

Gospel of John

Authorship

Most people agree that the Apostle John wrote the fourth Gospel. John, along with his brother James, were disciples of Jesus. They were the sons of Zebedee and Jesus referred to them as the sons of thunder. This nick name was most likely because of their quick tempers. It was John in the Gospel of Luke 9:52-56 that wanted to call fire down on a village in Samaria because the people there did not want Jesus to enter their village. Their father Zebedee owned a fishing business on the Sea of Galilee and the brothers worked with him in the family business.

Simon Peter who also worked in the family business became a disciple of Jesus and the three, Peter, James, and John formed the inner circle of the followers of Jesus. They were the only disciples who were with Jesus when he raised Jairus' daughter from death. And it was Peter, James, and John who Jesus took to the mountain when He was conferring with Moses and Elijah. They heard the voice of God saying that Jesus was His Son and that they should listen to Him. Simon Peter and John were the ones who prepared the Passover meal also known as the Lord's Supper. So John knew Jesus well.

John did not refer to himself in the Gospel of John by name but many times referred to himself as the Disciple whom Jesus loved. Most people agree that this Gospel was written between 85 and 100 AD. At the time of its writing John would have been a very old man and it is believed that he dictated it to another writer. This is possible and if so it is still the recorded memories of John about Jesus. All scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit and is the direct infallible Word of God. (1 Peter 1:20-21)

Purpose of John's Gospel

John wrote his Gospel to confirm the belief that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Many miracles were recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke but John only spoke of seven that Jesus had preformed. John called these miracles signs that gave proof that Jesus was the Son of God. John also maintained that Jesus was God but that He also was human. John recorded that Jesus needed food and became thirsty, and He had emotions of sadness and anger. John also made it plain that Jesus was not half God and half man but fully God and man. Many believe John did this for a reason, as in the early churches some were teaching false beliefs about Jesus.

One group taught that Jesus was only a man filled by the Holy Spirit at His baptism. Right before His death the Holy Spirit left Him. Another group taught that Jesus was not a man but a spirit and only seemed human. Both of these groups were wrong.

The disciples along with John had lived with Jesus for three years and they knew He was a real man. They had also witnessed the miracles that Jesus had done. They watched Him die on the cross and they saw Him after He had risen from the grave. John knew that Jesus had defeated death and John also watched Him ascend up to heaven.

John knew that Jesus was a real man and he also knew that Jesus was the Son of God. John wrote his Gospel to prove this.

John and the other Gospels

There are some differences between John's Gospel and the other three. John did not include any descriptions of Jesus' birth or baptism. John only recorded seven of Jesus' miracles and he called them signs. Neither did John record any of the parables of Jesus but did record many of the long speeches that Jesus made.

Eusebius, a writer from about 260-339 AD said that John knew about the other three Gospels, as they were written before his. It is said that John spent much of his time spreading the Gospel and not writing his accounts with Jesus down. John did profess that the other Gospels were accurate.

Jesus was already preaching before King Herod put John the Baptist in prison and John's Gospel is the only one that recorded this. The other Gospels recorded much of the ministry of Jesus in Galilee and His time in Jerusalem just prior to His death. Jesus had gone to Jerusalem other times and John provided information that the other Gospels did not have. Nothing in the Gospel of John disputes the other three but gives us a broader picture of the life and ministry of Jesus.

Clement, from Alexandria, a second century writer from Alexandria called John's Gospel a spiritual Gospel. John did not just record that facts of Jesus' life but put a lot of thought into the words that Jesus spoke and the signs He had preformed. John wanted to explain the spiritual meaning of the words and actions of Jesus.

John did include some physical events that confirm that his account was that of an eye witness. John noted that the bread at the feeding of the five thousand were barley loaves. John made note of the distance they had traveled across the Sea of Galilee and he remembered the smell of the perfume at the house in Bethany. These may not be important details but they show the Gospel of John to be a personal testimony of a man who was with Jesus for three years and had actually witnessed these events.

- ✓ The Prologue John 1:1-18
- ✓ The Preparation John 1:19 to 2:11
- ✓ The Public Ministry John 2:12 to 12:50
- ✓ The Private Teaching John 13 to 17

- ✓ The Supreme Witness John 18 to 20

Chapter 1

The Prologue

Verses 1-5

In the beginning simply means that prior to this point there was nothing. This coincides with Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” First God created the heavens, the universe, and then He created the earth. Before this there was nothing but God. God is not a created being, God has always been and always will be, and God created all that there is. There cannot be a more powerful force than God, there cannot be a higher form of intelligence, and there cannot be a greater wisdom, as all there is came into being by His creation.

John begins his gospel with, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” One way to understand this is that language explains the mind of man to others. So God sent His Son to explain the mind of God to the world. John goes on to prove that Jesus is God. The Word was with God, in the beginning with God, and the Word was God. Jesus was not just an instrument of God used to create all things but was God, as without Him nothing came into being that has come into being from the highest angel to the lowest worm.

Who else but Jesus is more qualified to do the work of our redemption and salvation? Jesus is the true light that shines in the darkness of this world. He is the truth that the world searches for yet refuses to believe. Let us pray without ceasing that our hearts are opened up to behold His light that we may be made wise to His salvation through faith in Him.

John’s use of the word light is not the physical light but spiritual light. Physical light shines in the darkness and disperses the darkness. All that is evil in this world is darkness and the light shines and reveals the darkness of sin. Jesus called himself the light of the world twice. (John 8:12; 9:5) The light then is the light of spiritual truth and reveals the evilness of man’s heart. The evil darkness had never understood the truthful light of Jesus. People who do not believe in Jesus cannot understand His words, do not realize the salvation He offers to all, and do not recognize Him as the Son of God. To understand Jesus one must first believe in who He is and believe in God the Father who sent Him.

We must understand what it means to believe in Jesus Christ as our savior and Lord.

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God.
- We must obey His commandments.
- We must believe that He died on our behalf and paid the wages of sin with His life.

- We must confess and repent of our sins to God.

Verses 6-14

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus. John the Baptist came to witness of Jesus and announce His coming. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. Nothing would reveal the darkness of men's hearts than the light of Jesus and John the Baptist had come to witness that the light had come into the world. Jesus was the light of truth and by His Spirit He enlightens all unto salvation and those who are not enlightened by Him perish in the darkness of their sin.

Jesus was the Son of the Most High and came down to a lower world, the creator to live as the created. He came to save that which was lost in the world. To save that which is His because He created the world. No greater love has ever been displayed towards man and yet man rejected Him. When He returns to judge the world all the world then shall know Him. Many say they are His but they do not receive Him because they will not part with their love for this world or their desire for their sinful nature. Jesus said one must be born again in the spirit. They must be born of a new spirit with God as the author of their life. Jesus was always in the world but in the fullness of time He was God in the flesh.

Jesus was full of grace, fully acceptable to God the Father, fully qualified to plead for us, and full of truth. The Jewish people had been waiting for the Messiah to come. Their Old Testament scriptures spoke of His coming. Prophecy spoke of the place and events surrounding His birth. All the evidence was plainly before them and all pointed to Jesus as the Messiah, yet they rejected Him.

Verses 15-18

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus Christ and came upon the scene first but in reality Jesus came first. He was before the beginning and will be long after this world has passed. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega. Fullness dwells in Him and those fallen sinners that receive Him and follow Him in faith shall receive all that renders them wise, strong, holy, useful, and happy. That which we receive from Jesus can be summed up by one word, grace, a gift that is so great, so invaluable, God's goodwill towards us, and the good work of God in us. God's law is holy, just, and good and we should have proper fear and reverence of it. Through God's law we find righteousness, pardon, and strength. All mercy that comes from God comes through Jesus and no man can come to the Father except through Him. No man can know God except by what is revealed to us through His Son Jesus.

Major doctrines or truths regarding Jesus stated in John 1:1-18:

- ❖ Jesus is eternal and uncreated, existing before the world began (John 1:1-3).
- ❖ Jesus possesses Deity (absolute authority and ruler ship over created things — John 1:1).

- ❖ Jesus is a separate Being from the Father (John 1:1,2,18).
- ❖ Jesus is the Creator – the active force through Whom all things were made (John 1:3,10).
- ❖ Jesus is the source of truth and understanding of God’s will (John 1:4,5,14,17,18).
- ❖ Jesus is the source of life by which men have a relationship with God and hope of eternal life (John 1:4).
- ❖ Jesus became incarnate in the flesh as a man (John 1:14,9,10)
- ❖ Jesus was rejected by men (John 1:10,11).
- ❖ Jesus is the One who can give people power to become children of God (John 1:12).

The Preparation

Verses 19-28

The Jewish people under Roman rule were in high anticipation for their Messiah to come. In Luke 1:14, an angel appeared before the priest named Zacharias, the angel told Zacharias his prayers had been heard by God and his wife Elizabeth would have a child and his name shall be called John. The child, John, would be filled by the Holy Spirit from the time he was conceived in the womb of his mother Elizabeth. That John would drink no wine or liquor and would be great in the sight of the Lord. When John grew up he began to baptize the Jewish people and cried out for them to make straight to path of the Lord. The Holy Spirit gave him great power and the people obeyed him. The prophet Isaiah spoke of him in Isaiah 40:3. Many people came to hear him preach and were baptized in the river Jordan near Bethany.

The Pharisees who were the experts on the Law of Moses, and had in fact added many more laws to God’s law regulating every aspect of life, sent a group of priest out to see who John the Baptist was. From the book of Deuteronomy Moses wrote that God had promised a great prophet for the people and the priest wanted to find out if John the Baptist was that prophet. At first they asked if John the Baptist was the Prophet Elijah which John the Baptist said he was not. They asked if his was the great prophet that was promised and John the Baptist said he was not.

The priest then asked why John the Baptist was baptizing if he was not Elijah, the great profit or the Messiah. John the Baptist answered that the Messiah was in their midst but they do not know Him, that He was greater than John the Baptist and he was not even worthy to untie His sandals. John the Baptist told them that the Messiah would soon follow him.

Verses 29-36

Every morning the priest would sacrifice a lamb for the sins of the people. Because people sin all the time the priest in the evening would again have to sacrifice another lamb for

the people's sin. This was the law of God that the wages of sin is death and the people's sin was removed by the sacrifice of a lamb without spot or blemish. This was the question that Isaac asked his father Abraham when he was about to be sacrificed as a burnt offering, where is the sacrificial lamb? (Genesis 22:7)

John the Baptist had baptized Jesus and saw the Holy Spirit descend on Him and remain. (Luke 3:22) When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming he announced to the people that Jesus was the Lamb of God and the He would take away the sins of the world. John the Baptist knew, and surly all the people who heard him identify Jesus as the One who would take away the sins of the world, what this would mean in reality. Yet knowing this truth, knowing that the prophets of the past had spoken of this day, that they had been being baptized as a sign of repentance, many did not believe their Savior had come, and many to this day do not believe.

John the Baptist may have also been thinking about the Passover. The Israelite people, when enslaved by the Egyptians, had placed lambs blood on their doorpost so the death angel would Passover them. Jesus would in the near future provide the unblemished blood for the atonement for their sin.

John the Baptist baptized with water but proclaimed that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Upon repentance and conversion we are filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a comforter and will guide us to all truth. He will recall to our mind all that Jesus has taught us and will empower us to live in God's will and purpose for our lives. (Acts 10:44-48)

Verses 37-42

Two of John the Baptist disciples left and followed Jesus. This is just what John the Baptist wanted as he proclaimed that he was not even worthy to untie His sandals and that Jesus was of higher rank than he. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus and it was his job to prepare the way for Jesus and announce His arrival. This John the Baptist had done.

The two disciples followed Jesus and He asked them the same question He is asking today of everyone who points their attention to Him, what do you seek? Some people want money, some people want to have an important job, some people want to have power over other people, and some people want to have security. Wise people want to know God, they want to know and obey Him. They want to have peace that only He can bring and they want this more than anything else. They realize that a right relationship with God is the only way to have peace in their souls and that matters more than anything else. The two disciples did not answer Jesus' question but asked one of their own, where was He staying? Perhaps they did not really know what they were seeking at that time so Jesus said come and see.

One of the disciples was Andrew and the other is unnamed. Most likely it was John the author of this Gospel. This passage contains many details, such as the time when the disciples met Jesus. Perhaps John wanted to record the exact words that he had heard and so much of it was written in the language that Jesus spoke which was Aramaic. When he met Jesus, everything changed for him. So John would want to remember everything about that wonderful day.

Andrew was amazed that he had found the promised Messiah and wanted to share the good news with his brother Simon. Andrew did even more than just tell Simon about Jesus but brought him to meet Jesus. We all should be like Andrew, if we know Jesus we should want to tell everyone about the friend and Savior who we have met. We must introduce everyone we know to Jesus.

Jesus gave a new name to Simon. Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter, which meant Rock. Peter would have strong faith and people would trust him. People would look to Peter and he would be a help to them and help them to increase their faith in Jesus. Peter did not have these qualities now but when Jesus looks at us He sees not only as we are but He sees us as what we can become. Peter came to be a leader in the church at Jerusalem and everyone there called him Peter. Jesus can take people who are willing to commit themselves completely to Him and He can transform them into the fullest of their capabilities. We must allow Jesus to rule over every part of our character and our circumstances. Then we will become the kind of person that God wants us to be.

Verses 43-51

Jesus decided to go to Galilee and there He met Phillip. Jesus told Phillip to follow Him. Now Phillip was also from Bethsaida as was Andrew and Peter. The three were probably already acquaintances. Phillip quickly went and found his friend Nathanael and told him that he had found the One the prophets and Moses had spoken of. It is as we when we first met Jesus, learned what He has done for us, and experienced what He is now doing for us that we can't wait to tell our friends about Him also. Nathanael questioned Phillip but rather than argue Phillip had Nathanael to come and meet Jesus. If our friends do not want to meet Jesus, then the best we can do is just let them know the great things He has done for us. Explain how Jesus gives us peace in all of life's situations. We can invite them to believe and hope that the seed we have planted will grow.

Jesus had never met Nathanael before but when he arrived Jesus knew all about him. Jesus knew all about Nathanael's attitude and character just like he also knows all about us. We cannot hide anything from Jesus and still He loves us.

Jesus told Nathanael that He saw him beneath the fig tree in the shade. This information given and Nathanael knowing that Jesus was not there to have seen him caused him to believe that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus told Nathanael that he would see greater

things than this as well as all of Jesus' disciples. Jesus told them that they would see how He would amend the relationship between God and man. Perhaps Jesus was referring to the dream of Jacob's ladder. That ladder which God was at the top in heaven and angels were ascending and descending from Heaven to earth. Jesus is the ladder between earth and Heaven, between God and man, and Jesus is the only true connection between the two.

Jesus also referred to Himself as the Son of Man. It is possible that Jesus was making reference to the scripture in Daniel 7:13-14 where he said that in the clouds he saw One as the Son of Man coming.

Key Verses

Genesis 1:1, John 8:12, John 9:5, Ephesians 5:8-9, 1 Peter 1:23, Revelations 22:13, John 7:38, Luke 1:15, Deuteronomy 18:15, Isaiah 40:3, Genesis 22:7, Luke 3:22, Acts 10:44-48, Daniel 7:13-14

Chapter 2

Verses 1-11

In these first verses Jesus has been invited along with His mother to a wedding. We are not told whose wedding it is, perhaps a relative or close friend. Weddings in that time the period of celebration would last for a week. During this wedding period the wine had run out and Jesus' mother brought it to His attention. Jesus questions His mother as to what this had to do with Him, for His time had not yet come. Mary, knowing her son well instructed the servants to follow His instructions.

Jesus instructed the servants to fill the purification pots to the brim with water. After that they were to draw the water from them and take it to the headwaiter. The headwaiter was marveled that the bridegroom had saved the best wine for last when usually the weaker wine was served.

At first when we live through Jesus our life becomes more not less. Our life with Jesus is not so much what we have to stop doing or cut out of our lives but what we have now incorporated into our lives. Life with Jesus is what we now participate in, our engagement in sharing our joy with others in the abundant life and the inheritance of our eternal home. We drink of the purification water and are cleansed by the blood of Jesus and transformed by His Spirit living within us. We are alive through Jesus living in us as members of His body, the church, in a great fellowship of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Too many times we do not call on Jesus when our wine runs out. Often we call on Jesus when all other options have run out. When we find ourselves at the end of our rope and when the wine runs out, Jesus is faithful to save us and strong to provide. Would it not be better to call on Jesus before the wine runs out?

The Public Ministry

Verses 12-22

The temple in the time of Jesus was not the Temple that Solomon had built 959 years before Jesus' birth. Solomon's Temple had been destroyed by the enemies of Israel. The Jews rebuilt the Temple in 516 BC and in 28 BC Herod the Great started to add many rooms to the Temple. Jesus and His disciples had traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast which occurred each year in the spring. Many Jewish people traveled at that time of the year to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices in the Temple at Passover.

Four courtyards surrounded the Temple and were called the Gentiles Courtyard. Gentiles who had come to worship God were not allowed into the Temple and had to worship God in the courtyards. It was in these outer courtyards that the merchants and money changers did their business.

The Merchants would sell animals for sacrifices. Animals for sacrifice had to be perfect without spot or blemish and the Temple hired officials to inspect the animals that people brought into the Temple. They were very unfair in their inspections and never found an animal perfect enough to be sacrificed to God. The merchants then would sell the people animals that were acceptable to the Temple Officials for sacrifice. The merchants charged a very inflated price for the animals and made a large profit for themselves.

There was also a Temple tax which had to be paid by a special coin which was to cover the cost of the daily ceremonies at the Temple. When the people came to the Temple they had to see the money changers to exchange their money for the special coins to pay the Temple tax. The money changers also exchanged the money at a very inflated price.

The merchants and money changers did not care that the Temple was a Holy place to worship God. God's presence is everywhere but was especially prevalent in His Holy Temple. The merchants and money changers were there to earn large profits from the people who came to worship God. They conducted their business in the Gentiles Courtyards which made it very difficult for the Gentiles to worship God. The merchants and money changers did not respect God's House and did not respect the people who came to worship there.

When Jesus saw this He became very angry and drove the merchants and money changers out of the Temple courtyards. In the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke they recorded Jesus' words as saying that the merchants and money changers had made His

Father's house a place for thieves to hide. Jesus was probably angry that the business of the merchants and money changers were a distraction to the Gentiles who had come to worship God. Mark noted in his gospel what the prophet Isaiah had said in Isaiah 56:7 "Even those I will bring to My holy mountain And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples." God's House was for all people to come and worship Him. The notation in verse seventeen, "Zeal for Your house will consume me", comes from Psalm 69:9.

The Jews asked Jesus for a sign to show His authority to do these things in the Temple. Jesus replied, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." This reply marveled the Jews, as this third Temple had taken forty six years to build. Jesus was not speaking of the Temple in Jerusalem but that God had sent Him to live amongst the people. Jesus knew that the Jews would kill Him and He was speaking to the fact that God would raise Him up on the third day after His death. No one at this time realized what Jesus meant but after His resurrection His disciples fully understood what He had said.

Verses 23-25

Many of the people in Jerusalem believed in Jesus because He preformed many signs but their belief would not last. Their belief in Him was for the wrong reasons. They saw that He had power and they wanted to know how they could benefit from this power. In times of trouble they would not continue to believe in Him, as they were following Him because He was popular. When Jesus became unpopular they would not only leave Him but oppose Him as well. Jesus knows what is in everyone's hearts. He knows if our faith is real and sincere. He knows if we really love him. It is not always easy to follow Jesus. Other people may hate us or even hurt us because of our faith in him. But when we know Jesus personally as our friend, our faith will always be real and sincere.

This was the beginning of Jesus' public ministry and it began in His holy city Jerusalem. It is also very fitting that it began in His Father's house the Temple, the very center of life and worship. The right time for the beginning was a Passover, as it is a solemn period in the Jewish calendar. It also symbolizes when God passed over the Israelite nation in Egypt by the blood on the door post. In the day of the Lord the followers of Jesus will be passed over from the wrath of God because of the redeeming blood of Jesus shed on the cross of Calvary.

Key Verses

Isaiah 56:7, Psalm 69:9

Chapter 3

Verses 1-21

Nicodemus came to visit Jesus in the night. There are two possible reasons that he came in the night. One reason may have been that Nicodemus did not want to be seen with Jesus by the other Jewish leaders. Nicodemus was a Sanhedrin and also a Pharisee. As a Sanhedrin Nicodemus was one of the seventy Jewish leaders, plus the High Priest, who made decisions about certain legal matters and also ruled their religious government. The Jewish people at this time were under Roman rule but the Romans let the Jewish leaders tend to the matters specific to the Israel Nation. Jesus often had arguments with the Jewish leaders and therefore was not popular with them. It is probable that Nicodemus did not want his fellow Sanhedrin to know that he was with Jesus. Another possible reason that Nicodemus came at night is that Jewish leaders taught that the best time to study God's Word was at night. Jesus was busy with the people during the day and Nicodemus wanting to discuss religious matters may have thought it was best to see Jesus at night.

Nicodemus recognized that there was power with Jesus, as He had preformed many signs and spoke with great authority. Apparently Nicodemus went right to the point of the conversation because Jesus answered that the Kingdom of God cannot be seen unless one is born again. This is the only reference to God's Kingdom made in John's gospel. God's Kingdom is not a country that has borders and is not found in a particular place. Jesus made reference to God's Kingdom when teaching His disciples to pray. (Matthew 6:9-13) In this prayer, known as the Lord's Prayer, we are taught the phrase, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven." One reason we pray this is we are asking God to rule here on earth so that the people will be in obedience to Him. The Angels in Heaven obey God's will and we desire the same here for all mankind.

The writer William Barclay said that God's Kingdom is a society. It is a society where people do everything that pleases God. That Kingdom has already begun and is amongst us now. When we accept Jesus into our life and believe upon His name then we have become members of the society of God's Kingdom. In the future the Kingdom of God will come completely to earth and Jesus will be the King.

Jesus told Nicodemus that there is only one way to enter the Kingdom of God and that is to be born again. When we believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior God forgives us of our sins. The Holy Spirit then enters into our hearts and begins His regenerative work in our lives. Our spirits, which have been separated from God because of the sin in our lives, is now renewed by the Holy Spirit and thereby we have been born again. We have put off the old self and now live in the new self under the control of and led by the Holy Spirit. By this work and seal of the Holy Spirit we have become citizens of God's Kingdom.

Nicodemus did not fully grasp what Jesus was saying as he was thinking in natural terms of the flesh. Jesus went on to say, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." There needs to be two births in life. One is of the flesh which comes from our parents. The second comes from the Holy Spirit. Jesus states that which is born of the flesh is of the flesh. Our flesh is a perishable thing and has an appointed time to die. The spirits of all mankind is eternal and the question is where is our eternal spirit going to be after the flesh dies? Jesus told Nicodemus that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. We must be born of the Holy Spirit to receive eternal life in God's Kingdom.

Nicodemus was a teacher of the scriptures to the people and Jesus asked him how he could not understand these things that He was saying to him. Jesus caused Nicodemus to wonder if he could not understand earthly teachings then how he could understand Heavenly teachings. Being born again was a spiritual matter but it takes place here on earth. If people cannot understand this new birth here on earth then they will not be able to understand the things that will happen in Heaven.

People do not understand the teachings of Jesus today because they do not understand spiritual matters. The teachings of Jesus dealt in spiritual things. Paul addressed this in his first letter to the Corinthians in chapter 2:13-16. Once we have been baptized with the Holy Spirit He is our counselor and will teach us all things. (John 14:26) Jesus is our only connection between Heaven and earth. He descended from heaven and after His resurrection He ascended back to heaven. Jesus now lives in our spirits through the Holy Spirit.

Verses (14-15) refers back to a time when the Israelites were wondering in the desert. They were a grumbling and complaining people and God punished them by sending snakes. The snakes bit the people and many died. The people went to Moses and asked him to petition God to remove the snakes. God told Moses to place a bronze snake on top of a pole and if anyone was bitten by a snake he was to look at the bronze snake. If that person did so as God had commanded he would not die. (Numbers 21:8-9) Jesus' reference is that if we lift Him up as the Israelites lifted up the bronze snake we shall have eternal life.

Sin is like a snake's bite, it poisons the soul of a person and ruins our lives. By God's grace towards man He has provided a way to cure man from the wages of sin. As the bronze snake was lifted up to cure the snake bite so Jesus will be lifted up on the cross to pay the price for our sin. We must look up to Jesus on the cross; we must trust His work on the cross, which was the shedding of His blood to cover the cost of our sin debt.

John 3:16 is probably the most famous verse in the bible. In a few words God has expressed the essence of what Christians believe. God had several reasons for doing this.

God sent His Son because He is fair. Because people are born with a sin nature they are going to do wrong things, they are going to transgress against God's law. People who do bad things are deserving of punishment but God sent His Son to bear that punishment for them.

God sent His Son because He is Holy. God cannot be in the presence of sin and people are incapable to live a life without sin. God sent His Son to live a righteous life and be the perfect sacrifice in our place to pay the sin debt we all have. When we believe this we receive the righteousness of Jesus as our own. God chooses to see the righteousness of Jesus and not the sin in our lives.

The emphasis of this verse is why God did this for us. That God would send His only beloved Son to die on a cross so that we may be free of our sin in our lives. The answer is clearly stated in this verse, that God loved the world so much. Love is more than just one of God's qualities it is the very nature of God. Everything God does is because He loves. God's love always reaches out to His creation and to the crown of His creation, man. God's love is not selfish and He gave the most precious thing to Him, His only beloved Son, Jesus.

God's free gift to us is eternal life in His Kingdom. There is no way that we can earn eternal life; the only way to receive it is to believe in Jesus. Believing is more than knowing Jesus is God, even Satan knows that. (James 2:19) Believing is we must trust Jesus to rule every part of our lives completely. Jesus has a plan for our lives and we must obey Him completely. We must believe that He gives us the power to change our characters and become more like him through the power of His Spirit. We must act upon His word and walk with Jesus in faith.

Jesus did not come to judge the world but to save the lost in this world. Those who receive Him will find eternal life in His Kingdom. Most people of this world are blinded to the truth of Jesus and run from it because they do not want to be exposed to the sinfulness of their life. They reject Him and live in the lust they have for this world and care not for the world to come. Those who follow Jesus will escape the judgment of this world and those who reject Him have already been judged by their own deeds.

Verses 22-36

John the Baptist and his disciples were baptizing in the same area as Jesus and His disciples. But more people were going to Jesus to be baptized than to John the Baptist. John the Baptist's disciples were a little miffed because of this and went to John the Baptist to express their concerns.

John the Baptist has already testified before them that Jesus was the Lamb of God and that He must increase while John the Baptist would decrease. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus and now that Jesus' ministry had begun his job was done. John the Baptist was satisfied that he had completed the mission that God had given him. John the Baptist compared the people as the bride and Jesus as the bridegroom and that John the Baptist was the friend of the Bridegroom. At a Jewish wedding, the bridegroom's friend had many duties. For example, this friend arranged the wedding and he sent out the invitations. But he had one special duty. He had to guard the bride's bedroom. He opened the door only when he heard the bridegroom's voice. We read in verse twenty nine, "But the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full." John the Baptist was delighted that more people were going to Jesus. Two other references are made in the New Testament that compares Jesus as the bridegroom and the church as His bride. (2 Corinthians 11:2 Ephesians 5:22-32)

John the Baptist then testifies that the teachings of Jesus are far superior to his own. John the Baptist taught only from the perspective of one who lived in this world but Jesus had come from Heaven and knew life there. Jesus knew the words of the Father and related His thoughts to people in His teachings.

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit came and remained with certain people for a short time. This was so they could do a special work for God and after their work was completed the Holy Spirit withdrew. Now in New Testament time the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in the hearts of Jesus' followers.

Key Verses

Numbers 21:8-9, Romans 8:16, 1 Corinthians 2:10-12, 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6, Matthew 6:9-13, 2 Corinthians 1:22, 1 Corinthians 2:13-16, John 14:26, James 2:19, 2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:22-32,

Chapter 4

Verses 1-3

Jesus was mostly met with cold disbelief in Jerusalem where He had started His public ministry. Already Jesus was facing opposition from the Jewish leaders. Through He was popular with the people, still He found Himself in argument with the Jewish leaders. Jesus applied Himself more to teaching and gave the duties of baptizing to His disciples, which teaches us that the benefits of the sacraments depends not on the one who administers them but on the believer who receives them. Because the Pharisees were becoming upset

that Jesus was baptizing more than John the Baptist, Jesus left Judea and traveled north to Galilee.

Verses 4-26

When traveling from Jerusalem to Galilee most Jews would travel around Samaria. The most direct route is through Samaria and this is the route that Jesus and His disciples took. To go around would double the distance and time but to go through Samaria would only be a three day journey. The Jewish people hated the Samaritans and the feeling of the Samaritans was likewise. Yet both groups shared the same ancestors, they worshiped the same God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In 931 BC the Kingdom of Solomon was divided after his death. The southern Kingdom of David continued to rule in Jerusalem and was called the Kingdom of Judea. To the north was the northern Kingdom of Israel and during the reign of King Omri he created and new capitol called Samaria, which he purchased for two talents of silver. (1Kings 16:24) About 724 BC Israel's enemies the Assyrians overpowered the Kingdom of Israel and took many of the Jews away and planted many of their citizens in their place. The Israelites who remained in Samaria intermarried with the foreigners and began to worship their false Gods. The Jewish Law did not allow for this and the Jews of the southern Kingdom of Judea no longer recognized the Samaritans as Jewish and hated them. Yet Jesus chooses to travel through Samaria on His way to Galilee.

Jesus is God manifested in the flesh, fully God and fully man therefore suffering the same weaknesses of man. When He and the disciples arrived in Samaria Jesus needed to rest and chose to do so at the well of Jacob. (Genesis 33:18-19) Jesus sent His disciples into the town and while he was resting at the well a Samaritan women came to draw water. Jesus started a conversation with this woman which was surprising for two reasons. The first being that she was a Samaritan woman of whom the Jews would have nothing to do with and the second that she was a woman, which the religious leaders of the day would not have done. Strict Jewish teachers would not speak to woman in public and Pharisee's would even close their eyes when seeing a woman in the public areas. The woman was very surprised by Jesus asking her for a drink from the well. The woman had access to something that Jesus needed and Jesus had something that she needed the gift of eternal life.

The conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well is an encouraging dialog for anyone who is seeking for light on their spiritual walk. It is a demonstration of how faith may in steps be enlarged and strengthened. At first the woman looked upon Jesus as nothing more than a weary traveler, a Jew. Then she saw him as a prophet and finally she realized Jesus was the Messiah, whom the townspeople call "the Savior of the world." Also it is a dialog for those who wish to learn a method of approach to the many souls who are in need of the Messiah whom God has sent to save

that which is lost. Jesus' discourse is an illustration of how to address those attitudes of heart and mind which we must appeal to if we are to bring searching souls into fellowship with Jesus Christ. A plan from our Lord to bring the lost into the enjoyment of the life promised to those who believe in Him.

First Jesus asking for a drink of water from the well appeals to her sympathy. This places Jesus on her level which is where we are to meet people. When we want to start a conversation with people we need to be where they are at, not coming from above them or below them. We must place ourselves on common ground with them and join them in a similar interest.

Second Jesus makes a claim appealing to curiosity. Jesus then said that if she knew the gift of God, that is the Spirit of God, then she would have living water and never thirst again. At first the woman did not grasp the spiritual meaning of Jesus' statement. We can also ask a question generating interest that would lead them to a desirable point of conclusion in God's offer of free salvation. It is amazing how many people are living what they believe to be a Christian life but do not know what it is to be born again. They do not have the power of the Spirit of Truth living within their lives.

Third Jesus makes a promise appealing to conscious need, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." One good question would be what do they believe is the way to get to Heaven. It will be surprising to you how many people do not know. In response to a wrong answer to the path to heaven we could respond with 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." People need to know and people need to have the opportunity to know. Jesus came to save that which is lost as followers of Jesus that is our mission also.

Jesus then turns her attention to her conscious need by telling her to, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." We can never find satisfaction and peace until we make right the wrongs of our past. The woman is then led to make a confession that she has no husband, which was a half truth about her life condition. Jesus then reveals to her that He knows she has had five husbands. In the Jewish culture it was unacceptable for a woman to have more than three husbands and yet Jesus reveals to her that the man she is now living with is not a husband to her. This full disclosure of her activity amazes her so much that she calls Jesus a prophet.

Some may think that the woman now finds the conversation to personal and tries to change the topic by asking Jesus about the true place to worship God. Mount Gerizim is a Holy mountain to the Samaritans. The Samaritans worshiped God at Mount Gerizim in northern Israel in Ephraim near Shechem. It is here at Mount Gerizim that the blessings were read to the Israelites upon entering Canaan. The Samaritans built a temple at the

summit of Mount Gerizim which was considered a sacred place where they worshipped. But she, in the presence of a prophet triggers a religious instinct that may have been dormant but is never dead. Worshipping God perhaps for her has never been more than a matter of ceremony and has never brought satisfaction in its practice. Now she is asking Jesus for the proper place to worship. Is it Mount Gerizim, as the Samaritans believe, or is it Jerusalem as the Jews believe?

Jesus now makes a revelation which gives her hope. Jesus tells the woman that the problem is not the place of worship but that she has never worshiped at all. Jesus states that God is a Spirit and true worship is not a question of place but a question of faith and love. Worshipping God is a matter of doing so in a spiritual reality and is found in a true knowledge of God and having a fellowship with Him as a loving Father. Jesus reveals that the time has come that the place of worship is not only in a Temple or on a High Mountain that worship now is with the Spirit of Truth. The Samaritan woman at the well knows that there needs to be a mediator between God and man. There needs to be a high priest to intercede for man before God. She states this by her knowledge that the scriptures speak of a coming Messiah. It is then that Jesus makes His supreme statement to her, "I that speak unto thee am He."

Worshipping God in the Spirit of Truth means that God knows our true intentions when we worship Him. Some may worship God for what they may get while others may worship God as a duty. God wants us to worship Him because of whom He is. The Holy Spirit helps us to do that so we need to ask for the Holy Spirit's help in worshipping God with true intention.

Verses 27-42

The disciples returned from the town and had brought food. They were amazed that Jesus was talking to a woman and a Samaritan woman as well. But they did not question Jesus on this as they had become accustomed that Jesus did things not according to Jewish customs but according to the will of God. They knew that Jesus had the power of God with Him.

With every statement that Jesus had made to this woman she has made a reply but this time she stops what she is doing, leaving her water pot and quickly went to the town and told the people there all the things that had happened to her at the well. Her actions are more of a testimony than any words she could have spoken. When she arrived in town she said to her neighbors, "Come, see a man, who told me all things that I ever did: can this be the Christ?" We cannot know how much faith she had but on this day the woman's interest in Jesus was so great that she left her water pot and quickly went to share her experience with the people in town. By this response we are safe to conclude that her faith was vital and real. She set off in haste and her mission was successful and many of

the town's people we attracted to her testimony and came out to the well to meet the Messiah.

The disciples were concerned that Jesus was hungry as well. They offered Him food to eat but He replied that He had food. This they wondered as to where He had food as none of them had given Him any of their food. The food that Jesus was referring to was the spiritual food that only He can give. In this Jesus declares the deeper satisfaction lies in revealing the spiritual truths of His spiritual food to fainting souls just as He had done with the Samaritan woman.

Jesus referred to a proverb, "four months must pass before the harvest." Jesus meant that once the seed was sown time must pass before the harvest. The seed must have time to grow in the soil. Sometimes we sow the seed but we do not see the result of the seed we have sown. The seed needs to grow first and it may need to be watered by others before it grows. Other times we may be the ones who water the seed and then other times we may be the one who harvest the seed. As followers of Jesus we are a team performing different tasks in working for the harvest, some sow, some water, and some harvest. Our reward comes from doing the work of His Kingdom in saving the lost souls of this world.

The Samaritans are coming forth from the town because of the testimony of the Samaritan women they have heard. Jesus intimates that opportunities for our testimony are always at hand. He declares to His disciples, "lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest." We all must be busy spreading the good news of Jesus, even though many will reject Him; many will receive Him, not only the Jews but people of all nations. All must have the opportunity, all must be confronted with the truth, and all must make their decision about the Messiah. We must remember, as we tell people about Jesus, that we are sowing the seeds of His Word and if any receive Him it is for His glory and not our own. We don't know who planted the seed, which watered the seed, and it is God Himself that nurtures the soul that grows the seed for His glory.

It is striking the difference in reception Jesus' received in Samaria as to what the reception was in Jerusalem. Yet the people in Jerusalem received Him with cold unbelief there and throughout Judea. In Samaria Jesus spent only two days there and performed no signs or miracles. Jesus was in the midst of people who considered the Jews as their enemies and yet they welcomed Him as the "Savior of the World."

Verses 43-54

In verse 44 Jesus quotes a proverb that a "Prophet has no honor in his own country." Jesus and His disciples had returned to Galilee where Jesus had grown up. Prior to now for the past thirty years Jesus had lived in Galilee but the people there had not recognized Him as a prophet, they had no idea of His divine mission. They who knew Him before

knew Him as the son of Joseph the carpenter. A common man and his son Jesus, was a common son. News of Jesus' behavior in Jerusalem had traveled fast and the people of Galilee had heard of the things He had done in Jerusalem and Judea. During His time at Passover He had become the center of interest. Many in Jerusalem had declared themselves ready to receive Him as their Messiah. The Jews had for hundreds of years been looking for the arrival of the Messiah, a political leader and worker of great signs. Now the people of Galilee believed Him because of His reputation from the trip to Jerusalem. But their faith in Jesus was only incipient. Incipient faith can develop into perfect trust but on the other hand it might also grow into doubt and hate. Even so many flocked to see Jesus upon His return because He had caused an interest in the people.

An official, a nobleman, traveled from Capernaum to seek Jesus because his son was ill and near the point of death. Jesus had returned to Cana and the trip from Capernaum was about twenty miles. Probably this official worked for Herod Antipas, who was the ruler of Galilee. Herod ruled on behalf of the Roman government. The people were probably surprised to see a high official of the Roman government travel so far to see Jesus. Usually officials would send for people they wanted to see rather than go to them. But his son was dying and he was willing to do anything to save him. And hearing of Jesus he believed that Jesus could cure his son.

The Nobleman came to Jesus and humbled himself before Him. We see this in verse forty nine as he addresses Jesus as "sir". The Nobleman had authority over Jesus but he submitted to Jesus because he realized that Jesus had a different kind of authority.

In verses forty seven and forty eight the Nobleman implored Jesus to come with him to Capernaum to heal his son. A crowd must have gathered because Jesus' response was, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe." The word you is in the plural in this sentence and therefore Jesus must have been speaking for the benefit of every one there. Or perhaps Jesus wanted to see if the Nobleman's faith was sincere. The Nobleman could have become angry with Jesus as he was a person of authority, or he could have left meaning his faith was not sincere. The Nobleman did remain and persisted for Jesus to come with him and cure his son. Jesus did not go with him but instead told him to go that his son lives. The Nobleman's faith was secure because he trusted Jesus and went back to his home in Capernaum immediately. This is real faith to believe in a miracle even before we see it happen. Jesus hears every time we pray and we must believe that He will answer our prayers. Time and distance is not an obstacle for our Lord as He was before the beginning and will always be. "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever." (Ephesians 3:20-21)

In the discourse between Jesus and the Nobleman illustrates the gradual development of belief. Just as we saw the stages of the development of faith with the woman from Samaria we also can see the same stage with the Nobleman.

First the Nobleman's faith regards Jesus as only a worker of miracles. He came to Jesus out of a need to have his son cured and believed that Jesus could heal him. The Nobleman desires Jesus to come with him to Capernaum to heal his son. Instead Jesus not only rebuked the Nobleman but the crowd that had gathered there also. It was a general rebuke of the attitude of the Galileans towards Jesus. It was an imperfect faith because the Galileans had come to see a miracle rather than to believe in the one who could work the miracle. Of this imperfect faith the Nobleman was an example and Jesus' intention was to show the need for a higher faith. Jesus was much more than one who could perform wonders He wanted men to know and trust and commit themselves to Him. Jesus appealed to the hope in his belief that Jesus could help his son. By the testimony of others about Jesus and what He was doing the Nobleman came to seek Jesus. The Nobleman displayed a little faith by traveling so far to bring the love of Jesus into his life for the benefit of his son.

Second Jesus commanding the Nobleman to return home without Him was done to increase his faith. By Jesus telling him to go home his son lives the Nobleman had to accept the words of Jesus were true. If he had remained and argued with Jesus then it would have displayed a lack of faith. The Nobleman believed Jesus and left to return home as Jesus had told him believing that his son would live. The Nobleman's faith rose to meet the challenge that Jesus had issued him. The Nobleman came to Jesus on reports that He had strong power but now had left not only on the reports of Jesus but resting confidently on the Word of Jesus. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh and if we are to follow Him then we must obey Him. By sharing the commandments of Jesus the ones that obey Him in faith are the ones who truly believe. (1John 3:22)

The third stage is reached when the Nobleman meets his rejoicing servants and learns that not only had his son improved but had been cured. The Nobleman remembered the hour that Jesus had said his son lives and it was at the same hour his servants said his son had begun to improve. Now the Nobleman is ready to completely trust in Jesus and to openly confess his belief. By the Nobleman's testimony of Jesus and what He had done the Nobleman brought his whole household into absolute trust and devotion in Jesus. When one experiences Jesus the first thing that a person should do is testify to others what Jesus has done in their life. Faith comes from hearing the Word of God. It is by our belief and confession of Jesus as our Lord and Master that a person is saved. (Romans 10:8-9 Romans 10:17)

The chapter closes with John reminding us that this is the second sign that Jesus preformed in Cana. Both these miracles happened at the opposite ends of the emotional

borders. The first at the marriage feast a house filled with gladness. The other a house filled with anxiety and pain in the shadow of death. Both signs give testimony to the divine person of Jesus. Both signs deepen the faith and illustrate the joy and blessedness of trusting in Jesus. The first sign brought a joyous close the private career of our Lord before He began His public ministry in Jerusalem. The second sign ends the opening scenes of his public ministry. The coming days will bring suspicion, hatred, and opposition. Along the way there will be those like the Nobleman of Capernaum who trust Him and love Him, and that to in the city which He had chosen as home for a time had found honor for Him.

Key Verses

1Kings 16:24, Genesis 33:18-19, Ephesians 3:20-21, 1John 3:22, Romans 10:8-9, Romans 10:17

Chapter 5

Verses 1-16

The Jews were having a feast in Jerusalem and Jesus attended. Which feast it was we are not told and apparently John did not think it significant to the events which took place there. Here we find Jesus standing at the pool of Bethesda near the sheep market or gate. The exact time or location of the sheep market gate is not known either and it is not important to the events that took place there. What is important is the significance of the sign Jesus preformed and its relation to His public ministry. It was another act of Jesus that raised the level of contention between Him and the Jewish leadership. The miracle here bore witness to the divine person of Jesus as the giver of life. The sign manifested the result of having faith in Jesus.

The pool called Bethesda was believed to have the power to heal people. The pool was located in the city near where the Temple was. Archaeologists have uncovered this pool in recent times and to this day many tourists today visit the pool. It was believed that an Angel would come down and stir the water and the first person in the water after it was stirred would be healed. When Jesus came to the pool many where waiting for an Angel to come and stir the water. The scene was a picture of the suffering, selfishness, and sin of the world. This is in contrast with the healing Jesus was able to do and the salvation to man that He alone could offer. Jesus alone is able to repair the waste of humankind and save the lost of this world. The ministry of Jesus is a ministry of redemption.

While chapter five of John's gospel deals with the Person of Christ the record of this miracle again speaks to the development of faith. Jesus did not heal all of the people at the pool but knowing the hearts found one there that He knew was a man who would have faith.

First Jesus asked the man, "Do you wish to get well?" The man may have lost hope, as he replied that once the water was stirred he would not be able to be the first into the pool. Others would be able to get into the pool first cutting him off. So he had come there thinking that at least he had a chance at the very least. Certainly this showed that he wanted to be healed. Many people know that in their spiritual condition they are deeply engulfed in sin yet they have no expectation of being healed of their sinful condition. They are conscious of their wickedness but they have no hope of redemption. Some have no desire to change their condition as they love their sinful condition, for them a life of holiness and purity is not what they want. They too are at the pool of Bethesda; they may be familiar with the church but have the wrong vision of its true purpose and have no hope of being made whole.

Isaiah tells us in Isaiah 53:2 that Jesus' appearance was not of a stately form or there was nothing in Him that would attract people to Him. But I believe that when people encounter Jesus they are taken in by His divine nature. The man at the pool was drawn to Jesus, he did want to be healed, and had the faith to obey the words of Jesus.

Jesus first saw the need of the man and then asked him if he would like his need fulfilled. We too as we go about our day see many people with a need, both physical and more importantly spiritual. We should be willing to help in their physical need but we do have the answer for their spiritual need, Jesus. We should, as Jesus, get their attention by asking do you want to be healed.

The man at the pool had been unable to walk for thirty eight years and probably had been laying down all that time. Now Jesus gave the man a command to, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk." This would have seemed to the man an impossible thing for him to do, as for thirty eight years he had not been able to get up and walk. But the man did as Jesus had commanded and was able to do so. Jesus commanded him to get up meaning that the man needed to take action in order to resolve his condition. Jesus told him to take up his bed which means that once healed he must remove all provision for turning back. It states that what Jesus commands us to do we must go boldly forward with no plan to return to our previous condition. Then Jesus told the man to walk entering into the new way of life. By his faith in what Jesus had told him to do the man received a new life which has been given by our Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus gives us a command it is always a promise. Whatever Jesus commands us to do He will always give us the power to accomplish our task.

The people who were watching must have been amazed by what had happened but the Jewish leaders were angered by the fact that the man was carrying pallet on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was a holy day and the Jews had added many restrictions as to what a man could do. Their rules explained what work is and they had thirty nine different types of work that a man could not do on the Sabbath. These were mans rules and not Gods.

(Exodus 20:8-10) Jesus had told the man to pick up his pallet and walk and it angered the Scribes that Jesus would tell the man to break the Sabbath. Most likely this was just an excuse for the Scribes and they were more taken over with jealousy. They could see the power of God working through Jesus yet they had no power for God to enforce the strict rules of their own making.

Jesus had slipped away to avoid confrontation with the scribes. Many times Jesus when He cured people He told them to keep it a secret. (Matthew 9:27-31 Mark 1:40-45) Jesus had healed the man physically and he was able to walk after thirty eight years of being unable. Jesus also wanted to heal the man spiritually and found him in the temple.

In the temple Jesus gives the healed man a warning. "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you." It is a sad fact that no matter how much suffering one goes through because of sin it does not make the man a hater of sin. The only safety net in our battle against sin is to have faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are born with that sin nature and are unable to overcome it without the power of Jesus living through us.

Verses 17-29

The healed man from the pool left the temple and went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus that had healed him. Instead of rejoicing that Jesus was able to heal this man the Jewish leaders were angry that Jesus was violating the Sabbath rules by working. They went out to persecute Jesus and Jesus answered that His Father is working and so is He. This angered the Jewish leaders so much that they wanted to kill Jesus. Jesus was claiming to be the Son of God, equal to God. The Jews believed in one God but Jesus was not claiming to be God but the Son of God. Either Jesus is the Son of God or a liar and guilty of blasphemy. Man has the same choice today in their acceptance of Jesus, they can either believe in Him for who He is, the Son of God, or consider Him as a blasphemer. There is the only two choices, we either believe in Jesus or we reject Him.

Jesus claimed to have two divine activities that He shared with the Father, God. As was made known by the healing of the lame man, Jesus was the giver of life. Jesus also told them that He had the authority to judge mankind. Jesus made claim that He was the source of spiritual renewal and life and that He alone could heal the morally depraved. Jesus had the power to raise a soul from spiritual death and the hour was coming that He also could raise the dead from the grave.

Jesus came to save that which is lost but by any man's rejection of Him he was placing judgment upon himself. Jesus was also the judge in the final judgment of man to come on that last day. This was made clear in His description of the two resurrections. The spiritual resurrection when all believers in Jesus will be resurrected now into a new life in the Spirit of Truth. Jesus also spoke of a bodily resurrection when all those who are in the

grave will hear His voice and rise from the grave. Those that have done good shall be resurrected unto life and those who have done evil shall be resurrected unto judgment.

Verses 30-47

Jesus now states that He does not testify for Himself, one who testifies for Himself has none to declare Him as true. Jesus abides in the Father and does only the will of the Father and if you abide in Jesus then you also abide in the Father. (John 14:9-10) There are four witnesses to the deity of Jesus.

John the Baptist was a witness to the identity of Jesus as he had been the forerunner of Jesus, a voice crying from the wilderness telling everyone to repent and make straight the way for the Lord. The Jews had rejoiced in the message of John the Baptist. They saw him as a great prophet who had witnessed to the very oneness with God which Jesus had just claimed. John the Baptist himself had proclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God” and “This is the Son of God.” (John 1:36 John 1:34)

The signs that Jesus was performing was also a witness to Jesus for no one could perform these works without the power of God.

Jesus states there is a greater witness than any man and that is the witness of His Father. But Jesus proclaimed that they did not believe the Father and therefore did not believe in Him.

The Old Testament was a witness to Jesus and most of the prophecy in the Old Testament spoke of the coming Messiah. Many believed they could find their salvation through the scriptures but Jesus made it clear they must yield themselves to Him, as He was the author and source of life.

Finally Jesus finishes by condemning the Jewish leaders for rejecting Him. They claimed to believe the scriptures and felt that accepting Jesus showed a disloyalty to Moses. Jesus argues that real loyalty to Moses would have led them to Him. Moses wrote of Jesus in the Old Testament. Jesus goes on to say that their lack of belief is not because there was not enough evidence but a lack of love towards God. The scribes and Pharisees were seeking the glory of men and were therefore blinded to the real truth of Jesus.

The key to the scriptures is their testimony of Jesus as the Son of God, and faith in Him carries His truth into life.

Key Verses

Isaiah 53:2, Exodus 20:8-13, Matthew 9:27-31, Mark 1:40-45, John 14:9-10

Chapter 6

In the chapter we find ourselves along the shores of the Sea of Galilee in Tiberias. In the last chapter hatred aroused against Jesus because he had healed the lame man beside the pool at Bethesda on the Sabbath. Because of the violent reaction of the scribes and Pharisees Jesus cannot remain in Jerusalem and has withdrawn to Galilee. Even though in Jerusalem the Feast of the Passover is being celebrated Jesus has started His ministry in Galilee. Jesus spent a long time in His Galilean ministry as indicated in the other gospels.

Jesus performed many signs during this time in Galilee but John chose to only describe two, the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus walking on the water. Perhaps this is because these two signs led to a crisis amongst His followers, which resulted in a marked division and an open confession of unbelief and faith. Chapter six contains three natural divisions. One division the miracles verses 1-21, the next division the discourse verses 22-59, and the third division a dispute among the Jews in verses 60-65.

Verses 1-14

There many people traveling from Galilee to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover but the news of Jesus had come to them from His time in Jerusalem. Jesus had withdrawn to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to spend time with His disciples to teach them. But the people knew that Jesus was there and followed Him by land by going around the north side of the Sea. With those who had been following Jesus and those who turned from their journey to Jerusalem John records as five thousand. John's count only included the men and not the women and children. John recorded five thousand but there was many more than that. They had been journeying a long time and when Jesus saw them coming he knew they would be weary and hungry.

Jesus knew that a miracle would be needed to feed so many people. Jesus knew this but wanted to test Phillip's faith. Phillip was from the nearby town of Bethsaida and would know where enough food could be purchased to feed a crowd so large. Phillip searched for a practical solution to the problem. Phillip counted up the cost of feeding so many and realized that they did not have enough money. Phillip did not in his thinking include God as a solution. The lack of resources does not stop God and what He can do.

Andrew discovered a young boy in the crowd that had five loaves of bread and two fish. This was the boy's lunch and he offered it to Andrew to help out. Andrew like Phillip did not understand what God could do. The disciples had some money for their traveling expenses and needs but they did not offer any of that to help the situation but the young boy gave all that he had.

Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, thanked God for it, and then passed it out to everyone there. All were filled and satisfied with the meal from the five loaves of bread

and two fish. We may look at our resources and feel they are not enough to meet the need of others and ourselves. Our resources are our time, possession, and our money. We also have skills that God has given us. We may look at the needs and wonder how we can meet those needs but we must remember to consider God in our search for a solution. It is better to give God what we do have than to give Him nothing. He will take whatever we offer and do mighty works for His Kingdom. He will also bless us with abundance. There were twelve baskets of leftover food from the five loaves of bread and two fish. If we give to God what is rightfully His, He will do so much more than we could ever imagine.

The people were amazed by what Jesus had done, they knew they had witnessed and mighty sign and declared, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." The prophet they were referring to was the one whom Moses had spoken of in Deuteronomy. Moses said a prophet would come and be like him but what Moses meant was that the Messiah would come. (Deuteronomy 18:15)

Moses had led the Israelites out of the land of Egypt where they had been enslaved. Now the Hebrew nation was under the rule of the Romans. The Israelites were living in their land but they were not the rulers of their land. The Jews wanted to be free of the Roman rule. They were looking for the Messiah to come and free them and establish His government. They had seen the power that Jesus had and wanted to make Him their King. They wanted a political and military ruler who would lead them to fight against the Romans. This was their plan but it was not God's plan so Jesus sent them away and went into the mountain to pray.

Verses 16-21

In the gospel of Mark we read that Jesus had sent his disciples ahead of Him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. (Mark 6:45) Jesus went up to the mountain to pray. They had rowed about half way across when a storm came up and with the strong wind the waves were rising. The disciples became afraid even though some of them were fishermen and had fished many times on the Sea of Galilee. They were familiar with the Sea and knew how suddenly and violent the storms on the Sea could be. Then they saw what they thought to be a spirit walking on the water coming towards them. This caused even more fear to fill their hearts. Jesus called out to them saying, "It is I; do not be afraid." Once they knew it was Jesus they bid Him to get into the boat and immediately they were at the shore to where they were going.

There is a contrast to this sign and the sign given at the feeding of the five thousand. Here Jesus is not perceived as a political leader with power in an earthly place but a divine Creator who has authority over the natural laws of the universe. Jesus does not suspend the natural law but shows that He is superior to the natural law. Jesus also shows His

ability to be independent of time and space, as when He enters into the boat they instantly reach the shore.

This is an example that if we trust in Jesus that even as we face the storms of life, face the loneliness and opposition along the path, that He is with us and we can enjoy the safety and gladness of a divine fellowship with Him.

Another picture is that as Jesus was praying on the mountain to the Father and then appears with His disciples to rescue them from the perils of life. This is where Jesus is today at the right hand of the Father interceding for us and some day will come again to rescue us from the trials of this world. (Roman 8:33-34)

Jesus is with us always even to the ends of the earth. (Matthew 28:20) Trials and tribulations come upon us quickly in this world, like the storm on the lake. We may feel that we have no control over our situation. We may think that we are struggling alone with our problems. But sometimes Jesus comes to us when we do not expect him. He may surprise us by the way that he comes to us. But Jesus can do anything! He protects us from bad things. We know that we are safe with him.

Verses 22-59

The crowds had seen the disciples leave in the boat and go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee and they knew that Jesus had not gone with them. So when they realized that neither the disciples nor Jesus was there they also got into boats and crossed over to the other side to Capernaum seeking Jesus. When they arrived on the other side and saw Jesus there they wondered how He had gotten there. But Jesus did not answer them to this question but only said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."

Jesus then began to teach the people the meaning of the feeding of the day before. We are reminded that all of the miracles of Jesus are acted parables. The signs not only served an immediate need through grace and love but also have a divine message of spiritual truth. The people were only thinking of their physical need for food but Jesus wanted to point out their true need of spiritual food, the spiritual food that only He could provide. He warned them to not work for the food which will perish but for the food which leads to eternal life. Jesus could give them the spiritual bread that would lead to eternal life because the Father had placed His seal upon Him. The essence of His lesson can be found in His words, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."

They had asked for a sign much like the manna that Moses gave in the wilderness. As the bread that Moses gave came down from God in Heaven, Jesus said that He was the true bread from God in Heaven. That He has come down from the Father and is the manna given for the life of the world. The body of Jesus was to be broken and His blood

shed and then to ascend back to Heaven. His gospel is that all who trust in Him He will give present satisfaction, future resurrection, and eternal life.

The language of eating His flesh and drinking His blood stresses the completeness of the faith we are to have in Him. As we walk in faith with Jesus, we must have an absolute dependence upon Him, as a crucified, risen, living, divine Lord. Our identification is with Jesus Christ and we are to bear His image, a light unto the world, that through us His truth may be seen in a darkened world. (Matthew 5:14)

Jesus is concerned with our physical needs, as He fed the five thousand, but the flesh is passing away it is the spirit that is eternal. Jesus did not preach on the physical needs of the world but on the need for spiritual life.

Faith in Jesus is not only for healing, but for the nourishment of our spirit. Previously Jesus had healed the lame man but here He is sustaining the strong. It is not only the immoral and sick that need Jesus but also the purest and best of men.

Faith in Jesus is a necessity not a luxury. The people were given the simplest of food and would have fainted without it. The Christian life is not something which may or may not be added to our blessings in life, without faith in Jesus there is no life either here or hereafter.

Our faith is to be in Jesus only. It is not found in the acceptance of a creed or in the performance of a ritual, but is the surrender of our self to a personal loving Savior. We must follow Him in devotion and trust.

Faith is not tasting or admiring but is consuming. Faith is having a complete identification with Jesus Christ. We must allow Him into every part of our life. His Word and will must become every part of our life.

Faith results in service towards Him and to our neighbor. It is a life of sharing, not keeping. His Word is to equip us to share the gospel message with the world. Our resources may seem inadequate but by allowing the Master to bless them we have the possibility to serve thousands.

Faith in Jesus will bring us satisfaction, not just temporary relief. Jesus is not a simple meal but an abundance that His true disciples find. Faith brings an abiding, abounding, eternal life through Jesus. No hungering soul turns to Jesus in vain.

Key Verses

Deuteronomy 18:15, Mark 6:45, Matthew 14:26, Roman 8:33-34, Matthew 28:20,
Matthew 5:14

Chapter 7

Verses 1-13

For six months Jesus remained in Galilee ministering to the people. Now it was time for the Feast of Tabernacles. (Leviticus 23:33-43) The Feast of Tabernacles came in the autumn and lasted for seven days. It was a time when the Jews thanked God for the harvest. The Jews also remembered when Moses led them through the wilderness and slept in tents. The Jewish people would make tents out of what they had and live in them during the Feast.

Because the Jewish leaders in Judea wanted to kill Jesus he had remained in Galilee during the six months between Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. The brothers of Jesus had urged Him to go to the Feast in Jerusalem to publicly proclaim His Messiahship. His brothers still had no real faith in Him and wanted to have His claims tested, and if they were true, to have Jesus receive national recognition. Jesus answered them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune."

In this answer to His brothers John records more evidence of Jesus' deity. Jesus shows here that He has divine knowledge in that He knew beforehand the exact time and nature of His death. Jesus did only the will of the Father and it was not His time to die. His death was to be at Passover and not the Feast of the Tabernacles. After the brothers of Jesus left for the Feast Jesus did secretly go but not for the purpose of proclaiming His Messiahship or to become the sacrificial lamb to take away the sin of the world.

It was a curious statement that His brother's time is always opportune. Jesus was saying that their spirit and practices were of the world and they had nothing to fear from the world. Jesus had gained the world's hatred by His witness against sin. Jesus' brothers were not the only ones interested in His attendance at the Feast. Jesus had become a person of national interest and the claim He had been making could not be discarded. The Jewish rulers were watching for his appearance and the multitudes of people were also watching to see Jesus. The people were divided in their opinion of Him. Some saw Jesus as a good man while others said he leads the multitudes astray.

It is this way today that men are compelled to face the claims of Jesus. These claims of Jesus cannot be put aside and must be addressed.

In verse seven the people that Jesus is referring to are the unbelievers in this world. Most of the people today hate Jesus for the same reason that they hated Him when He walked the earth. They also hate His followers the Christians. They hated Jesus because He made them aware of their sins. Natural man loves his sinful nature because his heart is set on the desires of the flesh and the lust for this world. Jesus did not only reveal their

sin but He also provided a solution to their sin problem. He did so by His work on the cross and as people see Him as the problem in truth Jesus is the solution.

Verses 14-36

After the Feast of the Tabernacles had begun Jesus appeared in the temple and began to teach. Jesus astonished the scribes and Pharisees with His teaching and they were asking how He was able to teach the scriptures with such knowledge and authority. Jesus replied to their question by saying, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.” The teachings of Jesus are of divine nature for He came from God His Father. He has come from and has existed in the Kingdom of Heaven. He is the author of the scriptures. Jesus is not teaching second hand lessons but teaching in the first person perspective. His teaching will be accepted by those who are in sympathy with the divine will. Faith is an instrument of the moral rather than the intellectual facilities. Faith is more of spiritual sympathy than external evidence. Those who are eager to do the will of God cannot fail to yield themselves to the Son of God.

The only crime the Scribes and Pharisees have against Jesus is that He healed a lame man on the Sabbath. Jesus defends His conduct by pointing out that the Mosaic Law itself justifies His reputed breach of the Law. The Law says that a boy must be circumcised on the eighth day after birth, even if that day falls on the Sabbath. Therefore it is not a violation for the priest to circumcise on the Sabbath. Jesus points out is it then a violation for a man to be made well on the Sabbath. Jesus then warns the Jews against foolish and superficial judgments.

The multitudes begin to question if Jesus is really the Messiah, they are puzzled that they know of His parents and their home and His early life. The coming of the Messiah was supposed to be a mystery. Then Jesus publicly claims that their belief of His origin is also superficial. Jesus tells them that His origin is from God and from Heaven and He soon will return there. Jesus states that soon He shall go away and they will not be able to find Him. Little did the multitudes understand the words that Jesus was speaking even though they are clear to us today.

People today do not reject Jesus on such trivial grounds or because of superficial reasoning. People know this and they know that about Jesus and have rejected Him because of other conjectured excuses. What did Jesus really do, what did He really say, who can find blame with His life, and what were His claims? Pilate said, “I find no guilt in Him.”

Is it not only “a little while,” that we have opportunity to accept Him. Time is a fleeting thing and quickly is gone and lost opportunity will only bring remorse and regret, when

the hour has past, the day is done, and life has past us by, and we no longer have opportunity to receive and follow Him.

Verses 37-52

On this the last day of the Festival Jesus made His supreme claim, and gave the climax to His teaching about the life that would result from faith in Him. Jesus declared that He fulfilled all the Festival symbolized and His followers would receive all the blessedness and joy that the Festival typified. The Festival of Tabernacles commemorated life in the wilderness of during the time between their freedom of bondage in Egypt and possession of The Promised Land. Each morning in the temple the priest would pour out water bringing to mind the water Moses had brought forth from the rock. On the last day of the feast, the eighth day, this practice was omitted. The priest withheld the pouring out of the water either to suggest Israel had received the blessing when entering The Promised Land, or to indicate the thirst from greater spiritual blessings which the prophets had spoken of had not been realized. Perhaps this is what Jesus saw, a people that were still thirsty in their spirits and distressed. In His love for the people Jesus cried, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink."

In the Old Testament there are many passages that speak of the blessings that the Messiah would bring. Jesus alluded to this practice of the priest by saying that any who had spiritual thirst could come to Him and He would satisfy their spiritual thirst. This is the same message that Jesus had taught the woman at the well in Samaria in John 4:10. "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." When Jesus was speaking to the woman at the well His words "living water" He was speaking about eternal life. In the passage from the Festival His words "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink," refers to the Holy Spirit. Both uses would be correct because when we receive the Holy Spirit He brings eternal life. The Holy Spirit empowers us to do God's work. The Holy Spirit is like a fountain that flows always inside our hearts and our spirits.

Jesus was speaking before His death as the Holy Spirit was not given until after Jesus had been glorified. Like the Father and the Son the Holy Spirit has always existed. The Holy Spirit is God, as the Father and the Son is God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the three persons of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit was present with the Father and the Son when the world was created. (Genesis 1:2) The Holy Spirit has always been working in this world. (Psalms 139:7 2Peter 1:21)

After Jesus had spoken to the people they had differing opinions of who He was. Some were saying that He was "The Prophet or "The Messiah", which in this case meant the same. Others said He could not be the Messiah as He was from Nazareth. They did not realize that He was born in Bethlehem. So in fact the prophecy of Micah 5:2 did point to Jesus.

The Jewish leaders had sent officers to arrest Jesus and they were unable to find fault with Him and returned back to the Jewish Leaders without making the arrest. The crowds were divided but many believed in Jesus. Without finding a solid reason to arrest Him the officers could not oppose so many people. Jesus spoke with so much authority and in a manner they had never heard before and they had a fear of arresting him.

The Jewish leaders were angered with the officers and said only hopeless ignorance could accept the claims of Jesus. The Pharisees spent many years studying the Law of Moses and believed the people to be ignorant and unlearned and willing to believe anything.

Nicodemus, the one who had come to Jesus in the night, declares that the law does not permit them to find guilt with Jesus without hearing His words and knowing what He is doing. Nicodemus made a weak defense and lacks moral courage for Jesus but he does display a growing faith.

Where there is no self-pride of intellect the truth of Jesus and His words find a welcome. People such as this welcome the promises of Jesus. Those who oppose Jesus usually reject Jesus without reason. They seldom listen allowing Him to fully present His claims. They may have a mind full of the knowledge of law and human wisdom but refuse to honestly face His words and works. Nicodemus is facing the light and seeking the truth. Through Nicodemus is of a timid temperament at last he will be a disciple of Jesus. Nicodemus will bring his hundredweight of spices to the tomb to show his devotion to the Lord he really loved.

Key Verses

Leviticus 23:33-43, John 18:38, 2Peter 1:21, Micah 5:2

Chapter 8

Verses 1-11

Jesus had retired to the Mount of Olives and the next day in the morning returned to the Temple to teach. The Pharisees came also but not for the purpose of worshiping God but to entrap Jesus into saying something that they could accuse Him with. The motive of the Pharisees was not a love for God or even a zeal for righteousness. Neither was the motive a passion for purity and holiness and it was not their indignation against sin. Their only desire was to entangle Jesus in some utterance of word that could lead to His arrest, conviction, and death. It is necessary to ask how often we accuse others for sinful acts that we too are guilty of. So many people try to elevate themselves by finding fault with others and bringing them to the forefront.

The Pharisees brought a woman who had committed a sexually immoral act that was forbidden by the seventh commandment of God's Law given to Moses. (Exodus 20:14) The punishment for adultery was death. (Leviticus 20:10 Deuteronomy 22:22) The Pharisees thought they had Jesus caught in not being able to give a correct answer. If Jesus complied with the Law of Moses and said put the woman to death, they would have reported Jesus to the Roman authorities. The Jewish people could not execute people only the Romans had the authority to do that. If Jesus did not tell them to kill the woman then He would not be in obedience to the Law of Moses. Either way the Pharisees believed they had Jesus in a question He could not answer correctly.

Jesus paused by stooping down and writing in the dust. Many teachers of the day did this to draw an illustration of what they were teaching. John did not record what Jesus had written in the dust so for us it is not known. Perhaps Jesus was ashamed and needed to take a moment. He may have been ashamed for the woman who had been caught in this sinful act. Or knowing the hearts of the Pharisees Jesus may have been ashamed for them in their evil motives. It is also possible that Jesus wanted to see if the Pharisees would repeat the question.

The Pharisees persisted in the question they had asked and so Jesus stood up to answer them. Jesus' reply to the Pharisees shows to each His divine wisdom and grace. "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." The first part of the answer is in compliance with the Law of Moses and so the Pharisees cannot say the Jesus was in violation. The second part of His answer deals with the moral issue of the woman's accusers. The Pharisees considered themselves to be righteous above all others. They spent many hours studying the scriptures and were highly educated. They were often seen practicing their righteous behavior for all to observe. The translation of the word used for sin in verse seven speaks not only to the outward man but also to the inward man. The answer Jesus gave lifted the question out of only the legal reality into the moral reality as well. Jesus' answer convicted, condemned, and silenced the Pharisees. If these Pharisees were to be the judge of men and their deeds, if they were to be the executors of justice, then they would have to live in the same purity of God.

The Pharisees then departed from the older to the younger one at a time considering the defeat of their plan against Jesus. It is interesting that they did not take the woman to the proper authorities for the crime she had committed. The Pharisees left the woman behind, which shows that their true concern was not for justice for violating the Law of Moses but the entrapment of Jesus.

Jesus' reply to the woman, "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more," implies that He could pass sentence upon her, that He could have condemned. Jesus did not condemn neither did He pardon her of guilt. Jesus warned her to go and sin no more. Jesus' words were full of encouragement and we must assume the woman went away to

a new and better live. His followers also learned a valuable lesson, “Judge not, that you not be judged.”

Verses 12-20

There is some argument as to the proper placement of the verses 1-11 in this book of the Gospel of John. Some early transcripts of the manuscript do not include verses 1-11 while others do. The problem is that in verses 12-20 follow Jesus’ teaching at the Festival of Tabernacles, which is where we find Him here. If verses 1-11 are misplaced verses 12-20 follow verse 52 from chapter 7.

In John 1:4-9 John describes Jesus as the light that gives life to everybody. Here Jesus describes Himself as the Light of the World. Jesus begins His sentence with “I am”. “I AM” is a special title that God gave Himself in Exodus 3:14.

During the Festival of Tabernacles the Temple and the city of Jerusalem was illuminated in remembrance of the cloud of glory God used to guide the Israelites in the wilderness. Here Jesus refers Himself as that light by telling the people that He is the light of the world. Jesus had already compared Himself to the rock from which the water flowed from and now He was comparing Himself to the Pillar of Fire. (Exodus 13:21) Jesus is claiming that He is able to guide and give light to all who follow Him. Jesus, as the Light of the World does more than just guide it actually makes the darkness disappear. Those who follow Jesus must continue with Him all the time. Walking with Jesus is a daily walk of learning and obedience.

The Pharisees here make another vain attempt to question the words and claim of Jesus. In a Jewish court of law if two testify then the testimony of two is considered as true. Jesus did not have another witness that the Pharisees could see and made a statement against Him. “You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true.” Jesus answers that His Father testifies of Him by the written word and by the testimony of His works which He had performed. The Pharisees replied, “Where is your Father?” The Pharisees did not have a full knowledge of Jesus and they probably did not really want to know. The Pharisees were so involved in their own legalistic form of religion that it was easier to remain in their self-centered beliefs that to submit to One who had greater power and authority.

Jesus was speaking in the treasury of the Temple, a public place, and though the Pharisees wanted to size Him they were not able, as God controls the events of this world and the hour had not come yet.

Verses 21-30

The Jews are God’s chosen people and in the past God had spoken to them through the prophets like Moses and King David. Now God had sent His Son and the Jewish leaders did not recognize Him. Jesus had come from Heaven and would return to Heaven. Jesus

was not from this world but from the Kingdom of Heaven. But because the Jewish leaders did not believe in Him they could not understand the things He was saying. They could only see things in the terms of the world and were unwilling to relate the words of Jesus in spiritual terms. Jesus said they were of the world. The Gospel of John in its use of the word world means everybody and everything that opposes God. Some thought Jesus intended to kill himself but Jesus was referring to where He was returning to after His resurrection. But they would not be able to follow Him because they did not believe Him. Therefore they would die in their sins because of their lack of belief and God would not forgive them.

Jesus testifies that He is not here on His own initiative but here to do the will of the Father. That He speaks and does only that which the Father tells Him to do. That Jesus does only that which is pleasing to the Father. Jesus also claimed that to know Him is to know the Father. In spite of the Jewish leaders rejection of Jesus many of the people believed in Him.

Verses 31-59

Jesus applies a test to the nominal believers which will show how real their faith is. "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." A discipleship with Christ is not just a passing emotion, no empty profession, but a patient determined walk in faith, study, and practice of the teachings of Jesus. This walk with Him will result in a moral freedom that cannot be obtained any other way.

The people were offended at the implication that they were slaves. Even though the Jewish people were under the domination of the Romans, their consciousness of descent from Abraham, their hope for a national future in the fulfillment of the promises, their present enjoyment of social and personal freedom, made them offended at the implication of servitude. Jesus points out that yielding to sin results to a moral slavery. If they would only have faith in Him as the Son of God they would be secure in freedom from sin and become the children of God. In spite of the physical facts however they may be they lacked a real moral relationship to Abraham, as was shown by their desire to kill Him.

If they were true Children of God, they would love and believe in Him as the Son of God. Because of their hatred of Him and an unwillingness to appreciate His message they show an actual moral relationship with the Devil.

Jesus restates that faith and unbelief is less concerned with the mind than with the heart. Faith requires a moral state and sympathy. "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

Then Jesus makes a promise along with a startling claim. “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” Jesus was speaking of blessedness in this present life and after the resurrection of the body and eternal life would reach its fullness. The people responded still without understanding and said that Abraham died, and also the prophets died, and as all will die. Jesus then claims that He has always been and always will be, and concludes with this statement, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”

The people then took up stones to cast Him out as a blasphemer and Jesus left them.

Key Verses

Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 20:10, Deuteronomy 22:22, Exodus 3:14, Exodus 13:21

Chapter 9

Verses 1-12

Jesus and His disciples were walking near the Pool of Siloam when they saw a man who had been blind since birth. His disciples seeing the man asked Jesus, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?” The disciples asking this question of Jesus was most likely in reverence to what the Jewish had been taught. Sin entering into the world was the cause of much affliction towards mankind because of the curse that sin had placed on God’s creation. There are scriptures that say the iniquity of fathers and mothers will be passed on to their children. (Exodus 20:5 Psalms 109:14) Sinful behavior can cause physical blindness but the greater affliction is that unrighteousness causes spiritual blindness. The greatest problem for man is that sin comes between him and God breaking the harmony that once was enjoyed between man and God.

Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents.” In life good people suffer as well as bad and sometimes it seems as the bad go without punishment. God is a just God and all will be judged according to their deeds in the flesh. (2 Corinthians 5:10) Jesus went on to explain that it was not sin in the blind man’s life but that, “it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.” When we encounter human suffering it is not for us to speculate if the suffering of one is deserved but to us this circumstance as an opportunity to minister to the afflicted. It is not for us to question who has sinned but a time to manifest God’s grace through us. We must follow the words of Jesus, “We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.” The message that Jesus is giving us is that our time is short and there is a task for

each hour. If we neglect our call to service, the opportunities we have to serve Him will be lost forever, the night will come and our work will not be complete.

Jesus said, "While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." This claim of Jesus is a promise. As the blind man sat there along the side of the road hearing this conversation it must have caught his attention and brought hope into his heart. The blind man to Jesus was also a picture of the world in its moral poverty and spiritual blindness. The claim of Jesus' word was that He was able to give light and vision to all who would trust Him. It was more than His teaching that is the source of blessing but His divine Person. Jesus was not just a great prophet He was the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Savior.

Jesus forms clay and places it on the man's eyes and tells him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. John explains that the Pool of Siloam means sent. The continuous claim of Jesus is that He was sent from God and that He alone could heal the blind man. Each day of the Feast of Tabernacles a libation had been brought from that pool to suggest the gifts of God to His people. Jesus is showing that as the waters of Siloam will wash away the clay from the eyes of the blind man, so He, the true Siloam, the One sent from God will take away his physical blindness and also restore spiritual sight to the world. The blind man in faith and hope obeys the command of Jesus and goes to the pool and washed coming away with his sight.

Verses 13-14

The Pharisees again were faced with a dilemma caused by Jesus. How could this man who had been blind from birth now be able to see? By what power and authority could this man from Galilee heal a blind man? The Pharisees arguments were much like the ones that people try to use today filled with rationalities and half-truths. The Pharisees argued that miracle could not have happened because it was done on the Sabbath. God cannot heal a man on the Sabbath because that would have been work and therefore would have broken the law of rest. For the Pharisees to say that the Sabbath law had been broken was merely their interpretation of the law. Therefore they were opposing a theory to a fact on the ground of a speculation and denying a reality. The same argument is heard today by stating scientific axioms founded in rationalizations the skeptics explain away the supernatural as nonexistent. The miracles of Jesus then by their reasoning are fables; He was not born of a virgin, never opened the eyes of the blind, and did not rise from the dead.

However, the Pharisees had a dilemma, there stood the man, his sight was perfect and he had been born blind. The Pharisees must either deny the facts or admit the divine nature of Jesus which the facts proved. The Pharisees could not disprove that the man had been healed of his blindness but they did deny that Jesus was good. This was a foolish position the Pharisees took as you cannot say that Jesus is not good and deny His miracles.

The Pharisees decided to verify that the man had been born blind and called his parents in to see them. The parents testified that he had been blind since birth but they were afraid to say anything more. The Pharisees had a rule that if anyone testified on behalf of Jesus they would be put out of the synagogue. The blind man's parents told the Pharisees that he was of age and could speak for himself.

The Pharisees tried to escape by asking the man again to tell them the story of his healing. Perhaps they could trip him up or find a falsehood in his story. The man seeing their dilemma asks if their eagerness for more information about Jesus was because they too wanted to become disciples of Jesus. The Pharisees declare they are disciples of Moses but they did not know who Jesus was.

The Pharisees have fallen to the position of the agnostic. This is a cowardly position due to the lack of moral courage and an unwillingness to face the facts. This position never is deserving of respect and the man who was blind ridicules them with the contempt they deserve. He states his simple unanswerable argument that an impostor, a deceiver, a sinner, could even have done the work that Jesus had done. The man finished his testimony by saying, "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing." With this statement the Pharisees excommunicated the man for the synagogue.

Verses 35-41

The Pharisees were the educated men of the day and had made a life of studying the Law of Moses. Yet the man refused to say anything against Jesus in his testimony and as a result they had put him out of the synagogue. We will often find this to be true today as our relationship with Jesus grows the people that we know who are caught up in their own intellect will reject us and the truth of Jesus. We may lose friends and family because of our faith and belief in Jesus; we may face ridicule and be cast out of the crowd. Jesus is a faithful friend and He will always help and comfort us, no one can separate us from the love of Jesus.

The blind man experienced the growth of faith in Jesus as his relationship with Him grew. At first Jesus was a man called by the name of Jesus, then he believed Him to be a prophet, and finally he believed Him to be the Son of God. In contrast to this man's faith stand the Pharisees. They had greater privilege and knowledge of the scriptures. The Pharisees should have been the first to believe. The Pharisees boasted wisdom and insight was the very cause of their sin. So often it happens that our own self pride blinds our eyes to the truth. As Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." It is true that those who are poor in spirit, those who are humble and stand on no wisdom of their own, will be the first to see the claims of Jesus. (Matthew 5:3) What we believe about Jesus will affect the judgment that we will receive. If we accept Jesus for who He is then we will escape condemnation but if we reject Jesus then we have already judged ourselves. The

problem for many people is they think they know all about God and have false conceptions of what they think God should be. Because of this they cannot accept the truth of Jesus and are blinded by their false beliefs. This was the problem for the Pharisees that they could not accept the truth of Jesus because He did not fit into what they believed. Therefore they walked in the darkness of their own thoughts and failed to see that Jesus was the light of the world.

Key Verses

Exodus 20:5, Psalm 109:14, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Matthew 5:3

Chapter 10

Verses 1-10

In chapter nine the Pharisees had excommunicated the blind man who had been healed by Jesus. Chapter 10 is a continuation of that discourse as a result of the healed blind man's excommunication and the mistreatment of the Pharisees towards that man. Here in the opening of this chapter we see a rebuke of the Pharisees for their treatment of the man to whom Jesus had given sight. It is also an encouragement to the healed man in his faith and trust in Jesus. This discourse is also a description of the loving, saving ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Shepherding was a part of life in Judea and the people were familiar with the sheepfold. A sheepfold was a pen often constructed out of rocks or limbs and sometimes it was a cave. In some cases the sheepfold stood in front of the house in which the shepherd lived and the entrance was also the entrance to the house. Some sheepfolds were partially roofed while others were completely in the open. Sometimes a gate keeper was employed at night to watch the sheepfold.

Jesus said that the one who enters the sheepfold by climbing in some other way other than the door is a thief and a robber. They have come only to steal, kill, and destroy. The Pharisees by excommunicating the man who had been born blind are an example of self-assumed authority. They were false rulers where as Jesus was the Messiah. God's true people were dissatisfied with the Pharisees and like the man who had been born blind were ready to follow Jesus. The Pharisees had not secured their power by entering the door to the sheepfold but had climbed in by another way. Their power was obtained by illegitimate means. Their deceit and hypocrisy had made them like robbers in their violence and audacity. Jesus had come into the world on a divine mission in the appointed office as the Messiah. Jesus was the true shepherd. John the Baptist and other prophets were like the gatekeeper of the fold and had given Him access to the flocks. As the sheep

recognize the voice of the shepherd, like the man Jesus had healed those who truly loved God, would gladly accept Jesus as the Messiah.

A sheepfold often did not have a door. During the night the shepherd would lay across the entrance to the sheepfold so that none of the sheep could leave without the shepherd knowing it. No beast or man could enter into the sheepfold without the shepherd knowing of the danger.

Jesus describes Himself as the door for the sheep to enter into the sheep fold. Jesus is the way to divine communion and fellowship and there is no other way to enter in legitimately except through Him. All others who make such claims are false Messiahs and they come only to steal, kill, and destroy. Those who come to God through Jesus will have life and have it abundantly. They will have true liberty satisfaction, and salvation. Jesus is the only way to come into the Kingdom of God and you enter through faith in Him. This is in contrast to the false teachers, the Pharisees, whose results are disastrous. The false teachers of this world only bring death but Jesus brings life.

Verses 11-18

Jesus now changes His metaphor to that of the Good Shepherd. Jesus added to the responsibility of a good shepherd that He as the Good shepherd would lay down His life for His sheep. Jesus would give guidance, protection, and sustenance for His sheep even at the cost of His life. This is in contrast to the poor shepherds described by Isaiah 56:9-12. "All you beasts of the field, All you beasts in the forest, Come to eat. His watchmen are blind, All of them know nothing. All of them are mute dogs unable to bark, Dreamers lying down, who love to slumber; And the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied. And they are shepherds who have no understanding; They have all turned to their own way, Each one to his unjust gain, to the last one. "Come," they say, "let us get wine, and let us drink heavily of strong drink; And tomorrow will be like today, only more so."

Jesus also draws a contrast between the Good Shepherd and the day laborer who is only interested in his wages. The day laborer does not have the pride of possession when danger comes to the sheep he will flee for his own safety. The day laborer is more interested in saving his own skin and will leave the sheep to the wolves who will scatter the flock as he kills some of the sheep. The day laborer does not have a personal concern for the sheep.

Jesus as the Good Shepherd is not only concerned about His sheep; He knows them individually and personally. He knows them and they know Him, just as He is known by the Father and the Good Shepherd knows the Father intimately.

Jesus had other sheep than the Jewish people that were in other sheepfolds. Whereas Judaism was exclusive, Christianity was inclusive. Jesus came first to save the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24), but in the end the gospel message would reach out to the Gentiles

and to the ends of the earth. All nations would be gathered into one sheepfold of faith under the guidance of the one Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ Himself.

In reference to His death and resurrection Jesus indicated that the Father loved and approved of Him because of His obedience in laying down His life. His sacrificial death was of His own voluntary choice. Jesus had the power to lay down His life willingly for others, and through this power His life would be taken up again. Jesus would be obedient to the Father and operate in the Father's power that was shared with Him.

Verses 19-21

At the conclusion of this discourse there was a division amongst the Jewish people. Some believed Jesus to be demon possessed while others thought Him to be mad or insane. Others believed Him because of the healing of the blind man. C.S. Lewis, a 20th century writer, said that we can believe only one of three things about Jesus. Jesus said that he was God's Son. If this was not true, then Jesus was either mad or wicked. A mad person believes things that are not true. A wicked person lies about something very important in order to deceive people on purpose. So if Jesus was not mad or wicked, he was telling the truth. He was God's Son. Jesus' audience had to make a decision about him, too. Some people in the audience said that he was mad or wicked. But other people recognized the truth about him. They believed him because of the miracle that they had seen. Only God's power could cure a man who was born blind.

Verses 22:42

Two months have passed since the healing of the blind man and it is now December. Jesus has been in Galilee for this time and has returned to Jerusalem for another national festival called Hanukkah. At this festival the Jew remember the events of two hundred year prior when a foreign King named Antiochus Epiphanes has defeated the Jews. King Antiochus Epiphanes wanted to destroy the Jewish religion and made the Jews leave the temple. The King and his people used the temple to worship their false Gods. In an act of defiance against the Jews they sacrificed a pig in the temple which for the Jews is an unclean animal. This act infuriated the Jews and one of their leaders Judas Maccabeus fought against King Antiochus Epiphanes and defeated him. The Jews then made the temple clean once again and offered proper sacrifices to God. At Hanukkah the Jews remembered when Judas Maccabeus defeated the foreign King.

Jesus is waking in the eastern cloister of the temple know as Solomon's porch, probably seeking shelter from the cold and rain of December. The Pharisees and seen him and gather around him to demand an answer as to whether He is the Messiah or not. This is another attempt to get Jesus to say something that they can arrest Him for. The Pharisees said to Jesus, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." This is a difficult question for Jesus, as He is the Messiah that the prophets have spoken about, but He is not the Messiah that they are willing to accept.

The Jews were looking for a Messiah that would free them from the control of the Romans. One who would bring peace to Israel and establish an everlasting government. A Messiah that would judge all nations and no longer would there be wars. They were looking for the Messiah that the prophet Isaiah had spoken of. (Isaiah 9:6 Isaiah 2:4) "Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me."

Jesus replies with matchless wisdom. He states that His signs are of divine power and are proof of His claims. The unbelief of the Pharisees is not from a lack of evidence but from the imperfection of their moral disposition. If they were understanding of Him and His Father they would then believe in Him. He then says they do not believe Him because they are not His sheep. Jesus goes on to make this statement, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. "I and the Father are one." Jesus further confirms the relationship between Him and the Father. This unity between Jesus and the Father in a oneness of will and power and it also indicates a unity of being.

The Pharisees picked up stones to stone Him for His claims of deity, as this was blasphemy. They may have accepted Jesus as the Messiah if He had not claimed deity. The Jews were not looking for a divine Messiah. It was because Jesus claimed to be one with God that the Pharisees hated Him, rejected Him, and eventually crucified Him. Jesus asks for which good work they were about to stone Him for and the Pharisees answered, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

Jesus does not deny His claim to deity but in His answer He frees himself of their charge. He quotes a scripture from Psalms 82:6, "I said, "You are gods, And all of you are sons of the Most High." Jesus state that if the judges, who represented Jehovah in their appointed office, could be called "gods," it could not be blasphemy for Him, who is the revelation of God, to call himself "the Son of God." His divine work of mercy and love are proof of His oneness with God. Jesus restates that if they will not believe His words then they should believe His signs.

While the attempt to stone Jesus by the Pharisees for now has been abandoned, still they plan as to how they can arrest Him. During this time Jesus escapes and retreats to east of the Jordan River. Here many who in the testimony of John the Baptist believed in Jesus. Their faith in Jesus is a striking contrast to the unbelief of the Jews in Jerusalem.

The breach between the Pharisees and Jesus was not complete. Jesus' claims to be the Christ, not only the Messiah, but the Son of God, was made with complete clearness and

defended by Jesus on the grounds of His signs. To bring this testimony to the forefront was the first purpose of the writer of this Gospel. The Pharisees no doubt understood Him to assert His essential and absolute oneness with God, and Jesus never argued that they were wrong in this assumption.

In this chapter Jesus makes some striking claims of life which issues from faith in Him. There are six praises from the opening of this chapter which set forth the blessedness of Life through Jesus.

The first two are found in verses 1-6. They are a statement of the faith of a believer in Jesus and the personal interest He has in a follower of His. "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. "When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice." Verse 27, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them," The second two are in verses 7-10 and speak of the faithfulness of the believer and the gracious gift of Christ. "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Verses 27-28, "and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them," the last two are verses 11-18 and relate to the safety of the believer and the protecting power of Jesus Christ. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. "He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. "He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." Verse 28, "and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand."

Throughout the Gospel of John eternal life is a present possession for the believer. Its main feature is not an eternity in time but blessedness and heavenliness of character. It is the abundant life which Christ gives to all who put their trust in Him.

Key Verses

Isaiah 56:9-12, Matthew 15:24, Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 2:4, Psalms 82:6

Chapter 11

Verses 1-6

Mary, Martha, and their Brother Lazarus were close friends to Jesus. Jesus had a deep affection towards them and they loved Jesus and responded to Him. The sisters had the grace of hospitality in their hearts. We read in the Gospel of Luke, (Luke 10:38-42) the story of Mary and Martha. They befriended Jesus and invited Him into their home. Martha was busy about preparing the meal that they would share together and became anxious that her sister Mary had sat at the feet of Jesus listening to His words. Martha complained to Jesus but He rebuked her saying that Mary was paying attention to the more important thing. Mary and Martha live in the small town of Bethany which is just east of Jerusalem on the southeast slope of the Mount of Olives.

Jesus was still east of the Jordan River when word came to Him from Mary and Martha that their brother Lazarus was sick. Having a friendship with Jesus does not protect us from human sorrows but it does give us the assurance of His sympathy and relief. When Jesus heard this news of Lazarus' sickness he responded, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it." By His response Jesus did not mean to say that Lazarus would not die or that the purpose of Lazarus' sickness was for the working of a miracle of resurrection. What Jesus was saying is that the result of the sickness would not be the continued victory of death, but the manifested glory of God, in the triumph of resurrection and life. The purposes of God are beyond our relationships and suffering in this world is a mystery to us but for those of us who place their faith in Jesus, the result of our pain and suffering will be of some eternal good, some manifestation of "the glory of God."

There is another lesson that is hard for us to understand. When we petition the Lord we expect an immediate response or answer. Our waiting can be a test to our faith that God does answer our prayers. We of finite minds cannot know the correct timing of events in life but God does. It is better for us to wait on the Lord to act and trust Him for the right answer to our prayers. After hearing the news of Lazarus Jesus remained two more days east of the Jordan ministering there. Jesus was not waiting there for Lazarus to die as he was already dead and buried before the message of his illness had reached Jesus.

Neither had Mary and Martha asked Jesus to come. They knew the dangers for Jesus to return to Judea where the Pharisees were planning to kill Him. Mary and Martha did not send a second message once their brother Lazarus had died. For them it was enough that Jesus knew of their troubles. They certainly desired for Jesus to come but they left everything to His decision and were confident of His love.

Verses 7-16

With a possibility that His return to Judea would result in the sacrifice in His life, after the two days Jesus told His disciples that they should return to Judea. The disciples warned Jesus that the Pharisees had tried to stone Him and that they wanted even now to kill Him. Jesus gave an answer that they did not fully understand at this time. "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. "But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

Jesus is asserting here that He has a duty to perform the will of the Father. If we walk in the light of the day we are able to see the stumbling blocks in our path. Jesus is the light of the world and if we follow Him He will direct our path to accomplish the good work He is doing through us. But if we walk in the darkness of this world we will not be able to see the stumbling blocks in the path before us. When we step out of the will of the Father we are walking on ground that may have hidden pitfalls that will cause us to stumble.

Jesus then tells His disciples that their friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. This further confused the disciples as they thought Jesus meant literal sleep. They felt that Lazarus would recover without Him. Jesus then plainly told them that Lazarus was dead. Jesus also said that He was glad that He was not there when Lazarus died so that now He could demonstrate the power of God by raising him from the grave. Their witness of this would be a great aid in their belief in Him. It would not be much longer before Jesus too would be dead but by seeing Him raise Lazarus from the dead they would also believe He could raise from the dead also.

In verse sixteen Thomas showed more courage than he is often given credit for. Thomas is better known as doubting Thomas but here he is saying that all of them should go to Judea with Jesus and die with Him.

Verses 17-27

When Jesus was near to Bethany of Judea Lazarus had been in the grave four days. Bethany was one days travel to where Jesus was east of the Jordan and Jesus remained there two more days after hearing of the illness of Lazarus. Then Jesus and His disciples traveled one day to Bethany which means that Lazarus had died the day that Jesus had received the news about him.

When Martha heard He was coming, true to her nature, as we read in Luke 10:38-42, Martha was the first to act. While Mary sat in the house Martha went out to meet Jesus. Martha greeted Jesus with these words, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." This was not a rebuke towards Jesus for not coming immediately but word of regret that Jesus had not been there during Lazarus' sickness in order to prevent him from dying. Martha then added the following, "Even now I know that whatever You ask of

God, God will give You.” This should be seen as a request made in complete faith in Jesus as the Messiah. This statement also implied that Jesus might secure the return of her brother to life. Although Martha’s faith is not perfect as the implication suggested that Jesus, as a man, might make a request to God. This overlooked the truth that Jesus operated in the spiritual realm and not in the physical realm only.

Jesus answered, “Your brother will rise again.” This promise from Jesus did not comfort Martha as seen by her answer, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Martha sees Jesus’ answer as a general resurrection and remote from the present day. Martha was probably thinking of the teaching found in Daniel 12:2-3 where those who sleep in the dust will rise again to an everlasting Life. The Prophet Isaiah also spoke of the New Heaven and the New Earth where God’s People would spend eternity together. (Isaiah 65:17-25) Her friends from Jerusalem about a mile away had come out to comfort her and Mary in this time of loss. They too must have been speaking of those days of resurrection from the scriptures of Daniel and Isaiah in an effort to comfort Martha and Mary.

Words of consolation so often fail to comfort the loss of a loved one in this world. The heart of man craves for something of comfort in the present and promises of distant reunions offer little peace to a hurting heart. That peace can be found in the person of Jesus Christ and for those whose perspective is born of the hope found in the promises of Jesus. The essential message of this entire chapter is personified in the promise of Jesus. “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” Jesus does not need to ask that Lazarus’ life be restored. Jesus does not bid Martha to wait to some future day, as Jesus Himself is the source of life giving power. Our comfort is given to us by our relationship to a present, divine Lord. Our spiritual relationship with God through Jesus Christ is our basis and pledge of a bodily resurrection and an eternal reunion with our Christian family. Physical death is but an incident in the course of an endless spiritual life. Those who accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior have a spiritual restoration through Jesus with God. While our bodies are perishable and die Jesus will resurrect our bodies as imperishable. (1 Corinthians 15:42)

Is Martha able to believe such a marvelous revelation? Her answer shows the strength of her faith and the clearness of her spiritual perspective. All of Martha’s hope is centered on Jesus. “Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world.”

Verses 28-37

The Writer of this Gospel, John, does not say but it is implied that Jesus called for Mary to come out where He was. When Mary receives the word that Jesus is calling for her she quickly leaves her home and goes out to where Jesus is. The friends who had come from

Jerusalem who were in the house to comfort Mary supposed that she was going to the tomb to further weep for her brother and followed her. When she arrived to the place Jesus was Mary fell at His feet and repeated what her sister Martha had said. "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." Mary makes no further request of Jesus but when Jesus saw her and the friends who had come with her weeping in sorrow He was troubled in His spirit. Jesus then asked to be shown the place of burial and then He wept.

Jesus had offered words of hope in the promise that Martha's brother would rise again but now to Mary Jesus offered His sympathy. Even though Jesus knew that the life of Lazarus was soon to be restored, and joy to fill the hearts of those who mourned, the thought of the suffering that Lazarus had endured, and of the present anguish of Mary and Martha, Jesus expressed in tears the sympathy of His loving soul.

In our own time of sorrow for the loss of a loved one, as we fall at the feet of our Lord and Savior, we are in need of the hope we have through Him and the comfort of His caring heart. Even as we believe in the future resurrection which will reunite us with our loved one, we may be in less of the need for instruction that was given to Martha than of the tender personal sympathy that was given to Mary by our Lord Jesus.

Verses 38-44

When Jesus, Mary and Martha, and the many Jewish people who had come with Mary arrived at the tomb Jesus was still deeply troubled. Jesus summoned the people to remove the stone covering the entrance to the tomb. Martha protested because Lazarus had been dead for four days and decomposition had already started. This would cause a stench to come out of the tomb and Martha was worried about that. The Jewish people believed that the spirit of the deceased hovered above the body for three days. Then when the body began to decompose the spirit would depart. Because of this there could be no doubt that Lazarus who had been in the tomb four days was dead. Jesus had resurrected others but known had been dead four days. (Matthew 9:18-26 Mark 5:42-43 Luke 7:11-15 Luke 8:40-56) Jesus reminded Martha of what He had said at an earlier date. If she would but believe she would see the glory of God. They were still not expecting to see a resurrection.

Once the stone was moved Jesus offered a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father for Him hearing His request. Jesus did not offer this prayer for His sake because He knew that the Father always heard Him. The prayer was for those who were witnessing the events about to happen. Coming right after Jesus' prayer to the Father no one could deny that it was the power of God that brought Lazarus back to life. Then in a loud voice Jesus called out to Lazarus and commanded him to come out, which he did still in his grave wrappings.

There are three things to note here about this sign of Jesus. First it was an actual resurrection, one that could not be explained away as a case of mental healing, Lazarus had been dead four days. Second there was no questioning what had happened as all there had witnessed the event. Even those who were hostile towards Jesus would have to admit that Lazarus had been resurrected. Thirdly it is a declaration by our Lord as no other sign to be given with the purpose of producing faith. Could a careful reading of this testimony from the Gospel of John lead to any other conviction than Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God? We must also rejoice in the promise of the deeper meaning which it gives to faith, a life which robs death of its sting and the grave of its victory.

Verses 45-57

As usual this sign caused a division among the Jewish people. Some believed in Jesus, they were the ones who came with Mary from the house to meet Jesus. They saw what God had done through Jesus in raising Lazarus from the grave. Others did not believe and they went right away to the Pharisees to report what had happened. They could not deny the sign that Jesus had performed. What they did not believe is the claim that Jesus had been sent from God and He acted in the power of God.

The result of the unbelieving testimonies was the deepening hatred in the hearts of the rulers. The Pharisees and the chief priest who were Sadducees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the ruling body of the Jews. The purpose of their meeting was to decide what to do about Jesus. Jesus was performing so many signs and was convincing so many people that the Sanhedrin was worried that much of the Jewish population would follow Jesus.

This presented two problems for the Sanhedrin. If what Jesus taught about God and His relationship to God was right, then they were wrong. Their whole system of Jewish government could collapse with the people turning to Jesus. Also if the people believed in Jesus and the messianic expectations ran to high, there might be a disturbance. Such a disturbance could bring the Roman authorities in to intervene. At present the Romans allowed them free rein in matters of their religion unless trouble broke out. If the Romans moved in to quell any trouble amongst the people the Sanhedrin could lose their privileged position. At the bottom line of either argument self-interest was evident.

Caiaphas, the high priest, spoke out in an unconscious prophecy. "You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." Caiaphas' meaning in this statement was that it would be better to murder Jesus than to allow their place and nation to be in danger from the Romans. His motive in saying this was selfish and his council diabolical. Caiaphas' words contained meaning which he never dreamed of.

It is true that Jesus was to die for the people; He was to be the sacrifice for the sin of the world. John the Baptist had proclaimed Jesus to be the Holy Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus was not only to be sacrificed for the Jewish nation but for all the nations of the world. The result of Jesus' death would be the formation of a new nation, the church, the gathering of the Children of God from all the nations. Caiaphas' prophecy is being fulfilled but not according to the thoughts of Caiaphas. As a result of the death of Jesus the very state Caiaphas wished to save was destroyed by the Romans. "So from that day on they planned together to kill Him."

Jesus withdrew to the safety of Ephraim where He and His disciples remained until the Passover season.

Key Verses

Luke 10:38-42, Daniel 12:2-3, Isaiah 65:17-25, 1 Corinthians 15:42, Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:42-43, Luke 7:11-15, Luke 8:40-56

Chapter 12

Verses 1-11

Jesus remained in Ephraim until time for the Passover. The Jewish people in Jerusalem were interested in whether Jesus would attend the Passover Feast. The Jewish leadership had come to the decision that Jesus must die and had given instruction that if sighted it must be reported to them. The people were wondering then if Jesus would dare come to the Passover Feast in Jerusalem were surly He would be arrested and killed.

Six days before the Passover Jesus returned to Bethany to the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. Mary is presented to us in three memorable accounts in which each one of them she is at the feet of Jesus. In the first account she is seated at His feet listening to His word. In the second account she has fallen at His feet seeking sympathy for the death of her brother Lazarus. In this final account of Mary she is at the feet of Jesus anointing His feet to express her devoted love.

All four Gospels give an account of the anointing of Jesus' feet with expensive ointment by a woman. (Mat 26:6-13 Mark 14:3-9 Luke 7:36-50) There are differing accounts of this story between the Gospels as to where and when this event happened. Matthew and Mark record the event in Bethany and Luke places it at the home of Simon the Leper. It is implied in John as the home of Mary and Martha in Bethany as it was Martha who prepared the meal and Lazarus was said to be reclining at the table with Jesus. Matthew and Mark also say the anointing was on the head of Jesus as though to anoint a king. John and Luke say the anointing was on the feet of Jesus. Only in John is the woman who anointed Jesus was identified as Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

The way that Martha expresses her love and respect for Jesus is in the preparation of the meal. Mary is at the feet of Jesus and pours a precious flask of perfume upon the feet of Jesus. The anointing of Jesus' feet is similar to a servant washing the feet of a guest. Mary also wiped away the excess perfume with her hair, showing further humility. Jewish women of good reputation did not allow their hair to hang loose. This was a display of her devotion to the Christ and her humility before Him that she would anoint the humblest part of His body, the feet, and wipe them with the most glorious part of her body, her hair.

No all present at the meal saw the actions of Mary as a devotion to the Lord and Savior. Judas Iscariot protested the action with this account recorded by John, "But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?" Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it." The greed and hypocrisy of Judas stand out against the devotion of Mary. Often people refuse to spend money on evangelistic and missionary work on the argument that the money is better spent on charity. Of course we have a responsibility to the poor of this world but Jesus rebuked Judas. "Therefore Jesus said, "Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. "For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me." (Deu 15:11) True gifts to the poor are given in the name of Jesus, for the sake of Jesus, and to win souls to Jesus. Social service apart from Christianity may spend the treasure of Mary according to the direction of Judas.

News of Jesus in Bethany reached Jerusalem and great crowds of people came to see Jesus. They came to see the One who raised Lazarus from the dead. The chief priests were Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection. Lazarus being alive was very embarrassing to them. The decision was then made that not only Jesus would have to be put to death but also Lazarus. The presence of Lazarus would lend credence to the power of Jesus and therefore increased His popularity. Already many of the Jewish people were expressing belief in Him because of Lazarus as proof of His power.

Verses 12-19

On the next day, after Jesus' meal at the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, Jesus enters the Holy City of Jerusalem in which a large crowd had turned out to greet Him. John in his Gospel had produced many witnesses to the Messiahship of Jesus but none more picturesque than the multitudes that pay their homage to Jesus as He enters the holy city. Many features of this scene as reported by the other Gospels are omitted but John's account gives more clearly the testimony of the festal throng to their belief in the person of Jesus, the predicted Messiah. The people show their faith in symbol and song by waving palm branches. The emblems of beauty and triumph and joy as they cry "Hosanna: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." This was a usage of a Psalm which all the Jews regarded as a prophecy of the coming Messiah. (Psalms

118:26) Jesus fulfills to minute detail the prophecy relating to the coming Messiah, as He enters the city riding upon a donkey. (Zechariah 9:9) This was the final and most open offer of Himself to the nation as their King.

His mother and brethren had impatiently waited for this hour to come, His royal manifestation to the nation of Israel. This grand reception by the Jewish people would soon be followed by another hour that Jesus knew was coming, the hour of His rejection and death and the hour of His resurrection and exaltation.

John closes this scene on a point about the faith of the Jewish people. John states that their belief was in large part because of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. John also notes the rising popularity of Jesus upsets His enemies, the rulers, all the more. Because of this soon the council of Caiaphas will meet again and plan the death of Jesus.

Verses 20-36

Of all the memorable events of the Passion Week only one is chosen by John. It is recorded by no other Gospel writer but it is directly in accordance with the purpose of John's Gospel. Certain Greeks had requested an interview with Jesus. These could have been God Fearing believers in God, or they could have been proselytes who had been converted to the Jewish faith. It is also possible that they were Gentiles who were in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover and were attracted to Jesus. Being called Greeks simply meant that they were not Jews.

Why they came to Phillip with their request to interview Jesus is not clear. Phillip is a Greek name and he was from Bethsaida which is a rather Gentile city outside of Galilee. Phillip went and sought the help of Andrew. It is recorded that Andrew was in the habit of introducing people to Jesus. Andrew too is a Greek name. Andrew and Phillip went together with the request of the Greeks.

Their request following the devotion of Mary, and the Hosannas of the multitudes, is proof of the love and faith and interest aroused by the public ministry of Jesus. There is no indication that Jesus addressed the Greeks who had wanted to see Him. When Jesus began to speak it was in general terms probably addressed to Phillip and Andrew along with the Greeks who had come with them and all others within earshot. In Jesus' reply He emphasizes the supreme character of the hour which had now come.

Jesus responded with this statement, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." It is in Jesus' death that He is to be revealed as the Savior of the world. The Greeks did not need to hear His words or see His signs; His death was what they needed to witness. His cross would be the divine power which would draw the multitudes of the Gentile world unto Him.

Jesus uses a grain of wheat to illustrate the need for His death on the cross. A grain of wheat must be buried in the ground and its outer covering must decay. It must perish as a grain before it can produce a multitude of grains like itself. Jesus applies this principle to Him, this great law of life through death, of service and influence through self-sacrifice, and states that if He sought selfishly to avoid the cross; He would forfeit the Father's purpose and will for His life here in the world. By yielding His life Jesus would secure and bestow blessings that are eternal. This same law applies to the disciples of Jesus.

In contrast to the Greek ideal of self-gratification the followers of Jesus must walk a path of self-denial, not first for the sake of others, but for the sake of Jesus Christ. The result will be an abundant life, an abiding fellowship with Jesus, and the divine approval of the Father.

Turning from the crisis that confronts the believer in a willingness to submit to death for Christ, Jesus expresses His own crisis. Jesus' struggle with the acceptance of His mission of death for others is now exposed. This identification of our Savior that any human undergoes in finding and accepting the will of God shows the reality of the incarnation. As it is difficult for the believer to take up the cross with Jesus so it was also difficult for Jesus to accept His own death. "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour." In the same breath which Jesus struggled to be freed from that which He had come, He also expressed compliance with the will of God. It was His purpose and the will of God to come into the world and bring redemption to humankind. That Jesus would do no matter the personal cost.

"Father, glorify Your name." Praise should come to the Father in the act of an obedient Son. In response to Jesus' request came a voice from Heaven saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The past and the future are brought together in this response. The Father had been glorified in the past by His true character being expressed by the acts of Jesus. In the future His character and will would be made known through Christ to His praise.

The people were not sure what to make of the sound coming from Heaven. What they heard they were not able to understand. Some felt the sound was that of thunder. Others thought that it was the voice of Angels. Jesus already knew that the Father approved of His ministry. The voice came to encourage and inform the people. Any of them who would hear and heed the voice would know that the act of Jesus in self-sacrifice was authenticated by the Father.

By Jesus' death and resurrection judgment of the world had not come. The world would be judged by the acceptance or rejection of Jesus. The ruler of this world, Satan, would be defeated by this event. Satan's power, the power of death, would be forever destroyed

by the resurrection of Jesus. The source of the power over death would be the cross of Jesus. The lifting of Christ has no reference to preaching. Jesus was to be lifted up not by testimony or by imitating His life but by His death.

“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.” The cross today is still the supreme moral magnet of the world. It is not the teachings of Jesus, or His example unrelated to His death, but His cross that is attracting multitudes and making them willing, as devoted followers, to take up the cross and come after Him.

The people were puzzled by His prediction of death. They had been looking for a Messiah that would assume political power and free them from the control of the Romans. They did not understand the prior need for His death. Men are still troubled by the truth of a crucified Savior. It is natural for man to shrink from the suffering involved in the complete surrender of self. Pain and sacrifice is not pleasing and death is no delight. In spite of all that is to be won Jesus trembles at the sight of the cross. Jesus knows its necessity but He is not blind to its anguish. “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour?’” As in the Garden of Gethsemane there is all the agony in His bitter cry, and in the words that follow all its victory too. “But for this purpose I came to this hour.”

Jesus then gives one final warning and promise. “While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.” Jesus Himself is “the Light of the world.” Whatever the mystery of Jesus, His person and work, we must believe Him, follow Him, commit ourselves to Him, otherwise we shall be like men stumbling along in a pathless night. Our Faith in Jesus will transform us more and more in to His Christ like image.

Verses 37-50

John now looks back over the ministry of Jesus; he aims to emphasize the causes and the consequences of Jewish unbelief. John employs the word of the prophet Isaiah. In quoting Isaiah John identifies Jesus as the same divine being whom Isaiah saw in his vision. (Isaiah 53:1 Isaiah 6:10) This same identity with God Jesus claimed for Himself with His own lips.

John refers the signs of Jesus as sufficient to produce faith in Him. In the light of such signs unbelief was sinful, but how could it be explained? The Jewish people’s spiritual blindness and moral cowardice were the cause of their unbelief. One is the nature of judicial blindness. The Jews would not believe so a time came, as it always does, when they could not believe. As it was in the days of Isaiah it was also in the days of Jesus.

Their hearts were not right; they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God. Some of the Jewish leaders believed in Jesus but they were afraid of the Pharisees and therefore did not openly confess their belief in Jesus. No one can ever hope to see the

truth if they are not willing to accept the consequences of that truth. A continued unwillingness to believe will result in the degeneration of the faculty of faith crippling the ability to believe. At the close of Jesus' public ministry John provides a summary of Jesus' teachings to emphasize the consequences of unbelief. Jesus claimed to be a personal manifestation of God, and to have proclaimed the very will of God. Therefore by rejecting Jesus is to reject God. Jesus refrained from judging men during His earthly ministry but by their refusal to believe on Him men were judging themselves. In the last day men would be convicted by the words that Jesus had spoken. No one who rejects Jesus can hope to be accepted by God.

Key Verses

Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, Luke 7:36-50, 1 Corinthians 11:15, Zechariah 9:9, Psalms 118:26, Isaiah 53:1, Isaiah 6:10

The Private Teaching

Chapter 13

Verses 1-20

Jesus was sharing what is known as the Lord's Supper with the twelve disciples. At the beginning of the meal a dispute arose between the disciples as to who would be greatest in the Kingdom. (Luke 22:24) Jesus took this occasion to teach the disciples that the greatest in His Kingdom would be measured by service. Jesus arose from the supper table and removed His outer garments and placing a towel around His waist began to wash the disciple's feet.

John in his Gospel prefaces this act by several phrases that emphasize the incomparable humility of Jesus in this act of washing His disciple's feet. John declares that it was, "Now before the Feast of the Passover." That note in time indicates that which we have been pointed to continually throughout John's Gospel. We are now entering the events leading up to the death of Jesus. Jesus' death is a fulfillment of the Passover and the offering of the sacrificial lamb. By washing the feet of His disciples Jesus was demonstrating that He had laid aside His existence-form as God. He had assumed the garment of human flesh and taken the place of a servant. Jesus had even stooped to His death on the cross that He might cleanse His followers from sin. John further says that Jesus was conscious, "that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father." Even then, knowing what He was about to suffer, Jesus was self-forgetful and mindful only of the needs of His disciples. The motive of Jesus' act is His perfect unfailing love: "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." His motive is even further

emphasized by the fact that He did not shrink from washing the feet of the one who would betray Him, “the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him.” Jesus’ act is a display of supreme humility by the assurance that Jesus was mindful of His universal power, of His divine origin and destiny: “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God.” Slaves were employed to wash the feet of a guest as they reclined at the table. Jesus taking on this responsibility showed Himself to be the servant of His disciples. Today Jesus is still the servant to His followers, as He leads us, teaches us through His Word, and intercedes at the throne of the Father for us as our advocate for the forgiveness of our sins.

None of the disciples interrupted Jesus as He went around the table washing each of their feet until He reached Peter. Peter was hesitant to have his Master perform such a menial service and even when assured by Jesus there was a purpose that he would understand later Peter objects. Jesus replied to Peter’s objection, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.” Peter then goes to the other extreme and asks Jesus to not only wash His feet but his hands and head also. What Peter failed to realize is that Jesus washing the feet of the disciples was a symbol of a spiritual cleansing which He was seeking to effect. Jesus did wash the feet of the disciples for their physical comfort since they were in a dispute to who was the greater and none would humble themselves to wash the feet of the others.

Jesus did more than wash the disciples feet He also cleansed their hearts. As Jesus went around the table washing their feet all their envy, bitterness, unkindness, and wrath were gone. They were now ready in their hearts to hear the private teachings of Jesus on this last night they would spend together. Jesus knew that they loved Him, and that new life had been given to them by His Spirit, but He realized the need to have their present state of mind corrected.

Jesus was aware that one was to betray Him and his heart was filled with deadly enmity. We know this by His statement, “and you are clean, but not all of you.” How comforting it is to know that as we love our Lord and trust Him, He does not reject us because of sudden failure or a single fault. Jesus has cleansed us from the guilt of sin but we still need a daily cleansing from our daily corruption. We do not need to be washed but once in the blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of our past sins, as Peter had asked. But we do need a daily washing of our feet, as our Lord is willing to do for those who love Him.

Jesus made it plain to the disciples that they are to follow His example of service and not only meet the physical needs of others but also their moral and spiritual needs as well. Jesus promises a blessing to those who follow His example. (1 Peter 5:1-6) Jesus states a prophecy which shows that from such blessedness one of their number, the traitor, will

be excluded. (Psalms 41:9) The rest of them will be the representatives not only of their Master but also of His Father.

Verses 21-30

With the disciples hearts removed of improper mood and temper which would have been an obstacle to the hearing of the words Jesus intended to speak; one more act must be performed; Jesus must remove the one who would betray him. It would be Jesus' final message of mystery, love, and cheer.

Jesus restates a fact that He has again and again referred: "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me." The disciples are startled by this statement; even though they have heard it before now they are concerned. Peter looked over to the disciple identified as the one whom Jesus loved. This Disciple is believed to be the writer of this Gospel John. Peter signaled John to ask Jesus who was the one who would betray Him. John is reclined beside Jesus on His right and Judas was reclined on the left of Jesus. Jesus gives John a sign by which he would know who the traitor is by dipping a morsel of food in gravy and giving it to him. At the same time Jesus dips the food into the gravy and gives it to Judas telling him to delay no further in carrying out his foul purpose. Jesus uses words that leave the mission of Judas unknown to the disciples, "What you do, do quickly." Judas immediately leaves and goes out into the night.

Judas shows a most pitiful picture of unbelief contained in the Gospel. Judas had spent three years of his life following Jesus but he resisted the Light, he cherished his sin of greediness, and was untouched by the matchless love of the Master who even stooped to wash his feet. Even now Jesus gave him a last sign of friendship. It was the custom to give a piece of bread like this to a special guest or friend. So Jesus was showing love and honor to Judas when Jesus did this. Judas may have had a final struggle of the soul but Satan had conquered his will.

Judas cannot be excused from his action by saying that he was possessed by Satan. The temptation may have come from Satan but the decision was made by Judas. Neither can the action of Judas be explained by saying that he really did not mean to betray Jesus. That he was only trying to force Jesus into a decisive action that would show Him to be the Messiah. When Judas left the group it was night. This is more than just a circumstance it was an expression of the darkness of a deed. Jesus had come to lead people into the light but one closest to Him had chosen to reject the Light of the World and to walk in darkness.

Verses 31-38

When Judas left the group the final decision had been made leading to the death of Jesus. Jesus had said many times that His hour would come when He would be glorified and

now with Judas on his way to betray Him to the Pharisees Jesus could now say, “Now is the Son of Man glorified.” The time had arrived for His glorification.

It was not only His glorification but the Father’s as well. Jesus would be glorified by the event of the crucifixion and the resurrection, so would the Father be glorified by it. Glorification means that the true and full character can be known for the praise of God. Both God the Father and Jesus the Son would be shown for what they were through the death of Jesus upon the cross and His resurrection from the dead.

Jesus told His disciples that He soon would no longer be physically with them that they would seek Him but would not find. Then Jesus gave them a new commandment which came from the Law of Moses. (Leviticus 19:18) It is fitting that these are the first words in Jesus’ farewell discourse and in was in regards to love since love is the motivation of His death and resurrection. His new commandment to them was to love one another. The measure of this love is spelled out to them, as He loved. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” No one who follows Jesus need wonder the extent of the love he should show towards one another. Jesus expressed it by the extent of His love---obedience, even to the point of death. Though it came from the Law of Moses it was a new commandment in that it had a higher motive. “Even as I have loved you”

The distinctive mark of a disciple and a Christian is love. The way that people would know the followers of Jesus is by the quality of their love for one another.

Peter wanted to know where Jesus was going. Jesus had said that Peter could not go there at this time but would follow later. This could have been in reference to going to be in the presence of the Father. Or it could have meant the suffering they would share with Jesus. Jesus was going to His death. Those who followed Jesus in faith, including Peter, would follow him in suffering for their faith.

Peter apparently understood the meaning of Jesus’ words and vowed that he was willing to lay down his life for Jesus. Would Peter really follow Jesus all the way even unto death? Jesus questioned the words of Peter because He knew that Peter had spoken hastily. Then Jesus told Peter that even before morning he would deny Jesus three times before the cock crowed. Obedient faith is not easy to come by but Peter did eventually follow Jesus to the cross.

Key Verses

Luke 22:24, 1 Peter 5:1-6, Psalms 41:9, Leviticus 19:18

Chapter 14

Verses 1-3

The opening words of this chapter are to comfort the disciples whose hearts were now troubled. Jesus had just revealed that one of the disciples would betray Him, that Peter would deny Him, and most troubling of all He was soon to depart them to a place they could not follow. Jesus conveyed to them that they were to trust in the goodness of God the Father and in His own purposes of love, “believe in God, believe also in Me.” These words are the best remedy for troubled hearts.

“In My Father's house are many dwelling places.” Where Jesus is going there is welcome and room for all. In the last chapter Jesus told Peter that he would be joining Him later and now Jesus is saying that He is preparing a place for all of His followers. If there was not to be a reunion in His Father's Kingdom, He would not have so often mentioned to His followers of a blessed eternity of fellowship: “if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.”

“If I go and prepare a place for you.” Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification were opening the way of access to the Father and the paradise of the heavenly home. “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” The substance of this chapter and the following two is the spiritual coming was to result in a personal relationship with Jesus, the consummation of which would be His return to glory, and the endless reunion in the Father's House.

Verses 4-11

Jesus had told His disciples that he was going to the Father by the way of His death and resurrection but they did not understand. The disciples did not know why He should die and knowing that He had the power of God they did not believe that He would die. Their lack of understanding was voiced by Thomas, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” For Jesus the way to the Father was in His death but He answered Thomas with a spiritual and profound interpretation of His words. “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” Jesus is distressed by the request of Phillip for a direct vision of the Father and by the reply of Jesus that they have seen the Father, as Jesus is the true revelation of God. Jesus tells them that His oneness with the Father has been displayed both by His words and His works. How it is that people today believe in God but do not recognize Jesus Christ as God in the flesh? How can they explain away the power that Jesus had and the signs that He performed other than He was God in the flesh? Has God become so universal that man no longer accepts His deity as the one and true God? Anyone who believes in the true God would also have to believe in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Verses 12-14

The complete communion and total unity between the Father and the Son was applied in two areas. The first area of application is that one believing in Jesus would do even greater works than even Jesus had done. This was possible because Jesus was going to the Father and would no longer be present on the earth to act in power. It is only hinted here and revealed later that as Jesus went to the Father the Holy Spirit would come and empower the believer. The ministry of Jesus was only for the short time of three years but the believers in Jesus would be present for a much longer span of time. So 'greater things' refers to the quantity, not the quality, of the things that Christians would do. And the good news about Jesus would spread across the whole world. There would be more followers of Jesus doing that work of the Kingdom and producing more fruit. The fullness of His promise was carried out on the day of Pentecost, when on one day more believers were added to Christ than throughout His whole ministry here on earth.

The second area of application was given by Jesus in prayer. Jesus promises power through prayer to and through Him with an unlimited scope. Jesus promises that anything asked in His name will be given. "In His name" is not a formula for prayer or a structure of prayer. What is asked for in the name of Jesus must be consistent with the character of Jesus. To ask for something in the name of Jesus is to request matters that conform to the character and the concepts of Jesus. The answered prayers through Jesus must bring glory to the Father through the Son. Believers would see that the Father and Son are one when those prayer requests are offered in conformity with the character of the Son are done through the power of the Father. What Jesus did on earth glorified the Father, so would answered prayer bring glory and praise to the Father.

Verses 15-27

The main message of this chapter is found in the supreme promise of comfort. Many say that they love Jesus but the one who truly does is the one who obeys and keeps the commandment of Jesus. An example of this difficulty is His command to love and pray for our enemies. (Matthew 5:44) It is not always easy to do this but Jesus has given us the promise of a helper. "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever." The word helper or comforter is translated from the word Paraclete or advocate and means one who is called to the side of another. The purpose of the helper is to give help, protection, and deliverance. The promised helper is the Holy Spirit.

Up to now Jesus had been a true comforter for His disciples, but now that His presence was to be withdrawn, His Spirit was to do for the disciples what Jesus had been doing. The Holy Spirit was to guide, inspire, strengthen, and sanctify them. The Holy Spirit had been on earth already and was present at the creation and is referenced many times in the Old Testament. After Jesus' ascension the Holy Spirit was to manifest Himself in new

power. As an instrument He would have the truth concerning a crucified, risen, Lord. The resulting work of the Holy Spirit was to be like a new coming, a new gift. His manifestation was conditioned upon a loving obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. The presence of the Holy Spirit was to be continuous: “that He may be with you forever.”

The comforter is further called the Spirit of Truth. The world because of its lack of moral sympathy with Jesus will not be able to receive or recognize this Spirit. At the baptism of Jesus the Spirit indwelt Him and now was to dwell the followers of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit coming at the request of Jesus to the Father is as Christ Himself returning to the earth and residing with the disciples of Jesus and they will enjoy a larger and fuller knowledge of the Father and the Son.

Judas (not Iscariot) asks the question how it is that He, the true Messiah, is to be manifested only to the disciple and not to the world. Jesus answers that the manifestation that He is speaking of is spiritual and is conditional upon obedience to Jesus. That this abiding Spirit in the believer will include the Father and the Son. Jesus further tells them that the Holy Spirit will teach them all things and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had taught them. Jesus then promises them an unsurpassable peace, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”

Verses 28-31

Jesus adds a word of comfort. In spite of promised return in the Spirit the disciples were to witness the anguish of seeing Him depart by way of death. Jesus assures them that His going away was necessary in order for His Spiritual return. That Jesus’ prediction of His death would strengthen their faith. Satan was to assault Him and He would gain no abiding victory. That He would only aid in manifesting to the world His loving obedience of the Son of God to the will of the Father. In these last sentences Jesus uses the phrase, “the Father is greater than I.” It is His truth that the Son, in the mystery of His relation to the Father, was as in the days of His flesh, or in His eternal Sonship, obedient to the Father. These words are a true witness to the conscious deity of the God-Man, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Key Verses

Mark 13:11, Luke 22:32, Mark 2:23-28, Matthew 5:44

Chapter 15

Verses 1-17

Jesus and His disciples left the upper room to go to the Mount of Olives. On the way to the Mount they passed the Temple area to reach the Kidron Valley. On the Temple there is a symbol used to represent the Israelite nation, it is a golden vine. During the period of independence under the Maccabees the vine was the symbol of the nation used on its coins. This vine finds its origin in the scriptures and is represented that Israel was a vine planted out of Egypt. The vine grew in the Promised Land they had been led to by Moses. Many branches grew from the vine and its shoot reached from the sea across the land and to the river. The branches grew so tall that the mountains were covered by its shadow. The branches of the vine planted by the Lord produced good fruit until the branches forsook the vine and the fruit became worthless. The vinedresser, the Lord God, questioned what more could He have done for the branches of His vine. So He told the branches that He would take down the vine hedges that protected them, that He would scatter them, and that He would allow briars and thorns to come up within their midst. (Psalm 80:1-16 Isaiah 5:1-7 Jeremiah 2:21 Ezekiel 19:10-14)

As Jesus and the disciple walked past the Temple Jesus made reference to the symbol by saying, "I am the true vine." All of the scriptural references of God's chosen people being a vine planted in the Promised land found in Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel speak of how Israel had grown wild. Jesus came into the world and was obedient to the will of the Father. Jesus said to them, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser."

The gardener of the vine was careful to the vine and pruned the branches to encourage them to bear more fruit. And the gardener would cut off the unproductive branches. He is not the kind of gardener that allows branches to grow wild and without discipline. He would have constant and concerned care for the branches so that it would be the most productive possible.

Jesus applied this metaphor to His disciples. He made reference to them from what He had spoken earlier that His words had made them clean. Jesus told them that the branches of a vine draw their strength and substance from the vine, so the disciples would draw their strength and substance by abiding in Jesus. Jesus made it clear that the only way they could bear fruit was by abiding in Him. The relationship of a follower of Jesus must be as close as that of the branches to the vine. Jesus made that point more real when He said, "I am the vine, you are the branches." A branch cannot live unless it has a life-sustaining union with the vine. By Jesus' statement that we are the branches and He is the vine He made it clear that the believer cannot have a life-sustaining union that will produce good fruit apart from Jesus, the vine. The disciples were to be in a constant union with their unseen Lord, and through them His life was to be manifested and His purposes

accomplished. Just as the branches are in a living connection with the vine, which only in the branches is the fruit produced.

Jesus had said in the previous chapter that Jesus would be the divine being that would ever abide in His followers. Here then is the importance of the believer's faith on the words of Jesus as an absolute condition of the life He would impart. Faith here is pictured as an abiding in Jesus, which is inseparable as the living branch is to the vine. Rich fruit will be the result of this kind of relationship producing a spiritual experience, of Christian virtues and of souls saved.

Jesus also expresses the displeasure of the Father with faithless followers, "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away." Some people say that they believe in Jesus but they do not act on His word with faith. They do not study God's Word in the Bible. They do not pray. They do not obey Jesus' commands. Instead, they do whatever they want to do. They say that they are Christians. But they do not achieve anything for God. Their lives do not show that they follow Jesus. They may even stop other Christians who are trying to do God's work. Such people do not have a close relationship with Jesus. So they are useless. We cannot do his work if we separate ourselves from him. Then we would become like useless branches, as we have separated ourselves from the sustaining power of Jesus. And therefore God will separate them from genuine Christians.

As the believer in Jesus abides in Him and the Word of God abides in the believer the old life of living for this world departs into the new life of conforming to the character and image of Jesus. For the believer of Jesus Christ will maintain a relationship with Him through faith and in conformity to His teachings that what a believer would ask for in prayer would be in line with the will of the Father. One of the promises of this abiding relationship is answered prayer. "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." The proof of the disciple is a character in conformity with the character of Christ. The Father is glorified by answered prayer. "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."

The whole life of Jesus had demonstrated His love of the Father and the Father had made know His love of the Son, Jesus. "And behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." As Jesus loved His disciples, they too were to live in His love. From their experience of Jesus' love they are to express the love of Jesus in their lives.

Jesus lived His life in complete obedience to the Father. The true mark of a follower of Jesus is obedience. The believer in Jesus is to live his life in loving obedience to Jesus. Abiding in the love of Jesus is obeying His will and to live His way of life. Joy is another true mark of a disciple of Jesus. The Joy of Jesus Christ will fill the life of a Christian. Believers experience the fullness of Christ's joy by their abiding relationship with Him. We

must remember that this conversation took place on the eve of Jesus', arrest, trial, and crucifixion. These words were spoken to a group of people whose hearts were troubled while Jesus was staring death in the face. Jesus was preparing them for a life of witness here on earth without His physical presence. Joy was one of the results of living a sustaining relationship with Jesus even under these circumstances.

Frequently we are tempted to believe that sin will produce happiness. Joy is the flower of the right; it is always the fruit of obedience to Jesus. Joy is the essence of the consciousness of Jesus' approving love.

Jesus then gives His last commandment to the disciples, "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. The illustration of Jesus' love is His own self-sacrifice which was to be accomplished the next day upon the cross. His love was also illustrated by His divine friendship which had led Him to confide to His disciples all His plans and gracious purposes. He had revealed to them the Kingdom work which would consist in revealing true virtues and in the salvation of mortal souls, a work which would be accomplished by prayer in His holy name. It may be to some, who wonder at their fruitlessness as followers of Jesus need this word from the Master: "This I command you, that you love one another."

Verses 18-27

The Disciples of Jesus are privileged to share in the love of the Father but they must also be involved in the world's hatred and rejection of Jesus. Since the world hated and rejected Jesus it would also hate and reject those who follow Jesus' teachings. Those who have been commissioned to reproduce the character of Jesus will find the people of the world will not accept them and oppose them.

The disciples had been chosen out of the world to follow Jesus. To be chosen by Jesus is to become a different kind of person and the world always has a problem dealing with people that are different. The world at large had persecuted Jesus and his disciples could expect the same reaction. If the world at large had received the message of Jesus then it would have also received theirs, but it had not.

The world had not received the Father who sent Jesus and therefore would not receive the message that Jesus had for them. By failing to know the Father in faith and rejecting His Son they would also reject those who followed Jesus in faith.

Those in the world who had never heard the truth of the Father could not be held accountable to their lack of belief. Jesus coming into the world brought the truth of the Father and therefore sin increased because now they had heard the truth. Still they rejected the truth but now they were accountable because they had heard the words of Jesus. Those who loved and received Jesus both knew and received the Father. Those who hated and rejected Jesus both hated and rejected the Father. The unity of the Father

and the Son works in both directions. Jesus bringing His message to them and working His works of grace among them they now held personal responsibility for their rejection of God. In Psalms (Psalms 35:19 Psalms 69:4) there is a reference to hating God without a cause. Ironically, the Pharisees who were supposed to know the scriptures best were living out that statement because they both hated and rejected both the Father and the Son.

Jesus was about to depart and would leave the disciples in that kind of atmosphere of persecution, hatred, and rejection. The disciples were promised the Counselor would come into that atmosphere and help and strengthen them. The Counselor would be sent by Jesus and would come from the Father. The interaction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit shows the unity between them. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one but experienced separately. The Trinity is a doctrine of experience.

By Jesus calling the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Truth it emphasized witness as a work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Truth gives witness to the truth of Jesus' witness of God. The witness and leadership of the Holy Spirit in a life will never be contrary to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Truth gives witness to the truth that Jesus has shown.

The Holy Spirit is the Spiritual witness to the truth of Jesus and the disciples are the physical witnesses of the truth of Jesus. Those who have experienced faith in Jesus Christ testify to the life changing character of that faith. Their witness is backed up by the witness of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads persons to faith through the witness of believers in Jesus Christ. The world is not left without a witness of Jesus. Therefore those who reject Jesus and the Father who sent Him into the world must bear their own burden of guilt.

Key Verses

Psalm 80:1-16, Isaiah 5:1-7, Jeremiah 2:21, Ezekiel 19:10-14, Matthew 3:17, Psalms 35:19, Psalms 69:4

Chapter 16

Verses 1-15

There is enmity in the world towards Jesus Christ. It was first revealed in Genesis when God placed His judgment on Satan and man for the first sin that had occurred there. (Genesis 3:15) Wherever Christ is loved in that community of people His followers will not be hated, but in communities of people who reject Jesus and His claims nothing can be expected but enmity, persecution and death. The followers of Jesus will be hated just as Jesus was and just because of Jesus.

The peoples ignorance of God is the cause of this hatred because of their false conceptions of His nature and will: “They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.” The testimony of Jesus by His words and works had only aggravated their guilt. He had by His word and works revealed Himself as the true Messiah and the Son of God leaving them with no excuse for their rejection of Him. Those that reject Jesus also reject the Father and thus fall into the sin of unbelief. “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also.” Nowhere else in this Gospel is it stated more clearly the sinful nature of unbelief and the peril of rejecting Jesus Christ. To deny the claim of Jesus and to refuse to become his disciple is to hate God and to condemn his own soul.

Jesus now ever so clearly sets forth the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus assures them that His departure will be more than compensated by the coming of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was already in the world, He was in the beginning at the creation of the world. After the ascension of Jesus the Holy Spirit would begin a work so marvelous and unique it could be described as a “coming” or a “being” sent from the Father. The work of the Holy Spirit at His very essence would be making Jesus known to the disciples in all the fullness of the Divine Person and work: “He will glorify Me” Through the disciples the Holy Spirit would make Jesus known to the world:

Jesus then talks about the Spirit's work in the world. “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”

“Concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me.” This does not mean that unbelief is sin, of course it is. This verse means that the Holy Spirit will convict the world of being sinful by the evidence of its rejection of Jesus Christ. The truth taught here is that the rejection of Christ shows one to be a sinner. Jesus Christ is good, Holy, and pure and to reject Him is to convict one of being opposed to goodness and holiness and purity and love. When Christ is preached He becomes the Touchstone of character.

“Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me.” By the resurrection of Jesus and His ascension Jesus was proved to be righteous, and all His claims of deity were vindicated. Jesus’ resurrection and ascension still form the ground on which the Holy Spirit convicts men that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God.

“Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.” At the cross of Jesus Satan massed all his forces and suffered an eternal defeat. Satan’s ultimate fate was settled and his sentence pronounced. Every time Christ is preached, under the power of the Holy Spirit, Satan suffers further loss, and every saved soul is a new proof of his judgment.

Here we are concerned with the sin of the world, the righteousness of Jesus, and the judgment of Satan, as they are proved by the Holy Spirit. By the evidence of the rejection of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus and His triumph on the cross, when the believer testifies to these great truths under the power of the Holy Spirit He never fails to convict the soul of a man. On the Day of Pentecost the first fulfillment of this promise was completed. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, presented these proofs and three thousand souls were convicted and saved. Today when the Holy Spirit accomplishes a great work of saving grace, it is where witnesses are testifying faithfully to the crucifixion, risen, ascended, divine Christ.

Jesus then talks about the Holy Spirit's work in the believers. "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." Until after His death and resurrection there were many spiritual realities that the disciples would not understand. "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you." The office of the Comforter is to reveal to the believer all the divine riches and grace that are in Jesus Christ, to make clear and vital the meaning of the realities of the divine Person of Jesus Christ.

The concern here is for the witnessing power of the believer that in such service the illumination and guidance of the Holy Spirit of truth is needed.

Verses 16-33

In the remainder of this chapter we are concerned with the work of the Holy Spirit. In the farewell discourse of Jesus He teaches that the real manifestation of His Spiritual presence is in the Holy Spirit that will soon follow His death." A little while, and you will no longer see Me" The crucifixion and death of Jesus was the next day. "And again a little while, and you will see Me." They would not only see Jesus after His resurrection but with an enlarged Spiritual vision on the Day of Pentecost and ever after.

The disciples are puzzled at a promise so mysterious, that Jesus would go away for a little while and then in a little while return. The departure of Jesus was a condition of a more real presence with them. Jesus further reassures them that their anguish at the separation caused by His death would be forgotten in the joy of the spiritual reunion which would be endless. "Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you."

The influence of the Holy Spirit will increase the knowledge of the disciples. They will not need to ask such questions as they have during this conversation. "In that day you will not question Me about anything." The disciples will pray to the Father in the name of

Jesus. “Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.” “In my name”, signifies in virtue of all that Jesus has been revealed to be. After the Day of Pentecost, as never before, Jesus was to be known as the Christ, the Son of God, the risen, glorified, invisible, divine Lord and Savior. Prayer in Jesus name would most certainly prevail.

Finally Jesus lays aside all figures of speech and plainly declares His divine pre-existence, His incarnation, His death, His resurrection: “I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.”

At last the disciples seem to understand and they assert their faith: “Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God.” Jesus then warns them that their faith is to be tested and they will not be victorious at first. “Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.” However by a strengthened faith in the power of the Holy Spirit they shall soon enjoy peace and share the victory of their Master and overcome the enmity of the world.

The closing paragraph in this chapter of the Gospel of John is in harmony with the continuing purpose of John.

Chapter fourteen presents the testimony of the divine Person of Christ. Chapter fifteen emphasizes the need of a vital faith by which believers can abide in Jesus. This chapter enlarges on the life which results from faith. A life, by which the Lord by the power of His indwelling Spirit makes real His gracious presence, gives increasing knowledge of the truth, confidence in prayer, inspires heroic courage, and secures abiding peace.

Key Verse

Genesis 3:15

Chapter 17

Jesus ended the discourse in Chapter 16 with what is known as the High Priestly Prayer of Chapter 17. The title High Priestly Prayer comes from the veil which was torn at His crucifixion and signifying that man no longer needs to go through an earthly priest. Man would no longer need to offer sacrifices through an earthly Priest for the remission of their sin, as Jesus sacrificed Himself for that purpose, that the wages of sin were paid by His life. Jesus Himself would now be the High Priest that we can pray through and have communion with the Father. (Hebrews 9:11-15)

Melancthon wrote, “There is no voice which has ever been heard, either in heaven or in earth, more exalted, more holy, more fruitful, more sublime, than this prayer offered up by the Son of God Himself.”

Verses 1-5

Jesus first prays for Himself, but it is not a selfish prayer. Jesus prays that He may be glorified that His Father may be glorified, and to give eternal life to His followers. “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.”

The “hour” had come, the expected time of His death and resurrection. By Jesus’ request to be glorified referred to His crucifixion, His resurrection, His ascension, and His outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Glorify means to make one known. Jesus now desires to be revealed in His true character the divine Son of God, the Messiah, and the Savior of the world. The “hour” would result in the manifestation of who Jesus truly is. The gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost would constitute or secure the answer to His prayer. By Jesus being glorified the glory of the Father would also be secured. God was never so fully revealed in all His justice and love and holiness and grace as by the “hour” with which we are now concerned.

By the revelation life was also secured for Jesus’ followers; “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” According to this Gospel of John to “know” is not an act of the mind only for the demons know God. To know requires love, obedience, faith, the response of the entire being. To know God as revealed in the Son is to have eternal life. This is not only a future promise but a present experience; it is not only an endless existence but also a heavenly blessedness. This first petition of Jesus is based on the fact that his work here on earth is finished; “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.” In Jesus’ commitment to obedience to the Father the supreme sacrifice had already been made and His work was finished. Therefore Jesus could pray, “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.”

Few of us feel, when in the shadow of death, that our life is complete, that our work is finished. Life is often a series of beginnings and failures and imperfect endeavors. Yet if one would walk in the will of God, life need not to end in a broken column of incompleteness. The ministry of Jesus was only three years, only a few sick healed, only a few sermons preached, only eleven disciples secured, no book written, and no organization formed. But the work of the Christ will be finished, as the cross remains and then glory.

Verses 6-19

Next Jesus prays for His disciples, the twelve who had been with Him. Jesus describes them in terms that have a meaningful message for all who follow Jesus. “The men whom You gave Me out of the world.” “And they have kept Your word.” “The words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received” “And they believed that You sent Me.” The Holy Spirit opens our hearts up to the truth of God’s Word and in our love and obedience to God’s Word we will follow Jesus in our faith.

Jesus at the time was praying specifically for the eleven who remained with Him. “I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours” Jesus does pray for all in the world, as we should also, but on this occasion His prayer was specifically for the eleven disciples.

It is hard to understand that there was twelve and one betrayed Jesus. They all have witnessed three years with Jesus in His ministry and had heard His words and seen His many signs. Yet Judas Iscariot chose to sell Jesus for the price of thirty pieces of silver. Judas gave up his inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven for his greed and lust of the world. Much as Esau had done and who traded his birthright for a bowl of soup. (Hebrews 12:16) Judas had every opportunity to be a good disciple. However, Judas chose to leave Jesus, in order to hand Jesus over to his enemies. There was a prophecy about this (Psalm 41:9). And bad things happened to Judas (Matthew 27:3-10).

The petitions for Jesus’ disciples are two. First Jesus prays that they may be kept from evil. During the time that Jesus was with them He protected them. (Matthew 12:8) Now Jesus was leaving them and the world, as it had hated Jesus, would also hate His followers. Jesus commits them to the care of His Father, who had given them to Him. Jesus does not pray that they be taken out of the world or that they be spared sorrow, pain, and temptation, but from discouragement and sin. “I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.”

The protection of the disciples was to be done by His Spirit, and also by the truth concerning His Father. “While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name.” The unity between God and Jesus is a revelation for the followers of Jesus and they will be kept by the same means after His departure. “Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me.”

The second petition of Jesus was that the disciples would be sanctified. The meaning here is not a reference specifically to holiness and separation from sin. These were covered in the first petition. Jesus is speaking more on their being set apart for service in witnessing to the truth. Jesus is praying for the sanctification of His close disciples to their appointed mission. “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” The revelation of the Father given to them through Jesus, “the truth” He had revealed was not only that which

set them apart but the core of their service. Jesus then adds, “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” Jesus is sending His disciples out into the world to testify to the “truth.”

Verses 20-26

Jesus now turns His prayer to all believers, “That they may all be one.” Jesus also prays that they may be with Him in Heavenly glory. Jesus first petitions for the unity of all believers. This oneness is far more wonderful than the church unity, the organic unity, a united Christendom which some suppose this refers to. It envisions a spiritual unity, which must be given a visible expression, which in essence is a union with Jesus Christ and through Him with God. “That they also may be in Us.” This prayer was first answered on the Day of Pentecost when by the Holy Spirit believers were all baptized into one body. Therefore the followers of Jesus become one body, the church, in one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all.

This petition is yet to be fulfilled completely and for its complete fulfillment we are to work and pray. The spiritual unity in the Holy Spirit must be manifested into an irresistible argument for the divine mission of Jesus. “So that the world may believe that You sent Me.” This provides opportunity to every believer to accept and act on the reality of our vital union as members of the body of Christ. This Christian unity can be advanced only by increasing our knowledge of Christ and the truth which He reveals. As followers of Jesus we must manifest the love, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, and patience which are the fruit of the Spirit. The believer must also look to the guidance of the Spirit to lead towards the manifestation of unity which a lost world still waits.

The time will come when this manifestation will be complete. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall we also with Him be manifested in glory. This petition is for the future glory of the Church that the prayer of Jesus has reached its climax. “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory.” The believers of Jesus have a present glory as well, “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them.” It is the glory of being the children of God and possessors of eternal life. There is a greater blessedness in store for the believer the actual vision of Christ, a share in the glory granted to the Son by the love of the Father. Jesus pleads for those who follow Him in faith, and His continuing revelation to them, and His own abiding presence with them. “And I in them.” This last phrase is the assurance and condition of the answer to this High Priestly prayer of intercession. Jesus Christ indwelling us by His Spirit is the power and agent by whom His followers are being kept from sin, sanctified in service, given unity of life, and made ready for glory.

Key Verse

Hebrews 9:11-15, Psalms 41:9, Matthew 27:3-10, Matthew 12:8, Hebrews 12:16

Chapter 18

Jesus and His disciples had entered into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray with His disciples. Judas came into the garden leading the Temple police and an undetermined amount of Roman soldiers. The usual size of a Roman Cohort was six hundred men. It is hardly likely that the Romans would have needed a force that large to arrest one unarmed man and eleven followers. They may have feared the Jesus had a private army secreted away outside of the city or others would simply spring to the cause. Whatever the actual number was it was certainly more than was needed.

Judas is not to be thought of as an inhuman monster, neither is he an innocent and misguided enthusiast, as some modern writers interpretation of Judas is. Judas was undergoing a normal and natural development which constitutes the solemnity of the warning to professed followers of Jesus. Judas is an illustration of a man who cherishes a common sin that many Christians have to battle. But Judas gave up the battle, or never fought it, and yielded to an evil passion. He did so in the warning and in spite of abundant light over the past three years with Jesus. At last Judas totally surrenders to his and like so many comes to hate the light rather than be draw to it and takes the side of the enemies of Christ. Judas provides the example of the triumph of selfishness. No one who follows Jesus is incapable of a traitorous thought, and who need not be on their guard against sinful deeds which may impede the cause of the Kingdom of Heaven.

In contrast to Judas stands Jesus in all of His divine majesty and the loyalty of His love. In spite of being arrested by so many Jesus remains in control of the events happening around Him. Jesus voluntarily offers Himself up for arrest to His enemies. Jesus knew of their murderous plans and His one thought is for the safety of His followers. When the soldiers said they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth He answered, "I am He. "I AM" is the special title that God used when telling Moses who he should say to Pharaoh that sent him. It is the same title that Jesus used in John 8:24,28,58. Upon hearing this the Roman soldiers fell back and onto the ground. Perhaps the power of this name caused them to fall down, or perhaps the overwhelming power of the deity of Jesus caused them to become slain in the spirit.

This hesitation gives Jesus the opportunity to agree to be arrested on the condition that they let His disciples have their liberty. Jesus feared that they might share in His fate and that their faith might fail them. Our Lord never allows us to be tempted beyond what we can bear. Peter is not willing to give up so easily and picks up his sword and swings at the servant of the High Priest. Swinging wildly in the dark it is suspected that Peter was aiming for the head but missed his mark and cut off the ear of his victim. Violence was not the method for the cause of Jesus and He rebukes Peter.

The words Jesus uses to rebuke Peter are full of deep significance, showing the voluntary character of His attaining death. “The cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?” What is this “cup”? The cup is a symbol of Jesus’ death as the bearer of the sin of the world. Jesus dreaded the cup, not merely of physical death but of death in the place of sinners. Jesus did not back away from being “made to be sin” for us, He did pray to the Father if it was possible that the cup be passed from Him. Only for a brief hour and now the victory is His, Jesus steps forth to meet the traitor and his murderous band with a calm that is majestic and divine.

Verses 12-27

The Captain of the Roman Cohort had Jesus bound and they took Him before Annas who was the former High Priest. Annas had been the High Priest but was disposed by the Romans. Still he was a man of considerable power, much like former Presidents and Prime Ministers. Annas had five sons and one son-in-law named Caiaphas. Caiaphas was now the standing High Priest. John does not say in this Gospel exactly where Jesus is taken to meet Annas. It is however implied that Jesus was taken to the residence of the High Priest Caiaphas in which Annas probably also had quarters. John’s Gospel only records Jesus’ meeting with Annas who is also addressed as the High Priest much like today people of former positions keep their address in speech. The High Priest Caiaphas earlier in this Gospel had said that one man should die to save the nation. Even as this prophecy was spoken for political purposes he had unwittingly spiritual truth towards all nations of the world.

Jesus did not arrive at the residence of the High Priest alone. Most of the disciples had scattered when Jesus was arrested but Peter and an unidentified disciple had followed. The unidentified disciple, which it is assumed was John, knew the High Priest and was allowed entry into the residence. This disciple went back and made possible for Peter to enter into the garden at the residence. Peter was questioned by the doorkeeper, a slave girl, in such a way that it would have been easy to give a simple yes or no answer. “You are not also *one* of this man's disciples, are you?” Peter answered the slave girl that he was not. It is obvious that the slave girl had doubts as to who she was letting into the garden. Peter answered the question in the simplest way although it was an untruthful way and a denial.

It was a cold night and the officers and the servants had built a fire to warm themselves. Peter joined the crowd around the fire to warm himself also and to bury himself in the crowd.

In the preliminary hearing of Jesus before Annas Jesus was questioned on two issues, his disciples and his teachings. There was political concern about the movement that Jesus was causing with the people. The power that the Romans had given to the Jewish leadership was politically sensitive to any disturbance of the Jewish people. If a

movement of the Jewish people especially viewed as political, in opposition to the Roman rule, the Romans would quickly send in their soldiers to quell any believed uprising. Therefore Annas was interested in the number of followers that Jesus had. There were religious concerns as well as to the number of followers in regards to the departing of their orthodox teachings and worship. Annas then had the concerns that he did not want Roman authorities suppressing the few freedoms they had and did not want an uprising in the Jewish belief system.

Annas also wanted to know what Jesus was teaching. Is His message different in public from what He spoke privately? Another obvious reason for this pretrial was for the Jewish leadership to formulate the charges that they would use against Jesus to justify their case against Him.

Jesus' reply to Annas was an implication that Annas did not need to ask the questions he had been asking. Jesus stated that he taught openly in the Temple and the synagogues, there were not two sets of teachings. Jesus' words are the truth and the truth cannot be presented in two different ways. Jesus said that all He taught had been open to the world to hear.

Jesus then corrected their legal procedures in this hearing. By Jewish law a person is not required to incriminate himself. A case against a person is to be established by witnesses but Annas was asking Jesus to witness against Himself. If Annas really wanted to know what Jesus was teaching then he should ask the witnesses to His teachings. This statement was recognition the case against Jesus was prejudiced from the start.

One of the officers felt that this reply of Jesus was imprudent and possibly arrogant. Striking Jesus to show that he felt this was not the way one should speak to the High Priest. In spite of the insult Jesus remained in control of Himself and the situation, Jesus asked the officer why he had hit Him. Jesus questioned that if He had spoken wrongly that they should have produced witnesses to disprove what He had said. That if there was no such witness then why would the officer hit Him. His point being that violence would not serve to change His answer or disprove His position.

Neither Annas nor the officer were really interested in justice, as the verdict had already been decided long before this preliminary hearing. What Annas was searching for was the argument they would use and how they would present it. After this hearing Annas turned Jesus over to the High Priest Caiaphas who would conduct the next phase of the trial. John's Gospel does not give us detail of that portion of the trial. The other Gospels will have to be consulted to learn what happened there.

While Peter is warming himself around the fire the question of if he was one of the disciples came up again. Some of those around the fire had probably heard the question of the gatekeeper who was a slave girl. Again the question is presented to Peter in such

a way that it was expecting of a negative answer. “You are not also one of His disciples, are you?” again Peter answered that he was not.

One person in the gathering was not willing to let this question pass by without further being pursued. This slave in the crowd was a relative to the Malchus who Peter had cut of his ear in the Garden of Gethsemane. This slave probably thought he recognized Peter, even though in the Garden of Gethsemane the light of the lanterns were not bright and the light from the fire in the garden was also dim. Still he may have thought he recognized Peter as the man who had wielded the sword. The slave asked Peter directly if he had been in the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus. Again Peter answered with a denial, and the roster crowded.

Peter had shown physical courage in the Garden of Gethsemane when he tried to protect Jesus by hacking away at the ear of Malchus. Now Peter shows his lack of moral courage by denying Jesus three times in the garden at Caiaphas’s residence. There is a contrast here in the reaction of Judas and Peter to their actions. After the betrayal of Jesus Judas fell into despair and took his own life. (Acts 1:18) After his denial of Jesus Peter was moved to repentance and returned to Jesus.

Verses 28-40

The detail of Jesus before Caiaphas is not recorded in John’s Gospel and after His trial by Caiaphas Jesus was taken to the Praetorium. The Praetorium refers to the entire complex of the Roman governor’s residence. It would also include the military barracks and the judgment hall. There may have been a connection with the Tower of Antonio just beyond the Temple area and connected to Herod’s palace. There is some thought that the governor, Pilate, may have stayed at Herod’s palace during the time of the Passover Feast. The Roman governor actually lived at the Praetorium in Caesarea.

The legalism of the Jewish leaders was shattered by their procedures of the arrest and trial of Jesus but obeyed their own rules of being clean before the Passover Feast that they would not enter into the Praetorium because that evening they expected to eat the Passover Feast. It would be religious contamination for them to enter a Gentile building, yet they thought nothing of demanding the death of an innocent man.

Because they would not come into the building Pilate came out to meet them. Pilate had only one question for the Jewish leaders, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?” Apparently the Jewish leaders had yet to form a correct accusation against Jesus and answered, “If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you.” Pilate had cooperated in the arrest of Jesus by providing soldiers to accompany them. By Pilate doing this the Jewish leaders assumed that he would also cooperate in sentencing Jesus as well. They could not charge Jesus with blasphemy before Pilate because there was no Roman law against that, so it would not hold up in a Roman court.

The Jewish leader's argument would have to be of political overtones and they settled on treason as their charge against Jesus.

Pilate thinking it was some religious dispute or a Jewish matter he told them to judge Jesus on their own. The Romans allowed a lot of flexibility in matters of religious context among the people they ruled.

This was not the answer that the Jewish leaders wanted to hear and they replied that were not allow to pronounce a sentence of death. The method of execution for the Jews was death by stoning. The Roman method of execution was by crucifixion. Jesus' death by crucifixion would completely discredit Jesus, and their rejection of Him would be justified.

John the writer of this Gospel indicated that this fulfilled the prediction that Jesus had made about the way that He would die. In Chapter 12:32 Jesus had said that He would be lifted up, which is an indication that He would be crucified. Jewish law in Deuteronomy stated that one hanged on a tree would be cursed. This is the way that Caiaphas believed that Jesus would be completely discredited. John saw it as the way that Jesus took away the sin of the world.

Pilate asked Jesus, "Are You the King of the Jews?" The question and its answer was a concern to Pilate because he was assuring himself that if Jesus was a King was he a threat to the Roman empire? Jesus did not look like a King but He answered, "Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?" By Jesus answering with a question He creates a shift in power in that the questioned become the questioner. Jesus has taken the initiative out of the hand of Pilate and now it is assumed by Jesus, who is supposed to be the one on trial. Jesus wanted to know the source of the question. Was it a question from the conclusion of Pilate weighing the evidence against Him? Or was it a trumped up charge that had been suggested to Pilate from the Jewish leaders?

Pilate became a little contemptuous in his reply to Jesus, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered You to me; what have You done?" Of course Pilate was not a Jew and therefore could not answer questions that concerned Jewish matters of Jewish kingship. Pilate then confirmed to Jesus that is was the High Priest that derived Jesus to him. So Pilate asked what Had Jesus done to have caused them to have done this.

Jesus again did not give a direct answer to Pilate's question but adverted to the topic of His Kingship. "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." Jesus made the point that if He were a king as the world's kings then He would have an army as worldly kings do and they would be fighting to rescue Him.

Pilate saw in this answer that maybe there was some validity in the charges that the Jewish leaders were bringing against Him. Pilate said to Jesus, so you are a king. The Answer that Jesus replied with again turned the decision back onto Pilate. "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Jesus' answer says that it was Pilate that had said He was a king but His answer went on to say that He came into the world to testify of the truth.

Perhaps with a shrug Pilate wistfully or possibly jestingly asked, "What is truth?" This ended the questioning by Pilate and he did not wait to get an answer from Jesus. The answer would come from Jesus on the cross and by the empty tomb, by this God's truth was seen. Pilate did not really want to know the answer, as this was his way of dismissing the subject and ending the interview with Jesus.

After realizing that Jesus was not a revolutionary and a threat to the Roman throne, Pilate went out of the Praetorium to address the crowd that had gathered. It is speculated that the crowd that had gathered was brought together by the Jewish leaders. Pilate addressed the crowd and not the Jewish leaders and declared that he had found no guilt in Jesus.

There is a custom that we find nowhere else in the bible except in the Gospels that during the Passover a criminal could be released. Pilate maybe had thought calling Jesus a criminal would satisfy the Jewish leaders and by offering to release Him as was the custom at Passover, it would not be he that released Him but the demand of the people. If they had chosen another to be released, which Pilate did not anticipate, he would not have personally pronounced the sentence on a man that he had said was innocent. Pilate then asked, "But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover; do you wish then that I release for you the King of the Jews?"

The people cried for Pilate to release Barabbas rather than Jesus. It is noted that Barabbas was a robber. The word used indicates that Barabbas was an insurrectionist, a rebel, an outlaw more than a petty thief. If this was true, he may have been a local hero for leading resistance against the Romans and was being held for execution. The irony of this is that in Pilate's cowardly stand upon what he believed to be true, there was not guilt in Jesus, that in an effort to placate both sides of the issue by giving the people the choice, a true revolutionary was released and a man who posed no threat to the Roman Empire, Jesus, was crucified.

Another irony is that Barabbas means "son of the father." One who was simply called son of the father was being released while the One who is the true Son of the Father would go to His death.

First the Jews had asked Pilate to confirm Jesus to a death sentence without a trial and Pilate refused to do this. Pilate appears to be noble in contrast to the Jewish leaders. Their hypocrisy in that they would not enter the palace of Pilate for fear of defilement before the Passover Feast, but their hearts are filled with murderous hate, as they ask Pilate to condemn an innocent man. They will not go into Pilate and he has to come out to them. Then Pilate has to go back in to speak with Jesus and return outside to speak with the Jews.

Secondly the Jewish leaders accuse Jesus of a political crime: He has called Himself a King. After Pilate's investigation he views Jesus as either a fanatic or a prophet, either way Pilate sees no guilt in Jesus of a capital crime and determines to release Him. Pilate still has a problem with the Jewish leaders in that he wishes to maintain their favor as well, so he attempts a compromise. When Pilate goes back out he addresses the Jewish people and not the leaders. He offers them a deal in which he believes that Jesus could be freed by their demands. It backfires on Him in that the Jewish leaders had anticipated this and told the people to cry for the freedom of Barabbas and not Jesus. Pilate is disappointed the rulers had persuaded the people to cry for Barabbas, as now he had to release a true criminal.

Key Verse

Luke 22:51, Acts 1:18, Deuteronomy 21:23

Chapter 19

Verse 1-16

Pilate then gives Jesus over to be scourged. This is a brutal and inhumane form of torture given by the Romans to a man who has been condemned. Pilate had hoped by this to appease the rage of the rulers and to inspire the pity of the people. In the painful scourging the soldiers added cruel mocking; they crowned the king with a crown of thorns, they gave Him a robe with purple and showed their homage by hitting Him in the face.

Pilate again went out and said to the people, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know that I find no guilt in Him." There was no mercy shown by the people and they cried all the more, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate is them enraged, they are asking him to condemn a man who he has found innocent and in exasperation he says, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him."

If Jesus had been found innocent of the one charge then the Jewish leaders accuse Jesus of a religious offence that is truly deserving of death. "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God." This was a just claim

as Jesus did claim to be the Son of God, a charge that Jesus never denied. Jesus is either the Son of God or a blasphemer there is no middle ground.

An unexpected effect is seen on Pilate with this new charge he is filled with terror. Can anyone lightly dismiss the claims of Christ? Pilate turns to ask, "Where are You from?" However superstitious Pilate's thoughts maybe, he is intelligent enough to be taken back by the suggestion that this patient, princely, sufferer may be a divine being. Jesus gives him no answer. It was not a time to ask Jesus of His origin but a time to declare His innocence and set Him free. Pilate is irritated by Jesus' silence so he asserts his dignity: "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?"

Jesus then responds in a truer dignity: "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." This is a solemn warning to Pilate. Pilate's power is a divine trust and he should beware lest he abuse it. Also the warning of this that officers of the law should not permit themselves to become tools to accomplish the works of a murderous will. Pilate is moved and his one desire is to release Jesus but the Jewish Leaders have one last desperate resort.

"If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar." Pilate now has a serious problem, how would this sound at Rome if this was reported that he let a man go free that claimed to be a king? At Pilate's weakest point the enemy has attacked him. At once Pilate surrenders Jesus to His accusers. Self-love and self-interest must be guarded at any cost of injustice and crime, Pilate's soul is lost. Pilate takes his place on the judgment seat and spoken in bitter irony he ask, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priest answered, "We have no king but Caesar." The Jewish leaders have become the vassals of Rome, they have renounced their Messianic hopes, they have denied their national rights, and then they are apostate from God. The climax has been reached in the record of Jewish unbelief.

Verses 17-42

John the Baptist declared that Jesus was "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." this removal of guilt would require the death of the sacrifice. Jesus declared that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ... that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life." Jesus further taught that, as "the Good Shepherd," He was to lay down His life for the sheep in order that they may have life more abundantly. Jesus also said it was the attractive power of the cross which would draw men unto Him. The crucifixion of Jesus was an atoning act of removing the guilt and power of sin, drawing men to Christ and making possible a larger life through Him.

Jesus bearing His own cross was a symbol of infamy and agony that they crucified Him, crucifixion identifies Him more fully with criminals, and they placed Him between two other criminals. Can we fully take in that Jesus, the Son of God, God in the flesh, took in the most shameful form of death; the cruelest that man has ever devised, in order to secure our salvation. Jesus had to endure the utmost of disgrace and torture and death on a Roman cross.

It was the custom to place a sign above the head of one being crucified to describe the crime which the offender had committed. Pilate, to show his hatred of the Jewish rulers, who entrapped and defeated him, wrote as a title, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Pilate did so in a bitter irony, he meant that the only king that the Jews could boast of or need was a helpless sufferer dying the death of a malefactor. But like Caiaphas, Pilate was affirming more than he had intended. What Pilate had stated was the very message that John the writer of this Gospel had wanted to establish, that Jesus was the Christ, that He is the King of the Jews. Jesus is the only Savior to the Jews, He is their only hope for salvation, and they crucified Him on a Roman cross. Only when they accept Jesus as their King can Israel be saved.

There are two memorable groups standing at the cross. The Roman soldiers who when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and divided them into four parts. There was a part for each soldier and then they cast lots for His seamless coat. The action of the Roman soldiers was another prophecy found in the Old Testament that they cast lots for the garments of Jesus. (Psalms 22:18) This is further proof that Jesus is the Christ.

The other memorable group was the four women who witnessed the crucifixion. They compose a contrast to the four soldiers. They were His mother Mary, Mary's sister Salome the wife of Zebedee and the mother of James and John, Mary, Clopas's wife, often thought to be the mother of James the younger and Joses, and Mary Magdalene. Jesus forgetting His own great anguish displays His deep love and sympathy by being mindful of those whom He loved. When Jesus saw His mother standing with the disciple described as the one whom He loved He called down to His mother and said, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then Jesus said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" It was then that the disciple started to care for the mother of Jesus and did so for all her days to follow. "From that hour the disciple took her into his own household."

With the Death of Jesus near Jesus cried out that He was thirsty and the Roman soldier placed sour wine on a sponge and with the branch of a hyssop brought it up to His mouth. This act was but one more prophecy being fulfilled from the scriptures, (Psalms 69:21) After Jesus had received the sour wine He spoke His last words, "It is finished!" The earthly mission of Jesus was now complete; He had finished the work that the Father had sent Him to accomplish. Those who are still burdened with the guilt of sin, nothing remains to be done but to accept Jesus as the Lamb of God. Those who are lost in the power of

sin, through Jesus there is eternal life if they look in trust to the uplifted Christ. This is the issue of faith in the divine Son of God. "And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit."

According to Jewish law it was necessary to remove the body of the dead before sunset of executed criminals. The Jewish leaders were most excited to obey this law because of the sacred character of the day which was to begin. In order to hasten the death of the executed they went to Pilate and got his permission to have the Roman soldiers to break the legs of the criminals in order to restrict their breathing so they would die much quicker. Which the Roman soldiers did, but when they came to Jesus He had already died. Therefore they did not break his legs. The prophecy in the Old Testament was then fulfilled that not a bone should be broken. This prophecy is also in reference to the Passover Lamb. (Psalms 34:20 Exodus 12:46) Being that Jesus was already dead a Roman soldier thrust his spear into the side of Jesus and blood and water rushed out from the wound. (Zechariah 12:10) The evidence then that Jesus was the Christ is that His side was pierced. It is a larger fulfillment of this prophecy remains for the future. Someday Israel in awe and sorrow and repentance will look "on Him whom they have pierced," as He returns in Heavenly Majesty, then will begin the true glory of the converted and believing nation.

The burial of Jesus presents us a different picture of interest. We see here two men who had lacked courage of their convictions and failed to give support to Jesus while He was living. They are both rulers, men of position and power, Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus. Joseph lays the body of Jesus in his own tomb and Nicodemus wraps the body of Jesus in a profusion of rich spices. These may have been deeds of courage and of love but they have come late. Neither are too late to fulfill prophecy nor give real service to the cause of Christ, but they are too late for the satisfaction of their hearts, as they mourn. The faith of these two men is like the glow of a sunset at the end of a cruel and dark day of murderous unbelief. Jesus does not ask for secret disciples, He bore the cross for us, and He expects us to walk openly, courageously, willingly, to take up our own cross and follow Him. It is interesting that the disciples who followed Jesus openly during His life fled at His death, and those who had followed Him secretly during His life declared themselves at His death.

Key Verses

Psalms 22:18, Psalms 69:21, Zechariah 12:10, Psalms 34:20, Exodus 12:46

Chapter 20

As we see the four scenes pictured by John, we should notice the nature of the evidence to the fact of the resurrection which each presents. We should also notice the content of the faith inspired. And we should notice the prophecy which each contains of the life in which faith will issue.

\Verses 1-31

It was not yet daybreak when Mary Magdalene came to the tomb of Jesus. It was the first day of the week, Sunday, and Jesus had been crucified on Friday. Mary found the stone moved away and the tomb empty. The cloth which was wrapped around Jesus lay in the place when Jesus' body had been laid. She thought the body had been stolen and became scared and ran to find help. Mary found Peter and John and told them what she had thought happened and they ran to the tomb.

In this first scene Peter and John are at the tomb of Jesus early on the morning of the first day of the week. They do not know that Jesus has risen as this is not what they are expecting, Jesus to be resurrected as they had not yet understood the scriptures. They have come quickly because of the announcement of Mary Magdalene and though maybe the body had been stolen. Peter goes into the tomb but turns away bewildered and distressed. Then John who had arrived first and looked in now goes into the tomb as Peter had. John also sees the empty tomb, the cloths that had been wrapped around the body of Jesus undisturbed, and the napkin which had been about his head carefully rolled up in a place by itself, John believed. John concludes that there can be only one explanation that Jesus has risen from the dead. For John there was no other logical conclusion except that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Over time men have been suggesting other explanations to the empty grave. His disciples had come by night and stole Him away, Jesus did not really die He only swooned upon the cross and then escaped the tomb, the disciples never saw Him they only imagined that He rose, and His followers were guilty of intentional falsehood. Theft, resuscitation, hallucination, deception, ignores the facts of all the events leading up to Jesus' death on the cross. The only conclusion for the thoughtful mind is that Jesus rose from the grave.

What did John believe? Did John believe that Jesus had risen from the grave? Surely John did but even more than that is the undeniable fact the Jesus truly was the divine Son of God.

Next Mary Magdalene came back to the tomb to weep and was surprised by a vision of angels. Jesus came to her but she did not recognize Him until He spoke her name. Then she knew that it was Jesus, as she called Him, Rabboni which is Hebrew for Teacher. It is the one who stands at the grave weeping at the buried hopes who first of all needs the

vision of a risen Christ. Sometimes He will speak to the very heart a message which inspires faith, as that which came to John when he went into the empty tomb, and that which comes to Mary when her heart hears the voice of the Good Shepherd.

Jesus bids her to tell the disciples that He is about to ascend, to the Father, but, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’” What was to come about by the ascension of Jesus to His Father in Heaven but a greater fellowship with Himself. This fellowship would be more intimate and real than His followers had ever known. A fellowship made possible by the Holy Spirit. Jesus designates a name to His disciple that He had never before given, Brethren. “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father” After Jesus ascends to the Father and the Holy Spirit comes to His followers as an abiding spiritual presence then they will have the truest fellowship “with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

The same day Jesus appears to His disciples in the evening. The Disciples had withdrawn to the safety of the upper room in fear of the Jews. They had yet to believe in the resurrection, even when reported to them by credible witnesses. “And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.” Now that the disciples had physical evidence they believed. Such proof was needed then but now it is not. There is other evidence that should suffice for us. We have the evidence of those who have the blessedness of a relationship with Him yet they have not seen but still believe. Their faith was now in One who was divine, One who could give peace to the soul, and One who could impart the Spirit of God. The life in which the disciples were about to enter into was, in its essence, a great mission identical with the mission of the divine Son. His mission would not end: “As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you. The disciples were to carry on the work of the Master. The power was also to be His, as He breathed upon them and said, receive the Holy Spirit. This gift gave the disciples fuller knowledge and was completed at Pentecost. In this way the risen Christ was to carry on His saving work through His human messengers by the power of His divine Spirit.

Thomas was not at this first appearance to the disciples and a week later Jesus appeared again. Thomas was there this time and the purpose of Jesus was to convince him of the reality of His resurrection. Thomas had been commonly known as a doubter. Thomas had been more skeptical than the others had been before they had seen the risen Christ. When Thomas had heard their report he demanded the same proof that they had been given. Thomas was an honest doubter because of his attitude toward the evidence. Thomas went to this meeting of the disciples; to the very place where he would hear repeated testimony he thought to be inadequate. Thomas was not afraid of the consequences of belief. He loved the Master and had been willing to die with Him. When

a person is willing to face the evidence, and really loves Christ, he is certain to receive light.

Thomas was convicted when Jesus appeared and offered to give him the very evidence that he had demanded. Thomas then believed without demanding the evidence and proof he had required. The love and mercy and knowledge of his Lord convinced Thomas not only of the resurrection, but of the divine nature. Thomas cried out in an adoring wonder: "My Lord and my God!" this confession is the culmination of belief and it is the climax of the Gospel.

John states that his purpose of writing this Gospel is to convince the readers that 'Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus being the Christ John designates the office of Messiah in whom all the prophecies of the Redeemer and Savior of the world have been fulfilled. By calling Jesus the Son of God he states the divine Person of our Lord. The proof of this is in the signs that Jesus had preformed. The greatest of all the signs that Jesus preformed is His resurrection. When Thomas accepted the evidence he at once believes and confesses his faith. To produce such faith in others is the purpose of John's Gospel.

John has written this Gospel in order that we may know Christ, may trust Him, may commit ourselves to Him, and have life in all its fullness of peace and joy and beauty and fruitfulness and hope, even the life eternal which issues from knowledge of the true God revealed in Jesus Christ His Son.