's Cross and the Parting of his Garments.

1. Verse 19: "And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."
 - a. It was recorded in Hebrew (the language of the Jews), in Greek (the language of the educated), and in Latin (the language of the Romans). All who could read would be able to decipher the message.
 - b. The message was intended as irony. The Jewish leaders attempted to get Pilate to change its wording but were refused (John 19:21-22).
 - c. The message was truthful: Jesus was/is King:
 - 1) Matthew 2:2: "Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."
 - 2) Luke 1:32-33: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."
 - 3) John 12:13: "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."

- 4) John 18:36-37: "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."
 2. Verse 20: "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."
 - a. The message was written in three prominent languages; Hebrew [Aramaic] of course for the Jews, Latin for the Romans who were present, and Greek for all those from Gentile lands who knew that prominent language.
 - b. "The title was written in all of these languages so that the people, regardless of their native tongues, would be able to read it.
 - c. "The three great languages of the ancient world thus proclaimed Christ to be king of the Jews; and what was intended to be mockery became reality as the Lord, by means of the cross, became king, not only of the Jews, who spoke Hebrew, but of the Romans, whose language was Latin, and of the rest of the world much of which spoke Greek. The world's chief tongues bore homage to him who suffered for them all, and who died that all of them who would, could be saved" (Woods, p.403).
 3. Verses 21-22: "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."
 - a. Nothing Pilate did or said, except his allowing the crucifixion of Jesus to go forward, seemed to have pleased the Jews. In this case, the heads of the various orders of priests quickly came to Pilate to demand that the words on the placard be changed.
 - b. They wanted the wording to be changed from, "The King of the Jews," to "He Said I am the King of the Jews."
 - c. The governor refused to make a change! By this reply, Pilate regained some his self-respect.
 4. Verse 23: "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."
 - a. There were four different Roman soldiers serving as executioners for Jesus and the two criminals. We are told, in the case of Jesus, that these men divided the Lord's garments into four parts, one part for each of the four. This was the common practice; doubtless this was also done in the case of the other two being executed.
 - b. The items included the sandals, the girdle (belt), the outer robe and the head covering. Much of the wealth of the rich was bound up in their attire.
 - c. One's clothing is the most personal and close items of his possession. No sensible person would go into public without his clothing. It would not appear to us that the items of the Lord's clothing was worth much; they were at important to him in his daily life as ours are to us. Perhaps these soldiers would sell these items.
 - d. "The *tunic*, or undergarment, made of linen or wool, was without seam, being wholly woven and thus not of parts sewed together, a rule the priests followed. This garment was excepted from those divided by the soldiers since to cut it up would render it worthless for any of them. They would determine its subsequent ownership by gambling for it!" (Woods, p.405).
 5. Verse 24: "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.”

- a. John records what these four men decided; remember that the apostle wrote his gospel account many years later, near the end of the first century. He could know that these men said and did by his inspiration. John was close enough to hear what Jesus said when he consigned his mother to the apostle’s care. He witnessed the close actions and words of the soldiers. John adds, that they did what they planned.
- b. Psalm 22:18: “They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” This prediction was made about a thousand years before the event! We are told that the LXX (the Septuagint Greek of the Old Testament) was the source of the quotation.
- c. Notice that these pagan were willing to gamble over the special garment of Jesus; they had no conception at the time of what the Lord’s death meant. Their means of gambling was to cast lots (using something like the dice of our time). In the face of death, they were to engage in sinful gambling.
- d. God used these pagan soldiers to fulfill the prophecy of Psalm 22:18. They knew nothing of this fact. The two criminals who were crucified with Christ had no idea that they were involved in fulfilling another prophecy (Isa. 53:9).

E. John 19:25-37: Jesus On the Cross.

1. Verses 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.”
 - a. Johnson: While the apostles mostly were afar off, the women were near the cross. Some have held that there were only three, "his mother's sister" being" Mary the wife of Cleophas, " but the best Bible students think otherwise and suppose that Salome, the mother of James and John, is the sister meant. Matthew names among the women, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children." The last, Salome, is supposed to have been the sister of the mother of Jesus (Matt. 27: 56).
 - b. A godly mother would want to be close to her son in his trials; she could at least show him her love, though she could do nothing to deliver him from the cross. Her very presence would surely give him comfort.
 - c. Seeing his mother near the cross, Jesus indicated John told her to look at him, who was now to become her son. The implication of this tells us that her husband, Joseph, was now dead. It may also imply that John would be a better son to Mary than her four natural sons she and Joseph had brought into the world; these did not believe in Jesus: “For neither did his brethren believe in him” (John 7:5). James and Jude were later converted and were chosen to pen the epistles which bear their names.
 - d. John, of course, was at the cross, in close proximity to the women and the cross. Our Lord saw the “disciple whom he loved.” In writing the account of these events, the writer did not identify himself as John. The very nature of the case indicates that this unnamed disciple to be John. John may have been the youngest of the apostles, and as such, would have called for the Lord’s special attention.
2. Verses 28-29: “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.”
 - a. John’s account of the gospel of Christ does not include many thing which the other three accounts report; his book supplements information which the other do not discuss. We are not told by John about the darkness that was upon the land: "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour" (Matt. 27:45).
 - 1) From the sixth to the ninth hour would be from noon to three o'clock in the afternoon

- in our culture. "This darkness cannot be attributed to an eclipse because of the great length of time it prevailed upon the land, and because at that time of the year, the moon was full as it always was on the first day of the Passover" (McGarvey, p.246).
- 2) When the present events occurred, the miraculous darkness was present. There may have been enough light for limited vision or there may have been torches or a fire.
 - b. Jesus retained his mental acuity during his hours on the cross. At this point, he said he was thirsty—He was aware of that need. He felt the intense pain of his condition; at the first, he was offered a mixture of wine and gall, which would have reduced the pain to some degree, but he refused it.
 - c. Now he is offered him a sponge filled with vinegar. This he accepted. The moisture it gave him, would enable the Lord to give utterance any other information he needed to express. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). [See the outline at the end of this chapter which lists the seven statements our Lord made on the cross].
 - 1) At about the ninth hour, the Lord cried out with a loud voice, raising the wonderful question, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Some have thought that the Lord was merely quoting from Psalm 22:1, which is a Messianic prophecy.
 - 2) But if so, why did he speak the line in such a loud voice? Perhaps so that those who heard him could know that he is the Messiah. But it is more likely that he was actually living out the anguish of which the statement speaks.
3. Verse 30: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."
- a. "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost" (Matt. 27:50).
 - 1) The expression, "gave up the ghost" is an "obsolete expression for 'gave up the spirit.' It contemplates the body as the man, and the spirit as being released that it may depart. The thought is utterly inconsistent with Materialism" (McGarvey, p.247).
 - 2) "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" (John 10:17-18).
 - b. Our Lord had power to lay down his life; our text says he "gave up the ghost" (his spirit). The birth and the death of our Lord was perfectly timed.
 - 1) Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."
 - 2) When the Lord "dismissed" his spirit, he commended it to God, and the darkness left the earth as rapidly as it had come.
 - 3) The record does not say that he died. He, voluntarily, of his own act, surrendered up his spirit. He had declared, "I lay down my life to take it up again." He died by his own act; he was raised by his own power. If he died by his own surrender of his spirit, his death was not due to the effect of the cross. The two malefactors outlived him, and were put to death by other means in the evening in order that they might not be upon the cross upon the passover sabbath (see verses 31-33), but Jesus was already dead. [Johnson, p.286].
 - c. He died earlier than his guards, the Jews and Pilate anticipated: "And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the
-

- body to Joseph. (Mark 42-45).
- d. Luke reports that he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and having said that, "he gave up the ghost" (23:46). John 19:30 reports: "He said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (19:30).
 - 1) The time of his death was about three o'clock in the afternoon, after suffering on the cross for about six hours. Despite the horrible amount of agony he experienced during that period of time, this interval shows his death came much sooner than was usual in death by crucifixion. Sometimes the victim lingered for several days before finally expiring.
 - 2) It is the mortal (physical) body that dies; the spirit (the eternal part of man) lives on; at death it is separated from the body (at which time the body dies—Jas. 2:26), but the spirit returns into God's keeping (Eccl. 12:7).
 - 3) Our Lord's body was placed into a new tomb; his spirit entered the Paradise of the Hadean Realm. After three days and nights, his body was resurrected and his spirit re-entered it—this was one complete process.
 - e. Evidence about the location of the Lord's body and spirit.
 - 1) Luke 23:39-43: "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."
 - 2) His body went into the tomb—John 19:38-42.
 - 3) His spirit went into Paradise:
 - a) Luke 23:43: "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."
 - b) Luke 23:46: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."
 - c) Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
 - f. His spirit did not return to heaven while his body was in the grave: "Jesus saith to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God: (John 20:17, ASV).
 - 1) "Touch me not" (*hapto*: to fasten to; to cling to; to lay hold of).
 - 2) He would not allow Mary to cling to him for he must go to his Father, which implies he had not yet gone there.
 - 3) God is in heaven; Christ went to Paradise; he had not yet gone to his Father; therefore, this Paradise is not heaven.
 - g. Since the Paradise under consideration is not heaven and not the grave, where and what is **Paradise**? Additional evidence is given in Acts 2:25-31: "For David saith concerning him, I beheld the Lord always before my face; For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou madest known unto me the ways of life; Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance. Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath
-

to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption” (ASV).

- 1) *Hell* (KJV): in the original the Greek word *hades* is used. The spirit of Christ was in a place called *hades*, while his body was in the tomb.
- 2) Peter showed that the prophecy was fulfilled which said his body would not remain in the tomb and his spirit would not remain in *hades*.
- h. We have the following evidence from these passages:
 - 1) His spirit was not in the tomb.
 - 2) His spirit was in Paradise.
 - 3) Paradise (in this case) is not heaven.
 - 4) Paradise is located in *hades* (*place of the unseen dead*).
- i. **It is finished.** This declaration is filled with meaning.
 - 1) All that he had come to do had been done: “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4).
 - 2) The pertinent prophecies had been fulfilled; the atonement had been made; the law was fulfilled (Matt. 5:17); his sufferings were now over!
 - 3) This is a statement of victory! Woods offers these great thoughts:
 - a) The words, “It is finished,” sum up all that he came to do—the redemption of mankind was now being achieved—and the course which had been laid out for him from the beginning, had been completed. His life and work, his suffering and death, the shame and agony of the cross, are all viewed as behind him and in triumph he shouts, *It is finished!*
 - b) The significance of these words for all of us are beyond our comprehension. Death thus became the door to the realization of his glory and not the shame which his enemies intended. He who was without sin, bore the sins of the world in these hours and thus paid the debt for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world. (Matt. 20:28; 1 Cor. 15:1-3.)
 - c) John's observation that in this moment Jesus “bowed his head” evidences the vivid impression it made on an eyewitness and indicates the close attention to detail that was his. Every detail of that historic occasion was indelibly etched in the mind of the beloved disciple. [He was also writing by inspiration—Bob Winton].
 - d) It was at this point that he uttered the words recorded by Luke, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46), which Matthew, Mark and Luke all note was uttered with a loud cry—one of triumph, and not of defeat.
 - e) It is significant that our text says that Jesus “gave up his spirit”; even in death he controlled his life and yielded it in a voluntary exercise of his will and not by force.
 - f) There is an ancient Christian hymn sung by the early disciples of the Lord which points out that it was not death which seized Christ but it was Christ who seized death, thus encountering it not as one conquered but as a triumphant victor over it.
 - g) The darkness which had enveloped the earth because the sun refused to shine upon the crowning tragedy of the ages—an act which above all others shows man at his worst—was now lifted and its light fell upon the cross and in its brilliance typical of the light which he sheds upon all who follow him, he died. The Bible's earliest promise of redemption was now realized, the seed of the woman had indeed bruised the serpent's head and the Lamb of God had taken away the sins of the world.
4. Verses 31-32: “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.”

a. McGarvey:

- 1) It was now the preparation for the Passover, which had already been celebrated the evening previous, but for the Sabbath of the Passover week, which was a “high day” (John xix. 31.) Mark explains it thus by adding, “that is, the day before the Sabbath.” It had become a preparation day by custom, and not by force of law; for there is nothing in the law on the subject.
 - 2) The fact that it was the preparation is given by Mark as the reason why Joseph went to Pilate and asked for the body (comp. verse 13); while John states it as the reason why “the Jews” besought Pilate to have the legs of the crucified broken and their bodies taken away (John xix:31).
 - 3) The same cause operated on both the friends and the foes of Jesus, each party having, in other particulars, a different object in view. (*Matthew and Mark*, p.364).
- b. To break a crucifixion victim's legs would hasten death: some say it would make it impossible to breathe since they had to push and pull themselves up against the nails to inhale and exhale; and the shock of having two major bones harshly broken, especially in addition to the horrible agony the victim had already endured, would certainly hasten death.
5. Verses 33-34: “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.”
- a. They found Jesus already dead, and did not break his legs; this fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy.
 - 1) Psalms 34:20: “He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.”
 - 2) John 19:35-36: “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.”
 - b. One of the soldiers used a spear to pierce the side of the Lord. This certainly made sure that he was dead. He, being a man of war and acquainted with death, would obviously recognize whether a man was dead. There have been unbelievers who denied that Jesus was dead; this soldier forever lays this allegation to rest!
 - c. When the side of our Lord was riven, forthwith came blood and water from this wound.
 - 1) “In view of the fact that John, an eyewitness, offered no explanation, thus regarding this development as exceptional, should make subsequent students hesitant to be dogmatic in the matter. There is very evidently symbolism involved in the issuing of blood and water in view of the affirmations of I John 5:6ff John intended to make clear that the death of Jesus did not follow the ordinary laws of nature” (Woods, p.411).
 - 2) I John 5:6-8: “This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”
 - d. The soldier pierced the side of Jesus with his spear. This wound would have killed him had he not already been dead. The fact that blood and water came out shows that he was dead. This piercing of his side also fulfilled prophecy.
-

- 1) 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."
 - 2) John 19:37: "And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."
 - e. The soldiers were competent witnesses of death; since they affirmed that Jesus was dead, we may know that he truly was dead: "And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph" (Mark 15:44-45).
 - f. Why did blood and water from the pierced side of our Lord? John provides an answer in the passage from First John 5:6-8, appearing above.
 - 1) Christ is the one whose coming is meant; his coming was his entrance into the world [since this is the only literal coming our Lord has made to earth so far]. He came into the world by means of the Virgin Birth, but John does not address that subject directly. Notice that his coming is in the past tense.
 - 2) The apostle declares that Christ came not by water only; he came by water and blood. On the surface this seems to be a very dark and difficult statement. The purpose of mentioning the water and blood was to establish them as witnesses: "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one" (verse 8). They bear testimony about the nature and identity of Christ.
 - 3) The reference to **water** is almost certainly an allusion to our Lord's baptism: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 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" (Matt. 3:15-17). The Father gave an audible and public acknowledgment that Jesus is his Son. This is strong testimony about the nature and identity of Christ. This event took place at the very beginning of his public ministry.
 - 4) The reference to **blood** is undoubtedly speaking of our Lord's crucifixion. When the Savior died, the Roman soldier pierced his side with a spear: "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" (John 19:34-35). Notice the statement here about blood and water. John's account of this event bears strong testimony about the nature and identity of the one crucified. This event took place at the very end of his public ministry.
 - 5) The Spirit also bears witness. He is the third witness of the Lord's identity (the water, the blood, and the Spirit). He bears witness to the deity of Jesus; his witness is reliable because the Spirit is truth.
 6. Verse 35: "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."
 - a. Brother Johnson offers these comments on the passage we are studying:
 - 1) The writer here identifies himself as an eyewitness, as one standing near the cross, as in fact, John the apostle. The reader cannot but note the emphasis that he places upon what he has just recorded concerning the spear thrust and the blood and water.
 - 2) Already in the days of John there was prevalent an agnostic skeptical theory that Jesus did not really, but only seemed to, die; and John proposed to set this matter at rest. What he saw proves the death of the Lord beyond a doubt. His testimony equally
-

sets at rest the suggestion of of modern skepticism that Christ merely fainted from exhaustion and was taken down from the cross, and subsequently restored by his disciples.

- 3) There has been much spiritualizing of the blood and water by a class of mythical commentators who see in everything a deep, mysterious, hidden meaning. The fact that in 1 John 5: 8, it is stated that three bear witness, the Spirit, the water and the blood, furnishes some warrant for allowing a special emphasis upon the blood and the water, but not for some of the curious interpretations.
 - 4) If we seek aid from the epistle we find that there John declares that Christ came by "water and by blood" that is, his work was inaugurated by his baptism and the great tragedy was ended when he shed his blood. Then he adds that the three bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood.
 - 5) It must be kept in mind that John is citing these as witnesses to Christ, and to understand him we must seek how they bear witness Taking up the blood, it is also clear how it bears witness. The Lord himself appointed an institution, in which a chosen symbol represents his blood, and he has said,
 - a) "As oft as ye do this (use this symbol in the appointed way) you do show forth my death." As the passover bore witness to the first passover in Egypt, so every celebration of the Lord's Supper, a memorial institution appointed at the foot of the cross, bears witness to his death, and the "blood of the New Testament, shed for many for the remission of sins," to his blood shed on the cross.
 - b) It thus becomes clear that the water must refer to the other great positive institution established by our Lord. Every baptismal rite bears witness also. The burial in the water is emblematical of the Lord's death and burial, and "we are buried by baptism into death," while the uplifting from the watery grave is "in the likeness of his resurrection.
 - 6) Hence, the water of the baptismal rite bears witness to the Lord's death, burial and resurrection, or to the three great facts of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4). If, therefore, John attaches any deep meaning to "the water and the blood" it is because they symbolize the two great positive institutions established by our Lord, and which are two of the "three witnesses" which testify to the vital facts of his life, death, burial and resurrection. [pp.288f).
7. Verses 36-37: "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."
- a. Notice:
 - 1) 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."
 - 2) John 19:37: "And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."
 - 3) Psalms 34:20: "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken."
 - b. Jesus fulfilled all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament which pertained to him. He was typified by the Passover Lamb which was not to have any of his bones broken.
 - 1) 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."
 - 2) John 1:29: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 5:7: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump,
-

as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.”

F. John 19:38-42: The Burial of Jesus.

1. Verse 38: “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.”
 - a. The body of Jesus was requested by Joseph of Arimathaea. An ordinary citizen could not have walked into Pilate’s chamber to make any request; this man was a well-known man.
 - 1) Matthew 27:57: "When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple."
 - 2) Mark 15:43: "Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus."
 - 3) Luke 23:50-52: "And, behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a counsellor; *and he was* a good man, and a just: (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) *he was* of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God. This *man* went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus."
 - b. Joseph was a rich man; a good man; just and honorable; a counsellor; he waited for the kingdom; he had not consented to the death of Jesus; he was a secret disciple of the Lord (John 19:38).
 - 1) Arimathaea was a city of the Jews (Luke 23:51), but its location is unknown. That he was a rich man is plainly affirmed in the text.
 - 2) This man went boldly (Mark 15:44) before Pilate to beg (crave) the body of Jesus for burial. The apostles had forsaken the Lord in Gethsemane and fled; Joseph had not openly revealed his faith before, but now his faith shines brilliantly!
 - 3) By his action he kept Jesus from being buried in some unknown location; it also fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53:9 ("With the rich in his death").
 - 4) We shall next see that he had an important helper, Nicodemus, who was also a notable person, a ruler of the Jews (John 3:1). By their actions they kept Jesus from being buried in some unknown location.
 - 5) It was essential that the burial place of Jesus should be known, otherwise how could it be learned that he had been resurrected?
 - c. Pilate gave permission for the body of Jesus to be removed from the cross and buried. There is not indication any hesitancy on the governor’s part.
2. Verse 39: “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.”
 - a. On the surface of the above passages, it might appear that Joseph alone removed the Lord's body from the cross: "And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid" (Luke 23:53).
 - b. Nicodemus came with a hundred-pound weight of myrrh and aloes with which to use in the Lord's burial .
 - 1) He had approached Jesus by night (John 3:1ff), and is mentioned as defending the Lord in John 7:50-52: "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."
 - 2) This great amount of material was used in the embalming process then practiced; it was placed next to the body and wrapped with a linen cloth; possible a layer of the spices was also put under the body, on the resting place.
 - c. The Sanhedrin had caused Jesus to be crucified; but two members of that august body were directly involved in interring the Lord’s body.

3. Verse 40: "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."
 - a. "The manner of the Jews" included the use of spices, where they could command the means. 2 Chron 16:10. A portion of these was burnt in honor of the deceased, and to this use was probably destined part of the one hundred pounds weight of "myrrh and aloes" in our Lord's case. In no instance, save that of Saul and his sons, were the bodies burned; and even then the bones were interred, and re-exhumed for solemn entombment. It was the office of the next of kin to perform and preside over the whole funeral office; though public buriers were not unknown in New Testament times. Acts 5:6,10. The body was borne by the nearest relatives. The grave-clothes were probably of the fashion worn in life, but swathed and fastened with bandages, and the head covered separately. [Smith's Bible Dictionary, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved].
 - b. Johnson:
 - 1) The Jews did not embalm as did the Egyptians, though in the case of King Asa there seems to be a hint of it, but it was the custom to wash the body, anoint it, and then wrap it in fine linen with spices and ointments enveloped in the folds.
 - 2) It is probable that the approach of the Sabbath hurried the preparation of the body, and it seems from the return of the women after the Sabbath that they did not consider the burial rites fully completed.
 - 3) Comparing the four accounts we learn that the body was wrapped in fine linen clothes with spices, and laid in a new rock-hewn sepulcher in a garden near the place of crucifixion, and that the sepulcher had never before been used.
 - 4) It was common in Palestine to cut vaults for the burial of the dead in the sides of the rocky cliffs and to close them with stones. It is probable that Joseph had built this for the sepulcher for himself and family. Thus is fulfilled the prediction of Isaiah (chap. 53), that though Christ "numbered with the transgressors," "he was with the rich in his death."
 4. Verses 41-42: "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."
 - a. Doubtless, it was providential that the crucifixion site and the burial tomb were close to each other. The tomb was in a garden, what we might call a cemetery.
 - b. It was a **new** tomb. No one had been buried in it before the Lord. It was new in the sense that it had never been used (Greek "kainon"), not necessarily that it had only recently been hewn.
 - c. Also, lest anyone think that the body of Jesus had come into contact with some great one's body, and raised by its power, as was the case in 2 Kings 13:21, the tomb had to be an unused one. "And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band *of men*; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet" (2 Kings 13:21).
 - d. The Jews' preparation for the Sabbath was nearing, so Joseph and Nicodemus perhaps had to rush their work.
-

Who Was Responsible for the Lord's Death?

1. A modern pope "forgave" the Jews for murdering Jesus. No Jew living today was directly responsible for killing the Lord.
2. There were many in the Jewish hierarchy who were directly responsible; they made definite plans and exerted direct efforts to that end. The authorities among the Jews and Romans were responsible for his death.
3. The Lord had come to the Jewish nation, but had been largely rejected by them, especially by their leaders: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11). The majority of the Jewish people of his time rejected the Lord, and many of these pushed for his crucifixion.
4. A large number of Jews welcomed Christ into Jerusalem for his triumphant entry; later in the same week, a large number of Jews demanded his death. The chief priest has swayed the people: "But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them" (Mark 15:11). There were a significant number in the great audience on Pentecost who bore guilt in the Lord's death.
 - a. Acts 2:23: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."
 - b. Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
5. The Romans bore responsibility in this dark deed: Pilate for putting politics before truth and principle; the soldiers in doing their gruesome part.
6. We all had a part indirectly, for it was because of sin that the Savior endured the cross.
 - a. Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:3: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."
 - c. 1 John 2:2: "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*"

The Seven Statements from the Cross

- A. Luke 23:34: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."**
1. We may be sure that God heard all the prayers offered by his holy Son. How many went unanswered? None. How many requests did he make that were turned down? Perhaps just one: "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*" (Matt. 26:39).
 - a. Hebrews 5:7: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."
 - b. This prayer was answered but, not immediately, not without conditions, and not for everyone involved. Only some of the guilty ones obeyed the gospel. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain....Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what
-

shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:23,37-38,41).

B. Luke 23:43: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

1. The attitude of the two thieves is shown in Luke 23:39-43: "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."
2. The statement was addressed to only one of the thieves. It *may* be that this man was a backslider since he knew somewhat about Jesus and his kingdom.
 - a. Mark 1:4-5: "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins."
 - b. Luke 3:7: "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"
 - c. Luke 3:21: "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened."
 - d. Luke 7:30: "But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."
 - e. Acts 13:24: "When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel."
3. Whether he had or had not been baptized is of no significance to us: the law of the gospel did not take effect until Jesus had died; and prior to the effective date of a will, the testator may dispose of his blessings as he sees fit, but after his death, the conditions of the will are then imposed.
 - a. Galatians 3:15: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto."
 - b. Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
4. Therefore, the conversion of this thief is no example for us since his pardon was given prior to the death of Christ, and we live on this side of the cross.
 - a. Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
 - b. Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - c. Hebrews 10:9-10: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*."

C. John 19:26-27: "Woman, behold thy son...behold thy mother."

1. It is to be expected that his mother was present. "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:35).
 2. The Lord demands that children honor their parents (Eph. 6:1-2), even after they are grown (cf. Mark 7:10-13). He never commanded us to do what he was unwilling to do himself.
 - a. Luke 2:51: "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart."
 - b. Acts 1:1: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." Our Lord lived up to what he taught.
 3. This exchange shows the Lord's great compassion: he made arrangements for his mother's welfare. It also implies that Joseph was dead.
 4. It shows his methods: he uses other people to provide for his own: "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me" (Matt. 25:40).
- D. Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34: "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"**
1. Matthew 27:46: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
 2. At about the ninth hour, the Lord cried out with a loud voice, raising the wonderful question, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Some have thought that the Lord was merely quoting from Psalm 22:1, which is a Messianic prophecy. But if so, why did he speak the line in such a loud voice? Perhaps so that those who heard him could know that he is the Messiah. But it is more likely that he was actually living out the anguish of which the statement speaks.
 3. "The depth of meaning contained in this bitter outcry can never, we suppose, be fathomed by human thought, yet the word 'forsaken' directs our thought in the right channel. If a good man who has long trusted in God and delighted in his favor could suddenly realize that God had *forsaken* him, he would enter, at least partly, into the Savior's feeling. But the peculiar relation which Jesus sustained to the Father rendered this feeling more intense than human hearts can experience, and at the same time it renders most mysterious to us the forsaking itself. It is enough to know that in it lay the chief bitterness of the Savior's death" (McGarvey, p.246).
 4. Isaiah 53:12 predicted that Christ would pour "out his soul unto death." The word "soul" might be used in the sense of "life"—that he gave his life for us. But in view of the statement from the cross, much more is doubtless involved.
 5. Death means "separation." "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26). When the human spirit is separated from the human body, death is the result; the physical body without the spirit is dead.
 - a. One is spiritually dead if he is separated from God. "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins....Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
 - b. The second death is the eternal separation those who die in sin will experience; they are forever separated from God: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2:11; cf. Rev. 20:12-15; 21:8).
 6. During the time our Lord hang on the cross, bearing the sins of the world, he was separated from God; God can have no communion with sin; while Christ bore our sins (though he was entirely guiltless), he had no fellowship with God.
-

- a. As awful as crucifixion is, there is one thing that is worse—being separated from God!
 - b. Although Christ was utterly sinless, yet he suffered as a sinner—separated from God. But this statement is beyond human comprehension; it enters into the eternal, and has to do with such deep considerations that we are not able to fathom them. This is the only statement of the seven statements from the cross, recorded by more than one writer.
7. "The cry is the result not only of His suffering body, but also from the fact that Jesus is the sin-bearer of the world. God in his holiness could not have fellowship with sin and therefore is removed from the Son (Ex. 33:3; Josh. 7:11-12; Ps. 66:18; Isa. 59:1-2; Isa. 64:7; Hos. 5:6). The Greek verb translated in English translation 'forsaken,' is in the aorist tense. Therefore, indicating the forsaken state had taken place in that time period in the past (the three hours of darkness), and had now reached its climax, thus the Lord's loud outcry. Paul states that Jesus, by His death had redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). Jesus was our sin offering (II Cor. 5:21). Therefore, Jesus died in our place, that He might bring us near to God" (Laws, *The Book of Matthew*, p.685).

E. John 19:28: "I thirst."

1. Thirst is one of the natural consequences of death by crucifixion. He could have miraculously provided water for himself. He did for Israel (I Cor. 10:4); he made the world (John 1:3). But he died without divine help.
2. He died that we might never thirst.
 - a. John 4:14: "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."
 - b. Revelation 7:16: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat."
3. This is the only one of the seven statements in which he sought something for himself. He was offered a mixture of sour wine and water (vinegar) which the soldiers had provided for themselves: "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" (John 19:29-30).

F. John 19:30: "It is finished."

1. All that he had come to do had been done: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).
 2. The pertinent prophecies had been fulfilled; the atonement had been made; the law was fulfilled (Matt. 5:17); his sufferings were now over!
 3. This is a statement of victory.
-

John Chapter 20

A. John 20:1-10: Witnesses Come to the Empty Tomb of Jesus.

1. Verses 1-2: “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.”
 - a. Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early on the first day of the week, while it before daylight. The Jewish method of dividing the days of the week was to begin a day at sunset [6:00 P.M.], and that day would end twenty-fours later. Their days began with darkness, went through the daylight hours, and came to an end at sunset.
 - b. Mary and the other ladies who came to the tomb before daylight were described by a poem which illustrates their high spiritual tone:

“Not she with trait'rous kiss her Saviour stung.
 Not she denied Him with unholy tongue.
 She, while apostles shrank, could danger brave,
 Last at His cross, and earliest at His grave” [Eaton S. Barrett]

- c. Mary got to the tomb in the darkness, just before sunrise. The day of the crucifixion had ended [that was on Friday]; the twenty-fours of the Sabbath had passed; the dark part of the first day of the week [Sunday] was about to end as the sun would soon rise. “Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils” (Mark 16:9).
- d. Critics assert that the reports contradict since different women are named as being present at the tomb. John only names Mary Magdalene; Matthew names Mary Magdalene and the other Mary; Mark says Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James (the other Mary), and Salome were there; Luke reports the presence of several: Mary Magdalene, Joanna (the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward—Luke 8:3), the mother of James (the Less; she is the other Mary of Matthew's account), and other women:
 - 1) Luke 23:49: “And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.”
 - 2) Luke 23:55-56: “And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.”
 - 3) Luke 24:1: “Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.”
 - 4) Luke 24:10: “It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.”
- e. The complete story is told only when all of the accounts have been consulted; no one of these four writers claimed to have reported every detail, and no detail reported by one is contradicted by any of the others. John does not say that Mary Magdalene came alone; Matthew and Mark do not say that only those women they named were present; Luke gives a more complete picture of the identity of the women since he names more than the others, and states twice that there were others present who are not named (24:1,10).
- f. The purpose of their coming to the sepulchre was to anoint the Lord's body (Mk. 16:1-2). Matthew merely says they came to see the sepulchre, since he had not previously said

anything about them preparing spices for that purpose. Luke 23:50-56 reports that the women had watched as Joseph placed the Lord's body in the tomb, and that they returned to the city to wait out the Sabbath, and to prepare spices for the anointing process.

- 1) Mark states that they had purchased sweet spices. They would have been able to buy and prepare these spices after the sabbath had ended the evening before, and left before daylight to make their way to the tomb as early as possible.
 - 2) The distance was likely a half-mile or more. It appears that they knew nothing about the Roman guard, or else they would have realized they would not be permitted entrance into the tomb. Also, they discussed among themselves, as they made their journey, how they would be able to move the great stone sealing the sepulchre (Mark 16:3-4).
 - 3) Each gospel writer provided the information needed to accomplish the end in view for his account. John names Mary Magdalene only, probably because he gives a detailed view of her encounter with the risen Lord, being the first person to see him after his resurrection (Mark 16:9).
- g. The great stone that covered the entrance to the tomb was still in place. They wondered how this stone could be removed, but that had taken place before their arrival. The guard had also vacated the area: “And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men” (Matt. 28:2-4). None of the Roman soldiers were present when Mary and the others arrived.
- h. Johnson: “The reason that John mentions Mary Magdalene alone is shown in this statement. She was the one who ran and met Peter and himself. Her sad cry, ‘They have taken the Lord away out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him,’ shows that others were with her at the sepulcher. Her only explanation was that the enemies had taken away the body. While Mary had gone to seek the disciples the other women entered the sepulcher and saw an angel there” (p.295).
- 1) Matthew 28:5-7: “And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.”
 - 2) At the moment when Christ died, nothing could have seemed more abjectly weak, more pitifully hopeless, more absolutely doomed to scorn and extinction and despair, than the Church which he had founded. It numbered but a handful of weak followers. They were poor, they were ignorant, they were hopeless So feeble were they, and insignificant, that it would have looked like foolish partiality to prophesy for them the limited existence of a Galilean sect. How was it that these dull and ignorant men, with their cross of wood, triumphed over the deadly fascinations of sensual mythologies, conquered kings and their armies, and overcame the world? There is one, and one only, possible answer—the resurrection from the dead. All this vast revolution was due to the power of Christ's resurrection. [See Johnson, p.295].
- i. Mary gave her report to Peter and John [the one the Lord loved]. All she knew at the time was the Lord's body was not in the tomb; she thought that someone had removed it and put in somewhere out of sight. She asked them to come and see. Notice that she used the plural pronoun WE—“We know not where they have laid him” (the other women).
2. Verses 3-5: “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. 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.”

- a. John and Peter ran to the tomb; the news was so shocking that they gave great haste in seeing for themselves! John arrived first, and looked into the sepulcher. His speed is an indication that he was younger and fleet of foot; Peter is thought to be among the older of the apostles.
- b. What met John’s eyes were the linen clothes in which Jesus had been wrapped. He did not enter the tomb, perhaps out of respect for the apostle Peter.
- c. Coffman:
 - 1) In addition to the deference to Peter, evident throughout in this passage, there was another deterrent to John's entering that tomb. "He seeth the linen cloths lying!" There is no marvel why John hesitated. Those linen cloths remained in the exact position AS IF THE LORD HAD STILL BEEN WOUND THEREIN. The impact on John was the same as if he had seen the linen cloths WALKING!
 - 2) The position of those medical bandages in which the body was wrapped absolutely demanded the conclusion that Jesus had risen THROUGH THEM, even as he had risen THROUGH the tomb, leaving them undisturbed, as if he had still been in them.
 - 3) The miracle of those undisturbed cloths was the clincher in John's mind, proving that Jesus had risen from the dead. John gave this evidence in his Gospel, because it was the evidence which convinced him....
 - 4) They had not been ripped off; and, if any man had taken them off, it would have been impossible to have restored their position, Even the napkin, to be mentioned later, still held the position it had when Jesus' head was in it. It had not even collapsed! It should be remembered that the angel who (presumably) rolled the stone away from the grave did so, not to let the Lord out, but to let the witnesses in. He rose through the tomb exactly as he did through the bandages.
3. Verses 6-7: “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.”
 - a. Evidence of his resurrection is seen in the grave clothes left in the tomb.
 - 1) John 20:4-7: “So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. hen Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself” ((NKJV)..”
 - 2) Greek scholars say that the linen cloth was lying in folds, that they were in a cocoon shape as if Jesus had simply passed through them without disturbing their arrangement.
 - 3) When Lazarus was raised, he had to have assistance to be loosed from the tightly wound grave clothes (Jn. 11:44).
 - 4) Jesus was bound the same way, hence could not unwrap the clothes or travel any distance in that binding.
 - b. The spices used in the burial customs of the Jews were sticky. These were placed on the body and the linen cloth was wrapped around the body, from neck to foot. "Who unwrapped Jesus, in unhurried manner rolled up the face napkin, then painstakingly, and with the skill of an artist, re-wrapped those sticky grave cloths back into their original shape so perfectly that they appeared as if they had not been tampered with?" (Ed.

- Wharton, "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ Historical...Or Mythological?").
- c. The evident conclusion seems to be therefore that Jesus passed through these grave cloths in the same way he passed through the walls of the tomb and also into the room where the disciples waited behind locked doors (John 20:19,26).
 - d. Coffman:
 - 1) Commentators who refer this to some mere tidying up of the grave, or the folding of the garments (there were no garments; but medical bandages), miss the point. Since when has it ever been supposed that a folded garment, or cloth, proved that the dead had arisen? The certain implication of this astounding narration is that Jesus had risen through the winding shroud of bandages, napkin and all, leaving behind the positive and undeniable evidence of his supernatural triumph over death.
 - 2) Remember, this evidence convinced John. The very amount of space accorded this phenomenon in this Gospel is far more than enough to indicate the extraordinary implications of "the linen cloths lying." Matthew has a remarkable corroboration of this account in the words of the angel, "Come see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 26:6), thus emphatically implying all that John here related.
 - e. The soldiers were terrified by the appearance of the angel and became as dead men; they went into town, reported what they had seen at the tomb, and accepted a bribe to report a lie:
 - 1) Matthew 28:11-15: "Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."
 - 2) "Here Matthew informs us of the exact relative time at which 'some of the watch' arrived in the city and reported to the chief priests what they had seen: it was 'when the women were going' to deliver their message, and it was after their meeting with Jesus. Notice that, not all, but some of the watch went to the chief priests, the remainder going doubtless to their own quarters. Some went to the chief priests because they knew that it was at their instance that the sepulchre had been guarded" (McGarvey, *Matthew and Mark*, pp.251f).
4. Verses 8-10: "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."
- a. What John saw in the tomb convinced him that Jesus had truly been raised from the dead. From this conviction the apostle never wavered. He remained a firm believer in Christ and a devoted servant to the end of his earthly life; he lived to about the end of the first century.
 - b. No grave robber had taken away the body of Jesus. The grave clothes remained in place without having been unwound, a difficult and tedious operation, since a large amount of myrrh and aloes had been bound up with the bandages.
 - c. "This is the climax of the whole paragraph regarding fine cloths. It resulted in John's everlasting faith that Jesus had risen from the dead. There were three elements of this convincing sign: the open grave, the absence of the body, and the undisturbed linen cloths. As for the reason why the stone was removed (supernaturally), it cannot be viewed as a means of letting the Lord out, but as a means of letting his disciples in for the purpose of beholding and being convinced of his resurrection" (Coffman).
 - d. No search was made to locate the body of Jesus; very shortly all of the apostles were
-

fully appraised of his resurrection. John here tells us that at the moment when they came to the sepulcher they did not adequately perceive the scriptures which declared the Lord's resurrection, ahead of time. Christ had told them several times that he would die at Jerusalem but would rise from the dead.

- 1) Matthew 16:21: "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."
- 2) Matthew 20:17-19: "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again."
- 3) Compare: "And afterward he was manifested unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen" (Mark 16:14, ASV).

B. John 20:11-18: Jesus Appears and Talks With Mary Magdalene.

1. Verse 11: "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre."
 - a. The narrative now returns to Mary Magdalene, who was tearfully standing near the entrance of the tomb.
 - b. "Mary did not leave the tomb, as did Peter and John, but remained there to weep. It is not known if she was alone, or what time of day this occurred. It is received in faith and reverence, as from the eyewitness account of an apostle, and with full consciousness that the revelation we have received, though inspired: is nonetheless fragmentary, but fragmentary only as regards inconsequential details. Of the great central facts, there is an overwhelming profusion of faith-inducing information" (Coffman).
 - c. After Peter and John returned home, she stooped down and looked into the tomb. She only knew at this point that the Lord's body was missing; she assumed that someone had removed it to some unknown location (20:1-2; 20:15).
 - d. The home to which the two apostles went was one owned or used by John. His social standing was not great, but he did know the high priest. He had some measure of prosperity and influence.
 - 1) He had hired servants and business partners:
 - a) Mark 1:20: "And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him."
 - b) Luke 5:10-11: "And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him."
 - 2) He owned property: "Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" (John 19:27).
 - 3) He was acquainted with the high priest: "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" (John 18:15).
2. Verses 12-13: "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."
 - a. Upon looking into the sepulcher, Mary saw two angels, clothed in white apparel, and sitting at the place where the Lord's body had lain—one at the head and the other at the

- foot.
- b. Brother Woods thought that Mary was weeping because she suspected that cruel robbers had stolen the body of the Lord: She "stooped" to look because the entrance to the tomb—cut out of rock into the side of the hill—was too low to stand upright and look inside. She was weeping over what she thought was desecration of the grave by enemies of Jesus."
 - c. The angels asked the lady why she was weeping. She expressed her dismay that someone had taken away the body of her Lord. Her tears were genuine. She supposed that his body had been taken away by the enemy and did not know what they had done with it. Did she perceive that these two men were angels? In her highly emotional state, brought on by the powerful events of the past three days, she was not able to absorb the information that had suddenly come before her.
3. Verses 14-15: "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."
- a. NKJ: Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away."
 - b. The apostle tells us that she then turned to leave the sepulcher, she saw another man standing near; she did not recognize that he was Jesus, but thought he was the gardener. The natural question was to ask whether he had moved the Lord's body, and that if so, she would take it to a proper place. Doubtless she would have needed help to move it.
 - c. Woods:
 - 1) "She did not at first recognize him. Here, again, we can only guess why. Her eyes were filled with tears; her mind was beset with grief; she had not the slightest expectation of ever seeing the Lord alive again; she noted only that it was some man speaking to her, and because it was in the garden and at an early hour she supposed, not unreasonably, that it was the gardener
 - 2) "What a magnificent woman she was! She lives in history as one of the most devoted disciples the Lord ever had. She is representative of that class of women—and may their tribe increase—who always put the kingdom of God first in their hearts and lives and who make all else subservient and secondary to its interests" (p.423).
4. Verse 16: "Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master."
- a. With one word, the Lord was able to focus her attention on himself; immediately she was fully aware that this man she perceived to be the gardener was really her Lord!
 - b. Her one word reply was, "Rabboni." John tells us that this word meant "Teacher." She was in a state of shock and confusion; the first thing to come from her lips was this term of reverence and love. It expressed volumes of happiness!
 - c. We are told by scholars that *rabboni* is one of three degrees of the word: Rab (teacher), Rabbi (my teacher), and Rabboni (my great teacher).
 - d. Johnson observes: "Before she had been listless, but when she heard her name in the accents she remembered so well, she at once beheld her Lord, and crying out, Rabboni, Master, she attempted to throw herself at his feet" (p.297).
5. Verse 17: "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."
- a. NKJ: Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father;
-

- but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"
- b. Regarding *touch me not*: The verb, primarily, means "to fasten to." Hence, it implies here, not a mere momentary touch, but "a clinging to." Mary thought that the old relations between her Lord and herself were to be renewed; that the old contact, by means of sight, sound, and touch, would go on as before [Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft].
 - c. The Lord affirmed that he had not yet ascended to his Father. During his three days and nights, his body was in the tomb and his spirit was in Paradise. But he had not been in heaven with the Father. His ascension to heaven did not occur for forty more days (Acts 1:1-6, 9-11).
 - d. Facts concerning the ascension:
 - 1) After his resurrection, Christ met with the apostles on several occasions.
 - 2) Following the last meeting, he ascended heavenward out of their sight: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).
 - 3) A prophetic picture of his approaching heaven's gate as he came back to his eternal home was given in the Old Testament: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he *is* the King of glory" (Ps. 24:7-10).
 - 4) Daniel 7:13-14 gave a prophetic description of what happened when he approached the Heavenly Father: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
 - e. Christ gave Mary a job to, "Go tell my brethren..." She was to tell them that the Lord was to ascend to God. She was entirely convinced that Jesus had been raised from the dead; she had seen him, she had spoken to him, he had spoken to her, and he had given her a mission.
 - f. The Lord did not say that he was immediately to return to heaven. Acts 1:3 reports that he was with the apostles for another forty days: "To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, **being seen of them forty days**, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."
 - g. He gave great assurance to Mary and the apostles that he was returning to his God, her God and to their God. "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 14:3).
6. Verse 18: "Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her."
- a. Mary carried out her instructions and reported her having seen and talked with the Lord. It was difficult for the apostles to accept as factual that Jesus alive again; they were soon
-

convinced, and filled with happiness. The apostle Thomas was skeptical, as we shall see later in this chapter.

- b. Matthew 28:5-10: “And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.”
- c. Again they the disciples that he would meet with them in Galilee, an appointment he had made with them prior to his arrest. He had identified the place (Matt. 28:16), and maybe even the occasion of this meeting. He referred to the eleven disciples as "my brethren." This term of endearment would have the happy effect of uplifting the apostles by showing that the Lord bore them no ill will for having forsaken him in the garden.
- d. Also, Matthew's report does not preclude any earlier meetings with the eleven. By calling their attention to the appointment he had made with them prior to his arrest and crucifixion, he reminded them that he had predicted that he would rise from the dead. The appointment had been made in the upper room when he had instituted the Lord's supper, hence only the apostles were present when the appointment was made.
 - 1) Matthew 26:32: “But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.”
 - 2) Matthew 28:16: “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.”

C. John 20:19-29: Jesus Appears to the Apostles.

1. Verse 19: “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.”
 - a. The apostle John next reports the appearance of Jesus to the band of the apostles, except for Thomas, who was not present. They were eating a meal, and were discussing the startling news about the Lord's resurrection:
 - 1) Mark 16:12-16: “After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - 2) Luke 24:33-37: “And they [the two men in the context] rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.”
 - b. The eleven were meeting, doubtless in the same upper room where the Lord had instituted the Lord's Supper. They were fearful of the vengeful Jews, who could be expected to present a real danger to these apostles of Christ; the door had been closed to offer some measure of security—possibly the entrance was also barred.
 - c. Suddenly the Lord appeared in their midst, unexpected and unannounced. They were

- filled with fear at his presence. His first word to them was, "Peace be unto you." This would quickly soothe their pounding hearts; he was back with them in the body which he had inhabited during his public ministry, which would be identifiable. Luke reports that he showed them the wounds he had sustained in the crucifixion. They were surely convinced and reassured!
- d. It appears that the Lord entered the place of their gathering miraculously, without the door being opened. Some scholars would deny this, but how else are we to explain how he entered without the door being opened. He was not there one second, and the next there he was! They would have known if the door had been opened and closed.
 - e. John reports that the occasion was still on the First Day of the Week, the very day on which he had been resurrected. The day had passed on toward the evening. Monday had not yet begun (IAW the Jewish method of dividing the days); Sunday would end at sun-down (about six in the evening), and the darkness part of Monday would then start.
2. Verse 20: "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."
- a. "The religion of our Lord is a reasonable one; it never requires one to be credulous; and thus the Saviour supplied these disciples with physical evidence of his identity. He showed them his hands with the nail prints in them and his side into which the soldier had thrust his spear. In so doing, he convinced them that he was not a ghost or apparition and that their eyes were not deceiving them; and additionally, he provided evidence that he was the same one they loved and with whom they had been associated for over three years. Thus at once he gave them proof both of his *reality* and *resurrection*. Fear and doubt, formerly possessing them yielded to faith and assurance, and they believed" (Woods, p.427).
 - b. Luke tells us that he ate a piece of broiled fish and honeycomb: "But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" (Luke 24:37-43).
 - c. They were filled with gladness at these events. Coffman observes:
 - 1) "This appearance before twelve men (including the two from Emmaus) was authentic and convincing; and they who saw it never wavered or doubted afterward. It was even repeated a week later when Thomas had rejoined them; and this double epiphany to the Twelve constituted the very foundation of Christian evidence. This was the sacred fountain that supplied the evangelistic zeal of the apostles. The certainties established in these scenes enabled them to stand before the whole world shouting the message of redemption in Christ.
 - 2) "The conviction made final and permanent by these events sustained them in the fires of persecution and death. The Galilean had triumphed! If the facts here related did not occur, then what did happen? Skepticism has no answer. For nearly two millenia the wisest and best have received this narrative as sacred Gospel. The record here is the truth, and it shall stand forever."
3. Verse 21: "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."
- a. To offer even more assurance to the apostles, he Lord repeats his proclamation, "Peace be unto you." Compare: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of
-

- God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6-7, ASV).
- b. The Father had sent the Son into the world to accomplish his eternal purpose; likewise, Christ was now sending the apostles on a mission that would last to the end of time. The world would not be the same again! The next two verses contain the Great Commission.
4. Verses 22-23: “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.”
 - a. John’s account of the Great Commission is parallel with that reported in Matthew, Mark and Luke.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - 3) Luke 24:46-49: “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”
 - b. The table below will illustrate the parallels found in the four accounts of the great work given, first to the apostles, and thence on to following generations.
 - 1) Matthew 28:20: “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you....” [This would include the Great Commission].
 - 2) 2 Timothy 2:2: “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”
 - c. The apostles did not receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at that very moment; if so, Thomas was excluded from this reception. Other passages provide the full details of the occasion when this great event was fulfilled.
 - d. Notice how the statement “receive ye the Holy Ghost” is parallel with their receiving the miraculous powers of the Spirit in the other passages. They did not immediately obtain these gifts, but received them on the Pentecost after our Lord’s ascension [Acts 2:1-4].
 - e. Christ stated to the apostles that they would have the power to forgive sins or retain the sins of other people. They were not empowered to do this by any whim or circumstance. Indeed, no mortal man, not even the apostles of Christ, possessed the power to remove the guilt of even a single sin!
 - 1) Mark 2:5-12: “When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch
-

- that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.”
- 2) Only deity can pardon sin, the forgiving the Lord indicated to the apostles was only in an indirect way. Pardon for sin is bound up in the gospel of Christ; as the apostles presented the gospel to sinful people, their forgiveness resulted in their faith and obedience as they responded to the gospel.
 - 3) Compare: “And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee **words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved**” (Acts 11:13-14).
- f. The Gospel of Christ is the power God uses to bring about man’s forgiveness.
- 1) Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
 - 2) Acts 15:7-9: “And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.... And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”
 - 3) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:22-23: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth” (ASV).
- g. Whether one was pardoned or not pardoned, was determined by the response of the person toward the soul-saving gospel. “For we are a sweet savor of Christ unto God, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one a savor from death unto death; to the other a savor from life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Cor. 2:15-16, ASV).
- 1) What was the result when they preached to sinful men the good news of God's grace, only to have those men to utterly reject the message? It was preached to men who were dead in sin, and their condition was only worsened by their repudiation of the gospel!
 - 2) Acts 13:45-46: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 - 3) Romans 10:9-10: “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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
 - 4) Acts 22:16: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”
-

Accounts Of The Great Commission Compared

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Go	Go		
Teach	Preach Gospel	Preach	
All Nations	Every Creature	All Nations	Whose Soever
	Believe		
		Repentance	
Baptize	Baptize		
	Saved	Remission of Sins	Sins Remitted
With You Always	Signs Accompany	Endued with Power	Receive Spirit

MATTHEW	Teach			Baptism	
MARK	Preach	Faith		Baptism	Salvation
LUKE	Preach		Repentance		Remission
JOHN	Preach				Sin Remitted
SUMMARY	PREACH	FAITH	REPENTANCE	BAPTISM	SALVATION

5. Verses 24-25: “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.”
 - a. NKJ: Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."
 - b. “Didymus, which means the Twin, is the Greek for the Hebrew name, Thomas. He was one of the Twelve, of whom history has recorded but little. It is reported by tradition that he carried the gospel to India and died there. He seems to have been an honest, affectionate man, but of a rather skeptical turn of mind. This incident, as well as the unbelief of the others prior to the meeting of the Savior with the apostles, shows that they were very incredulous, and hard to convince, notwithstanding the Lord had said he would rise again. Only "infallible proofs" could convince them. The failure of Thomas to be present with the other disciples was probably due to his utter despair” (Johnson, p.302).
 - c. Many call this man “Doubting Thomas.” Perhaps we should view him as one who demanded evidence before he would accept as factual something that appeared incredulous on the surface. However, the Lord had promised the apostles that he would rise from the dead three days after his crucifixion. They had watched the Lord’s agonizing death on the cross, and knew that his body had been entombed; his death seemed to them to be

absolutely final.

6. Verses 26-28: “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.”
 - a. On the following Sunday, eight days later as the Jews counted time, the disciples were again assembled in the upper room, including Thomas. Again, the door was shut, and maybe secured with a bar.
 - b. Suddenly, the Lord was present, standing in the midst of the group. Once more, he greeted them with the soothing phrase, “Peace be unto you.”
 - c. Turning to Thomas, Christ invited him to examine the wounds in his hands and to put his hand into the wounded side. “Do not be without faith, but believe.” The religion of the Son of God is not built on superstition or doubt. It is strongly based on absolute truth. Truth is at the very core of the Gospel and permeates it throughout.
 - 1) Luke 1:1-4: “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed” (ASV).
 - 2) Acts 1:1-4: “The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God: and, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me” (ASV).
 - d. The reply of Thomas completely declares the defeat of his unbelief and the return of his faith to grand new heights! Having seen and talked with the Lord, and seeing the wounds still present on the body of Jesus, his doubt was removed and strong faith sprang forth.
 - e. “There is reason to think that Thomas, face to face with the Saviour, retreated from his earlier demand, and did not actually touch him, faith springing out of doubt on the sight of the Saviour. Jesus did not say that Thomas believed because he had *touched* him, but because he had *seen* him” (Woods, p.432).
7. Verse 29: “Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”
 - a. Thomas’ faith grew out of his having seen and spoken with the Lord. There could be no doubt about the Lord’s resurrection from the dead. His faith was strong.
 - b. But what about the faith of the vast majority of believers” No one this side of the first century has ever seen Christ. Yet our faith is strong, having the very word of God as its foundation.
 - c. 1 Peter 1:8: “Whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (ASV).
 - 1) The saints Peter addressed had never seen the Lord. No one living on earth today has seen the Lord. It is unimportant to our faith for us to see him with our physical eyes. Although those people had not seen Christ, yet their love for him was no less strong. Love for the Lord does not depend on literally seeing him. A blind mother who has never seen her baby, loves that baby; her love does not depend of beholding the

infant's physical features. A blind baby also develops an undying love for his mother without having ever seen her face.

2) Compare: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Cor. 5:16).

d. To *know* someone is to have a special relationship with that person. A husband *knows* his wife, and his wife *knows* him. A Christian *knows* his God and Christ. Contrast that with: "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16; cf. 2 Thess. 1:8-9; John 17:3).

e. We *know* God and Christ in the sense that we believe in them, love them, and follow them. Therefore, we *know* no man after the flesh; we do not follow any fleshly being or obey any fleshly source of authority. We follow the will of God and Christ. These are the ones we *know*.

D. John 20:30-31: The Great Purpose of the Book of John.

1. Verse 30: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book."

a. John was guided by the Holy Spirit to record only a few of the miracles our Lord worked during his personal ministry. The total number of supernatural demonstration he did report are simply said to be "many."

b. The Bible was not written to satisfy human curiosity. What is not included in it is also an evidence of its inspiration!

2. Verse 31: "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."

a. The miracles which John reported were included to create faith in the minds of those who would read his book.

b. Faith is produced by the word of God:

1) Acts 15:7: "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."

2) Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."

3) Romans 10:17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

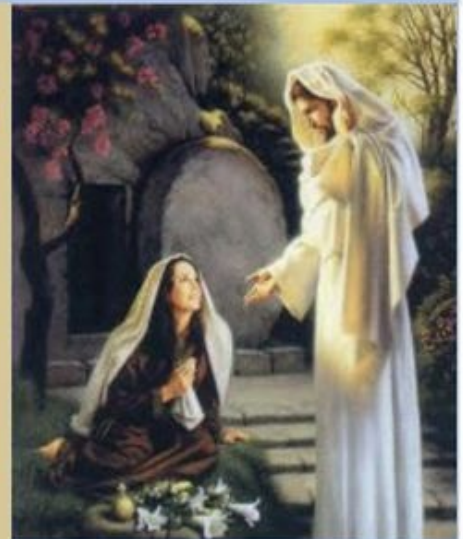
c. Acts 14:1: "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed."

1) Luke says that they *so spake* that a great multitude of Jews and Greeks believed. Faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7). The message of the soul-saving gospel produces faith. Faith is not produced by the *sound* of the speaker's voice, or the *strength* or *beauty* with which the message is delivered. When we understand the gospel message, and allow its truths to lodge in our minds, faith is the result.

2) God, in his word, reveals what he demands of us; he reveals to us the blessings of obedience and the penalties of disobedience, by means of which he urges us to do what he says. It would have been beneath the dignity of the Almighty Lawgiver to give man the right to pick and choose which part of God's law to obey and which to reject. The Creator simply delivered his commands and prohibitions, requiring man to use his intelligence to decipher, believe, and obey.

Post-Resurrection Appearances

➤ TO MARY MAGDALENE	• John 20:11-12
➤ TO CERTAIN WOMEN AS THEY RETURNED TO THE SELPUCHRE	• Matthew 28:1-10
➤ TO PETER	• Luke 24:34
➤ TO TWO DISCIPLES ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS	• Luke 24:13-15
➤ TO 10 APOSTLES (THOMAS BEING ABSENT)	• John 20:19-23
➤ TO ALL 11 APOSTLES ONE WEEK LATER (INCLUDING THOMAS)	• John 20:26-28
➤ TO SEVERAL DISCIPLES AT THE SEA OF GALILEE	• John 21:1-23
➤ TO THE APOSTLES AND ABOUT 500 BRETHERN AT ONCE ON AN APPOINTED MOUNTAIN IN GALILEE	• Matt. 28:16-20
➤ TO JAMES	• 1 Cor. 15:7
➤ TO THE APOSTLES AT JERUSALEM IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE ASCENSION	• Acts 1:3-9
➤ TO SAUL OF TARSUS	• Acts 22:3-5 • Acts 9:1-2



1 Corinthians 15:5-8



John Chapter 21

A. John 21:1-6: Jesus Appears to the Apostles at the Lake of Galilee.

1. Verse 1: “After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.” NKJ: “After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed *Himself*.”
 - a. John refers to the preceding events of chapter twenty. We remember the Lord having an appointment with the apostles in Galilee. This verse describes the meeting there, at the shore of Tiberias, the Sea of Galilee. The Jordan River flowed through this sea.
 - b. This lake is about twelve miles long and about nine miles wide; its depth is said to be up to one hundred and sixty feet. Pictures of it show that its waters are a pleasant blue. It is sometimes called the Sea of Tiberias because a city of that name is located near its shore. Capernaum, which was the Lord’s center of operations when he labored in the province of Galilee. Brother Woods states “that much of his teaching was done and it was in that area that many of his miracles were performed, of eighteen of the thirty-eight miracles recorded, ten of them were in the city of Capernaum” (p.435).
 - c. The world in general had rejected the Lord, by the time of his death; indeed, the leaders of Judea, with the unwilling help of Pilate, had brought him to the cross. But now he had risen from the dead.
 - d. He appeared several times to certain ones after his resurrection, but not before anyone in the world. It was only to his disciples and to none others. In the case of Saul of Tarsus, Christ did not appear to him in the physical body that bore the wounds of his death; this was a few years after his ascension. [See Acts 9, 22 and 26 for details]. “Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord” (1 Cor. 9:1-2).
 2. Verse 2: “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.”
 - a. Seven of his apostles were present, four of which are named. The identity of the two other disciples is not given; the other four are not mentioned. Nathanael is most likely also known as Bartholomew. [See the comparative lists of the apostles].
 - b. Compare: “Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him” (Matt. 10:2-4). The first seven in this list appear to be identical to the list of our present verse.
 3. Verse 3: “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.”
 - a. Peter declared to the others that he was going to go fishing. This could mean that he was returning to his business of fishing, with the implication that he no longer expected to carry out the orders given to him by the Lord. But it might be the case that he and the other apostles needed the money and food which fishing could provide.
 - b. The outcome of his effort was failure. After struggling all night, they caught absolutely nothing. Were their empty nets caused by providence? We remember this Old Testament principle: “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain” (Psa. 127:1).
 4. Verses 4-5: “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.”

- a. NKJ: But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."
 - b. Those who have had to labor throughout the night can appreciate how fatigued these men must have been. When someone from the shore spoke to them, maybe they did not pay enough attention to to recognize him. Although they had an appointment they were not thinking of Jesus at the moment he spoke. From a distance of three hundred feet, faces may be indistinct.
 - c. He called them, “Children,” a term which would be our equivalent of “boys.” He was not demeaning their manhood, but was addressing them in a familiar, friendly tone. He asked whether they had any food. They said they had none. The Greek text could be translated with these words: “You haven’t caught any fish, have you?”
5. Verse 6: “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.”
- a. Being omniscient, the Lord told them to cast their nets on the right side of their boat. They caught so many fish that they were unable to draw in the great number of fish!
 - b. The number of “keeper” fish was one hundred and fifty-three (vs. 11). The catch was so heavy the net could not be pulled into the boat, but had to be dragged through the water to the shore.

B. John 21:7-14: Jesus Shares a Meal With the Apostles.

1. Verse 7: “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.”
 - a. John was the first to recognize the Lord, and told this to Peter: “It is the Lord!” Younger people are quicker to perceive things than many older folks. The others may have been too busy to pay much attention to the voice from the shoreline.
 - b. Peter is known for being impetuous. He clothed himself in his fishing coat and jumped into the sea, trying to get to the Lord before the ship could be brought to land. The rest of the men realizing the importance of bringing the catch to land, stayed with the boat.
 - c. Peter, we may be sure, was not completely naked; he must have had his underclothes on. Not wanting to meet the Lord without being properly clothed, he girded on his outer garment, and swam to shore.
 2. Verse 8: “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.”
 - a. The ship was about two hundred cubits from shore when this episode occurred—about 300 feet. A conversation could be held over water at that distance; there was nothing to obstruct the sound of the voices.
 - b. Peter’s intensity of love for the Lord and his usual quick action, urged him to make a head-long rush to be with Jesus. The others acted more responsibly.
 3. Verses 9-10: “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.”
 - a. When the rest of the men had come ashore, they saw a fire of coals burning, with fish already cooking; there was also some bread. We are not told how Jesus had come to have these items of food.
 - b. There was not enough fish on the fire to feed the number of men present, so the Lord asked them to bring some of the fish they had caught to augment the meal he had begun. Is there any proof that Christ had miraculously produced the fire, the fish or the bread? He refused to produce bread to feed himself after his long fast (Matt. 4 and Luke 4). He
-

- did not miraculously produce food and drink at Jacob's well, when he and the apostles arrived there, tired, hungry and thirsty (John 4). But if he had obtained the food from someone else, that might have constituted an unreported appearance. This may imply that these items were supernaturally wrought.
4. Verses 11-12: "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."
 - a. Peter helped draw the net full of fish to land, without the net breaking. Here we are told that the count of fish revealed that there were one hundred and fifty-three.
 - b. There had been an earlier case of a miraculous draught of fish: "Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:4-8).
 - c. Returning to our text, all of the apostles recognized Jesus; none of them asked him who he was—they were fully aware that it was the Lord. If you and I had been there, we might have asked where he had been since we last saw him. That would have been, at least impertinent, if not foolish.
 5. Verses 13-14: "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."
 - a. The Lord distributed bread and fish among the apostles. Jesus may have been near the place where the net of fish had been brought ashore; he had told them to bring some of this new catch to be used with the fish already cooking. We are only give a few details about what happened. Did Jesus himself also eat?
 - b. John tells us that was the third time the Lord had showed himself to the apostles, after he had arisen from the dead. The first occasion was when he appeared to ten of them when they had met in the upper room on the day of the resurrection; the second was a week later, when Thomas was also present.
 - c. This was the third time. Notice that we are told that this was the third time he had appeared to his apostles; he had earlier appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other women as they returned from the tomb [John 20:15-18; Matt. 28:5-10]. He had also appeared to Peter [Luke 24:34] and to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus [Luke 24:13].
 - d. FourFold Gospel: "This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. It was his seventh appearance, but his third appearance to a group of disciples, and the third appearance witnessed by John. John counts as follows: 1. An appearance to the apostles without Thomas (Joh 20:19); 2. an appearance to them with Thomas (Joh 20:26); 3. this appearance."
 - e. Those who saw the Lord included the following:
 - 1) Mary Magdalene was the first to see the risen Lord (Mark 16:9; John 20:14-18). She was the lady from whom the Lord had cast seven demons.
 - 2) The other women saw the Lord (Matt. 28:9-10). These had been with the Lord for quite some time, assisting in his ministry (Luke 23:49,55-56; 24:1ff).
 - 3) Peter saw the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:5; Luke 24:34). Certainly, this apostle would
-

know whether it was Jesus.

- 4) The two disciples traveling to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32; Mark 16:12).
- 5) The twelve, including Matthias (1 Cor. 15:5; Acts 1:21-26; Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-41; John 20:19-29).
- 6) More than 500 brethren at one time (1 Cor. 15:6). At the time that Paul wrote the First Corinthian letter, the greater part of these were still alive.
- 7) He was seen by James, then by all of the apostles (1 Cor. 15:7).
- 8) Lastly, he was seen by Saul of Tarsus, hardly an impartial witness since he had before dedicated his life to opposing the cause of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:8; Acts 9:1ff; 26:9ff).

C. John 15-25: Various Matters Are Discussed Between the Lord with Peter and John.

1. Verse 15: “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” ASV: “So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, 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.”
 - a. Notice the name by which the Lord addressed Peter: “Simon son of Jonah.” In John 1:42, he was told that he would become a stone, John 1:42: “...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” He had not yet become the steadfast person the Lord described.
 - b. In our text, Christ addressed him as, Simon son of Jonah.” He did not here call him Peter [a stone]. Jesus had told him before his ordeal, that Peter would deny knowing Christ three times. This prediction happened just as the Lord had predicted. This apostle went out and wept bitterly over his faithless denials. Peter had reached a low ebb at this point, and was deeply distressed over failure.
 - c. He had boastfully affirmed his loyalty to the Lord, but did not live up to his assertions: “And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all” (Mark 14:27-31).
 - d. He had met the apostles in Galilee. Christ is now endeavoring to rebuild Peter’s inner strength, for his overconfidence had set him up for his devastating failure. Calling him Simon, and not Peter, the Lord asked him if he loved his Lord, “more than these.” Is he referring to the other apostles or to the fish they had just caught. This has been disputed for centuries, so nothing we say here is apt to settle the question.
 - 1) Peter had declared that the other apostles might desert and deny the Lord, but he would never do so! The apostle had made that distinction between himself and the others. This lends some support to the view that the Lord is asking him if he loved Christ more than these other apostles.
 - 2) If Peter meant by his earlier statement, “I go a fishing,” that he was returning to his former occupation, then the Lord is asking whether he loved him more than he loved his earthly work.
 - 3) The Lord’s question could fit either of these alternatives. Brother Woods thought that the first case fits better (p.441): “The time had now come for the restoration of Peter and the probing was designed to impress the wavering disciple with the need for more caution and less boasting of his strength in the hour of trial. The question brought clearly before Peter his weakness, his fall and his present condition.” This writer agrees. As there had been three denials by the Peter, so now he will be asked three

- times whether he loved Christ.
- e. “Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?” Peter replied, “Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee.” Notice that he did not include the phrase, “More than these.”
 - f. Johnson: “Since that fall, Christ had met with Peter among the rest of the disciples but had not referred to this subject, but now has come the time for a restoration of Peter. Hence he probes him with the question, Lovest thou me better than these? That question would at once recall to Peter his boastful claim, his awful fall, and would pierce him to the heart. He no longer claims that he is the truest of the apostolic band. does not even affirm confidently, but answers, Thou knowest my heart; thou knowest that I love thee. Then said the Savior, Feed my lambs. The modesty of Peter's answer is better indicated in the Greek than in our version. The word used by the Savior for ‘lovest’ is a very strong term; that used by Peter for ‘I love’ is far less” (pp.310f). The word Jesus used is from *agape* and the word the apostle used is from *phileo*.
 - 1) “Brotherly kindness” is translated from the Greek term *philadelphia*, which means “love of brethren.” *Brotherly love* denotes the tender love that must characterize each child of God toward every other child of God (Heb. 13:1; 2 Pet. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:22). This is the kind of love Peter said he had for the Lord.
 - 2) The word the Lord used was one which is expressed by obedience: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3; cf. John 14:15, 21, 23).
 - g. Love is defined by Vine:
 - 1) *Phileo*: NT:5368) is to be distinguished from *agapao* in this, that *phileo* more nearly represents "tender affection." This is the word Peter used. *Agapao*: NT:25) and the corresponding noun *agape*. This is the word Jesus used.
 - 2) If Peter loved him, then he is to “feed my lambs.” The apostle is called on the feed those who would obey the gospel. The First and Second epistles of Peter do that very thing, as he doubtless did in his work with the brethren, personally.
2. Verse 16: “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.”
 - a. Again the Lord referred to Peter as Simon, son of Jonas. His restoration to his former confidence was not yet complete, indeed, it would not be until he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which would provide power which had been promised to him and to the rest of the apostles of Christ.
 - b. Woods: Thus, Jesus reverted to his original name in this address to him. This must have cut Peter to his heart and to have made him all the more aware of the seriousness of his defection. In this, the second time Jesus probed the heart of Peter, he again used the word *agapao* for love; and, Peter, in his reply, again chose the warmer, more humble word *phileo*, in saying, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." He will claim no more than deep affection for the Saviour; gone is his boastful claim to a commitment superior to the others. Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep," earlier, "my lambs," thus, both classes, the old and the young, the mature and the immature (pp.442f).
 - c. Christ now tells Peter to “feed my sheep.” It is easier to teach a young person that one who is older—as we have all observed. Young minds are pliable and teachable, and have not been corrupted by false information. There would be others for him to teach and bring up to spiritual maturity.
 3. Verse 17: “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.”
-

- a. “Grievous as this was for Peter, it wiped out all guilt of his denials; and the Saviour's total forgiveness is implicit in the threefold charge to care for the church Jesus came to establish. The external situation associated with this triple confession of love inevitably called to mind the denials. There were three of each; the charcoal fire was at both events; the day was breaking on both occasions; and there had to have been another cockcrow, although the latter is not mentioned” (Coffman).
 - b. This third question brought grief to the heart of the apostle. Our Lord used the same word for love which Peter had used twice already in giving his response.
 - c. “Three times Peter had denied the Master; three times the Master questions his love; three times he gives him charge concerning his work. The questioning was painful, Peter 'was grieved,' but the grief was wholesome and Peter's whole subsequent life bore proof of the discipline. His rashness was forever gone” (Johnson, p.311).
 - d. The apostle Peter remained a strong, devout and faithful servant from this time forward; we are told of only one stumble, which was quickly solved (Gal. 2:11-14).
 - e. We may be sure that this great and good man fulfilled his mission fully and well.
4. Verse 18: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst 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.”
- a. We are not told how old any of the Lord's apostles were; the implication is that John was the youngest; the general thought among scholars is that Peter was likely middle-aged at the time. The Lord spoke of Peter having been younger, at which time he made the decisions of what he would do and where he would go.
 - b. He is here told that the time was coming when others would make those decisions for him. “Peter had denied his Master to save his own life. Now that he is reinstated in the old confidence and charged with the Master's work, he is told that he will be called on to die for it. He will be girded, not with a girdle, but with bonds, and he shall be led where he would not, unto death” (Johnson, *ibid.*)
 - c. Barnes: “When in early life thou didst gird thyself, etc. The Jews, in walking or running, girded their outer garments around them, that they might not be impeded....The expression here denotes freedom. He did as he pleased—he girded himself or not he went or remained, as he chose....[T]he Saviour intimates that at the end of his life he would not be thus free.”
 - d. Traditional assertions have been made that Peter was crucified, head-downward, in Rome. There is no biblical proof that the apostle was ever in Rome. But what about 1 Peter 5:13: “The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.” Some think is here referring to Rome. [Instead of a congregation, some think the reference is to some special sister, who resided there, perhaps even Peter's wife].
 - e. One of the most basic rules of biblical interpretation is that a word or statement is to be taken as literal, unless there is overriding evidence in the context that requires it to be taken as figurative. There is nothing in the context that makes this demand. Thus, Peter here speaks of being in the literal city of Babylon at the time he wrote 1 Peter, and that there was a congregation of the Lord's people in that ancient city. Further, since Mark is clearly a reference to a real person, then the city must also be so understood. We are not to take *Babylon* here as a reference to Jerusalem or Rome.
 - f. *Encarta* states that Babylon continued as a city until the seventh century A.D.
5. Verses 19-20: “This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. 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?”
-

- a. Other translations:
 - 1) ASV: “Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; who also leaned back on his breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee?”
 - 2) NKJ: This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me." Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?”
 - b. This passage indicates that Peter was to die the death of a martyr for the Lord. John wrote after Peter's death, and may be understood as affirming that he did thus die.
 - c. Woods: “Having revealed to Peter that he would live to old age and then die violently, Jesus said to him, ‘Follow me.’ He had earlier forsaken the Lord from fear of death and now, with the absolute certainty of death by martyrdom before him, he is bidden to resume his master's work. It should be noted, to his high honor and credit, that he did this from this time forward, faithfully, earnestly, fearlessly, often in the face of dire threats to his freedom and life....Peter would follow the Lord in teaching and work and also to a violent death from which he would ultimately rise to a glorious and unending life.”
6. Verses 21-22: “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.”
 - a. Peter then asked the Lord about “this” man—a reference to John. We ought not to read into this any suggestion of animosity between Peter and John. This appears to be an honest inquiry into John’s future. Peter and John were the two who were sent by the other apostles to Samaria, to carry through with the work Philip had done there (Acts 8).
 - b. Our Lord reminded Peter that John’s future had no bearing on Peter’s responsibilities. Even if it were the case that John was to live until the return of Christ, that did not affect the duty of Peter—he was to continue to follow Christ.
 7. Verse 23: “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?”
 - a. This illustrates how easily a statement can be misunderstood and a twisted version of it can be passed around as truth. John points out that the Lord did not say that John was to live until the Second Coming of Christ. John corrects this misunderstanding. Christ has not returned; if John is still here, where is he?
 - b. Why is it that some folks will wrangle a statement out of context and a perverted version is declared to be a truth? Envy? Ignorance? Malice? Ignorance? Honest mistake?
 8. Verse 24: “This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.”
 - a. Study the following observations from our Brother Woods:
 - 1) “Because the writer refers to himself in the third person here, rather than in the first person, some critical writers have concluded that verses 24 and 25 are an appendix added by others who knew John's testimony to be true and wished to corroborate the fact.
 - 2) “But, (1) the writer does refer to himself in verse 25 in the first person; (2) the third person is grammatically correct because John was referring to "that disciple" of verse 23, also in the third person; (3) the allegation that the elders of Ephesus, or some other unnamed person or persons supplied the appendix is untenable from the fact that but little of what John wrote, *as an eyewitness*, they could have known; (4) John knew that his testimony regarding the Christ was true; for others to know that it was
-

- true would not make it any more true or credible.
- 3) "John, an old man when he penned these words, confidently declares them to be true, and on this conviction relied for his salvation. It is impossible for reasonable people to believe that the record he gives of our Lord's life is no more than a baseless fabrication, designed to deceive or that it was written by one who was himself deceived" (p.447).
- b. These words came through the pen of the apostle John, writing near the end of the first century; they affirm the truthfulness of what he has recorded.
 - c. Compare the following from the ASV:
 - 1) Luke 1:1-4: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 14:37: "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord."
 - 3) 2 Peter 3:15-16: "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."
9. Verse 25: "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."
- a. "'Many other things' are recorded by the three preceding gospels which John does not record. The ministry of Christ was so busy, his teaching so voluminous and his deeds of mercy so numerous, that the verse states that it would be impossible to make a minute record, and in order to convey this idea forcibly an oriental hyperbole is employed" (Johnson, p.314).
 - b. The words and activities of Jesus were so many that no man could record all of them, even if he were privy to them all.
-

- Annual Lesson Commentaries*[ALC], Gospel Advocate Company, 1957, 1961, 1967, 1974, 1978
- Barclay, William, *The Gospel of John*, Vol. 1, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1955, 1975
- Bible, *New King James Version*, PC Study Bible
- Bible Commentary, The*, F.C. Cook, Editor, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1962
- Bible, *American Standard Version*, (ASV), PC Study Bible
- Bible, *Cambridge*
- Bible, *King James Version* (Quoted throughout material except as otherwise noted)
- Bible, *English Study Bible*, Harold Littrell, Star Bible Publications, Ft. Worth, TX, 1994
- Burgon, John, *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark*, Internet
- Camp, Franklin, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*
- Campbell, Alexander, *The Christian System*
- Clarke, Adam, *The Old Testament*, PC Study Bible
- Coffman, Burton, *Commentary on Daniel* [Study Light Website)
- Dixon, H.A., *Saving Faith and Other Sermons*, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, 1963
- Dungan, D.R., *Hermeneutics*
- Dunn, Frank J., *Know Your Bible*, Firm Foundation Publishing House, Inc., Houston, TX 1996
- Durant, Will, *The Life of Greece*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1939
- Durant, Will, *Caesar and Christ*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1944
- Easton Bible Encyclopedia*
- Four Fold Gospel*, McGarvey
- Gibbon, Edward, *The Decline and Fall of The Roman Empire*, Vol. I-III, The Heritage Press, New York, 1946
- Gospel Minutes Charts* [no copy write]
- Halley, Henry, H., *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1965
- Henry, Matthew, *Bible Commentaries, BibleSoft*
- Herodotus, *The History of Herodotus*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952
- Holman Bible Dictionary for Windows*, Version 1.1g, Parson Technology, Hiawatha, Iowa, 1991,1994
- Horne, Thomas Hartwell, *Introduction To The Scriptures*, Baker Book House Co. Grand Rapids, MI, 1970
- International Bible Dictionary*, PC Study Bible
- Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, *A Commentary Critical*, (JFB), PC Study Bible
- Josephus, Flavius, *Complete Works of Flavius Josephus*, PC Study Bible
- Lipscomb, David, *Questions Answered*, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, 1969
- Maddox, F.W., *The Eternal Kingdom*, Gospel Light Publishing Company, Delight, Arkansas, 1961
- McClintock & Strong, *Cycloedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Electronic Version
- McGarvey, J.W., *A Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, Gospel Light Publishing Company, Delight, AR, 1875
- McGarvey, J.W., *Lands of the Bible*, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, TN, 1966
- McGarvey, J.W., *Biblical Criticism*, Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, 1956
- McGarvey, J.W., *A Commentary on Acts of Apostles*, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, TN,
- Microsoft ® Encarta ® Encyclopedia* © 1993-1998 Microsoft Corporation
- Milligan, Robert, *The Scheme of Redemption*, Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, TN
- Morgan, G. Campbell, *The Great Physician*
- New Analytical Bible*, World Bible Publishers, Iowa Falls, Iowa, 1973
- PC Study Bible*, Complete Reference Library, BibleSoft, Seattle, WA
- Pfeiffer, Charles F., *Old Testament History*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1973
- Pfeiffer, Charles F., *Between the Testaments* Guardian of Truth Foundation, Bowling Green, KY 1959
- Pfeiffer, Charles F., *The Biblical World*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1966
- Pfeiffer, Charles F., *Baker's Bible Atlas*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1961
- Ramsey, Johnny, *Cover to Cover*, Arlington, Texas, 1980
- Rimmer, Harry, *The Magnificence of Jesus*
- Smith, William, *Dictionary Of The Bible*, PC Study Bible
- Strongs Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, PC Study Bible
- Swordsearcher, Bible Program, Brandon Staggs, Broken Arrow, OK
- Thayer, Henry, *Greek Works*, BibleSoft
- The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1970
- Theological Wordbook*, Harris, Archer, Walkte, Moody Publishers, 1980
- Thiessen, Henry C., *Introduction to the New Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, MI, 1943
- Thompson, J.A., *The Bible and Archaeology*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1962
- Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952
- Trench, Richard C., *Notes on the Miracles and the Parables of Our Lord*, Revell Company, Old Tappan, NJ, 1953

- Unger, Merrill F., *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1954
- Vincent, Marvin, *Biblesoft*
- Vine, W.E., *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, PC Study Bible
- Wallace, Foy E., Jr., *The Gospel For Today*, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, Nashville, 1967
- Wallace, Foy E., Jr., *God's Prophetic Word*, Foy E. Wallace., Jr. Publications, Oklahoma City, 1946
- Wallace, Foy E., Jr., *The Gospel For Today*, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publications, Nashville, 1967
- Wallace, For E., Jr., *The Present Truth*
- Wallace, Foy E., Jr., *The One Book Analyzed and Outlined*, Dehoff Publications, Murfreesboro, 1987
- Wallace, Foy E., Jr., *God's Prophetic Word*, Foy E. Wallace., Jr. Publications, Oklahoma City, 1946
- Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition*, The World Publishing Co., New York and Cleveland, 1968
- Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition*, The World Publishing Company, New York, 1968
- Woods, Guy N., *Questions and Answers Open Forem*, Freed Hardeman College, Henderson, TN, 1976
- Woods, Guy N., *Questions and Answers Open Forum*, [Two Volumes] Freed Hardeman College, 1976
- Woods, Guy N., *A Commentary on The Gospel According to John*, Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, 1981
- Word Perfect 8, Dictionary
- World Book Encyclopedia*, Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, Chicago, IL, 1964
- Young, Edward J., *Prophecy of Daniel, The*, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1970
- Young, Edward J., *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1970
- Young's Concordance*, Robert Young, Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., Grand Rapids, MI