

The Gospel of John



By Cougan Collins

THE
GOSPEL
OF
JOHN

BY COUGAN COLLINS

The New King James Version Copyright © 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All right reserved. (All Scriptures are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise stated).

**LONE GROVE CHURCH OF CHRIST
P.O. BOX 65
Lone Grove, OK 73443
www.lgchurchofchrist.com
lgchurchofchrist@cableone.net
© Copyright 2008 by Cougan Collins**

I dedicate this book to my loving wife Erica and my two daughters.

Table of Contents

Preface	5
Introduction	7
Chapter 1	13
Chapter 2	23
Chapter 3	29
Chapter 4	39
Chapter 5	49
Chapter 6	61
Chapter 7	77
Chapter 8	85
Chapter 9	97
Chapter 10	105
Chapter 11	113
Chapter 12	125
Chapter 13	133
Chapter 14	141
Chapter 15	147
Chapter 16	153
Chapter 17	159
Chapter 18	165
Chapter 19	173
Chapter 20	191
Chapter 21	205

Preface

The Gospel of John has always been my favorite Gospel account. I wrote this commentary just as I taught it in our Bible class at the Lone Grove Church of Christ. This commentary is designed for all Bible students and it will help you gain a deeper understanding of the life of Christ.

This study is not limited to the Gospel John because many times I use the other Gospel accounts to give a complete picture of the event. For instance, in chapters 18-20, I give a detailed account of Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection from all four accounts.

Throughout this study I point out various Scriptures that people are confused about and use to teach false doctrines. I hope this commentary will strengthen your faith in God as this Gospel proves that Jesus is Deity and the Son of God.

If you have any questions about anything in this commentary please feel free to e-mail them to me lgchurchofchrist@cableone.net.

Introduction to the Gospel of John

1. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels because they have a lot in common, and they focus on Jesus' work in Galilee.
2. The Gospel of John is different from the Synoptic Gospels because it focuses on Jesus' work in Judea.
3. John fills in the gaps the Synoptic Gospels leave out.

Consider the following chart:

The Gospels	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Unique	42%	7%	59%	92%
In common	58%	93%	41%	8%

Each Gospel account has its own theme, and each account was written to a specific group as noted below:

1. Matthew was written to the Jews, and it shows Jesus' Messianic work as a king over His everlasting spiritual kingdom, which is His church.
2. Mark was written to the Romans, and it shows that Jesus is the one with power and strength through His miraculous works.
3. Luke was written mainly to the Greeks, and it shows the human side of Jesus and portrays Him as being a perfect man.
4. John was written to all Christians. Its primary focus is Jesus being Deity and the Son of God (Jn. 20:30-31).

Before we examine more of the unique features of the Gospel of John, I want to take a look at its background.

Author:

The author is unnamed, but it is believed that the apostle John is the author of this book and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John, which are also unnamed.

Let's examine the evidence that logically shows that the apostle John is the most likely candidate for being the author.

1. Whenever we have a book that does not bare the author's name, we must rely on other early writers who state whom the author was. In this case, the external evidence is overwhelming because many of the early writers credit these books to the apostle John.
2. The only early writing that speaks against John being the author comes from a small heretical sect known as the Alogi in Asia Minor around A.D. 170. Most scholars agree that this sect only wrote against him being the author because the Gospel of John proves the Deity of Jesus, and that went against their belief.

So, the external evidence suggests the apostle John was the author.

Let's look at the internal evidence:

1. Most agree that whoever wrote the Gospel of John also wrote 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John because they use some of the same words and expressions.
2. The Gospel of John and 1 John start and end with the same thought.
3. The use of "only begotten Son," which refers to Jesus, is only found in these two writings (Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:9).
4. The author is most likely a Jew because he quoted passages from the Old Testament, and he has a working knowledge of the Jews' feasts.
5. He mentions four Passover feasts (Jn. 2:13, 23; 5:1; 6:4; 13:1; 18:28), the Feast of Tabernacles (Jn. 7:37), and the Feast of Dedication (Jn. 10:22).
6. He was familiar with the Jewish customs such as purification (Jn. 3:25; 11:55), burial (Jn. 11:38, 44; 19:40), and the social position of women (Jn. 4:27).
7. The writer was an eyewitness and one of the 12. (Jn. 21:20-21, 1 Jn. 1:1-4).
8. The author is described as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20, 24).
9. Only one of the three apostles Peter, James, or John, who were part of Jesus' "inner circle" of friends, could possibly be the person whom Jesus loved.
10. "The disciple whom Jesus loved" could not refer to Peter (Jn. 21:20), and it could not be James because he was martyred at an early date (recorded in Acts 12:2).
11. John is the only possibility remaining.

Another argument used against John being the author states that John had a disciple named John the Elder, and he is the person being referred to in 2nd and 3rd John. Therefore, he is the one that wrote these books under the apostle John's guidance.

- They get this from a vague passage from Eusebius's writings in Book 3 Chapter 39 verse 4. Most scholars who have looked at this passage consider it as unclear because it is difficult to tell if he was talking about two different Johns or the same John.
- Based on the evidence, this is a big "what if" based on one unclear passage from an early uninspired writer.
- All the evidence I have presented strongly suggests that the apostle John is the author of these books.

A brief look at John's background:

- His father's name was Zebedee (Mt. 4:21).
- His mother's name was Salome (Compare Mk. 15:40 to Mt. 27:56).
- His brother's name was James (Mt. 4:21).
- He was one of the twelve apostles (Mt. 10:2; Mk. 3:14-17; Lk. 6:13-14; Acts 1:13).
- Many times He was in the company of Simon Peter, and he and his brother had a partnership with Peter and his brother in their fishing business (Lk. 5:10).

- John was present when Jairus's daughter was raised from the dead (Mk. 5:37ff, Lk. 8:51-56).
- He went with Jesus to the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17:1ff; Mk. 9:2ff; Lk. 9:28ff).
- Jesus called him and his brother, sons of thunder (Mk. 3:17). Why? Possibly (Lk. 9:54ff).
- When Jesus spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, John asked Him when it would take place and what signs would precede this destruction (Mk.13:3-4).
- Jesus asked John and Peter to make preparations for the Passover (Lk. 22:7-8).
- John was with the Messiah during His agony in the garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36ff; Mk. 14:32ff).

After Jesus' ascension into Heaven:

1. John and Peter were entering the temple area when a lame man stopped them and asked them for money. Peter healed him instead, which gave them the opportunity to preach the gospel (Acts 3).
2. Peter and John were arrested for their preaching, and they stood before the Jewish council at Jerusalem (Acts 4).
3. When the Samaritans were converted by the preaching of Philip, the apostles sent Peter and John to visit these new converts to impart miraculous gifts to them (Acts 8).
4. John was at the "Jerusalem Conference" with Peter and James (the Lord's brother) who were described as "pillars" in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15; Gal. 2:9).
5. Tradition says that John was the only apostle that died of natural causes around A.D.100.

Date:

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

Purpose of the Book:

The Gospel of John proves that Jesus is the Son of God and that He is Deity. The reason some say he wrote this Gospel was to refute Gnosticism. Irenaeus stated that John wrote this Gospel to refute the heresies of the Cerinthus and the Nicolaitans, which were two forms of the Gnostic heresy.

1. The Gnostics believed that God the spirit was good, but matter is evil. In other words, everything that is created is evil.
2. They taught that angels or a less perfect being came from God and created the earth.
3. They believed in the body, soul, and spirit, but they considered the body and soul as being evil.
4. The spirit was good, but it had to be awakened by a specific knowledge that a person could only gain if he joined the Gnostics.

5. They believed there were seven orbs that surrounded the earth that separated us from God. The only way a person could make it through those orbs was by having a special knowledge that only the Gnostics could provide.
6. They based their relationship with God by how they felt instead of basing it on God's Word.

There were different Gnostic beliefs:

1. Some would deny themselves of certain foods and marriage.
2. Since the body was considered evil, others indulged in sinful pleasures because they didn't feel it would have any affect on their good spirit.

One writer (author unknown) suggested the following false doctrines all have their roots in Gnosticism:

1. Original Sin – Born a sinner.
2. The Calvinistic doctrine of predestination – The Gnostics taught that some were born with a spirit nature and would be saved while others are born with a fleshly nature and would be lost.
3. Many Roman Catholic errors such as celibacy, food requirements, lent, etc.
4. Those who take what they have felt or personally experienced as being a sign that they are closer to God or that they are right with God instead of basing their belief on God's Word only.

John deals with these type of doctrinal errors in his Gospel by showing that Jesus is Deity. Jesus' identity is revealed in the following passages (Jn. 5:37; 8:14, 18, 18:37).

His testimony is supported by seven "I am" statements.

1. Jesus is the "bread of life" (Jn. 6:33-35).
2. Jesus is the "light of the world" (Jn. 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36, 46).
3. Jesus is the "door of the sheepfold" (Jn. 10:1, 7).
4. Jesus is the "good Shepherd" (Jn. 10: 11, 14).
5. Jesus is the "resurrection and the life" (Jn. 11:25-26).
6. Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6).
7. Jesus is "the true vine" (Jn. 15:1-8).

His testimony is also supported in seven great miracles:

1. The first miracle Jesus performed was turning water into wine (Jn. 2:1-11). This wine was a nonalcoholic grape juice, and it was considered the best tasting. The ruler of the feast said, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now" (Jn. 2:10), which shows that Jesus is the master of quality.
2. Jesus healed the nobleman's son (Jn. 4:46-54). The nobleman came to Jesus begging Him to heal his son who was in Capernaum over twenty miles away. Jesus told the nobleman, "Go thy way; thy son liveth". This shows that Jesus' power was not limited by distance because He is the master of distance and space.

3. Jesus healed a man who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years (Jn. 5:1-18). The longer a disease afflicts a person, the harder it is to cure. However, with Jesus time does not matter because He is the master of time.
4. Jesus fed five thousand men (besides women and children) with "five barley loaves, and two small fishes" (Jn. 6:1-14). The amount of food or the number of people did not matter, because Jesus is the master of quantity.
5. After feeding the multitude, Jesus sent His apostles to the other side of the sea. Later, they saw Jesus walking on the water (Jn. 6:16-21), which showed that He is the master of natural law.
6. In John 9, Jesus healed a man who was born blind. Jesus taught His apostles that sin did not cause this man's misfortune. Instead, his misfortune would be used to show the work of God. When Jesus healed him, He demonstrated that He is the master over misfortune.
7. Jesus raised His friend Lazarus from the dead (Jn. 11). Lazarus had been dead four days, yet Jesus commanded him to "come forth" and all saw "the glory of God," testifying that Jesus is the master of death.

There are several key words in the Gospel of John, but the only one I want to mention is the word "belief" or "faith", which he used 98 times. In regards to salvation, neither "belief" nor "faith" is used in the sense of just mentally believing in Jesus. Instead, it is a call to obedience. A great passage that proves this is John 3:36.

^{KJV} **John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.**

^{NKJ} **John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."**

^{ESV} **John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.**

^{ASV} **John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.**

^{NAU} **John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."**

^{NRS} **John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God's wrath.**

If a person wants eternal life he has to have an obedient faith because, if he does not obey, then he does not have true faith.

Finally, I want to point out a few more unique features about the Gospel of John:

1. It has no parables (Jn. 10:1ff is a proverb).
2. The Synoptic Gospels begin with Adam and work their way to Christ, but the Gospel of John begins with God.
3. It fills in the details the Synoptic Gospels leave out.
4. It records Jesus' longest prayer (Jn. 17).
5. It teaches many details about the work of the Holy Spirit.
6. It is written in the most simplistic form of Greek, yet it teaches a deep spiritual message.

John chapter 1

In John 1:1-3, 14, it is easy to understand that Jesus and the Father are separate individuals, yet they are both God. Now will be a great time to take a quick look at the Godhead (Acts 17:29, Rom. 1:20, Col. 2:9). The word “God” or “Godhead” simply means Deity. So, when we see a passage that says, “One God,” it is not saying there is just one person or one being; it is saying there is only one Deity. As we will see, the Word of God teaches there are three persons that have the characteristics of Deity, namely the Father, the Son, and the Holy spirit. Many refer to this as the Trinity, which is a man-made word. However, it does represent the Godhead well since there are Three in one.

Please note that all three are called God in Scripture:

- Father – (Jn. 3:16; 6:27; 2 Pet. 1:17)
- Jesus – (Heb. 1:8; Tit. 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:1)
- Holy Spirit – (Acts 5:3-4)

These three are not one person. Instead, they are three distinctive beings who have the same nature and essences of Deity, and they have the same goal. Some try to put their relationship into human terms by comparing them to an egg because it has an outer shell, an egg white, and a yolk, which are three distinct parts that make up the one egg. Others have used a three-leaf clover using this same idea.

To further show there is a plurality of persons that make up the one Deity, all we have to do is examine the first verse of the Bible (Gen. 1:1 – 2) In this passage, all three members of the Godhead are mentioned. God the Father is the planner, and God the Son is the creator as He carries out the Father’s plan. The Holy Spirit is the organizer as He is described as hovering over the water in verse 2. Another interesting point comes from the word “God” in verse 1, which is the Hebrew word “Elohim.” Elohim is in plural form, which means there is more than one person that makes up God. The word “Elohim” is used more than 2000 times in the Old Testament, and other Old Testament passages make this plurality clear as well (Gen. 1:26, 3:22, 11:7; Isa. 6:8), which proves more than one person makes up Deity.

There are many New Testament passages that show all three members of the Godhead as well (Mt. 28:19; Eph. 4:4-6; Mt. 3:16-17; Lk. 3:21-22; Jn.1:32; Acts 10:38, 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Jn. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:2; Jude 20-21; 1 Cor. 12:4-6).

We can observe some differences in the members of the Godhead in following passages:

- Jesus is a mediator between humans and the Father (1 Tim. 2:5).
- The Father knows, but Jesus does not (Mk. 13:32).
- The Father will send the Holy Spirit and replace Jesus as a comforter (Jn. 14:26).

Now that I have proved there are three distinct persons that make up Deity, I want to show some passages that show their individual characteristics as being a person and Deity. Since no one has a problem understanding that God the Father is a person, I will focus on Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus

- I and my father are one (Jn. 10:30). (Not one person, but one in unity and doctrine (2 Jn. 1:9) Similar to the husband and wife being one flesh (Mt. 19:5). (See Jn. 17:21 and 1 Cor. 12:12.))
- He said that “I AM,” which means “to be, self-existence” (Jn. 8:58; Ex. 3:14).
- You will die in your sins if you do not believe Jesus is God (Jn. 8:24).
- Jesus said you are to worship God (Lk. 4:8). Revelation 22:8-9 states you are to worship God. (See also (Acts 14:14-15; 10, 25-26)) Jesus accepts worship (Mt. 8:2).
- Thomas said “my Lord, my God” without correction (Jn. 20:28).
Jesus was not angel, and God calls Him God (Heb. 1:4-9).
- Jesus was not created (Isa. 43:10).
- Jesus created the world Col. 1:16-17.
- Jesus forgave sin (Mk. 2:5-9, Isa. 44:22).
- Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood (Acts 20:28).

Holy Spirit

- He speaks, hears, resists, wills, and guides.
- Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5:3-4).
- Hears and guides into all truths (Jn. 16:13).
- He speaks (1 Tim 4:1; Acts 10:19-20).
- He teaches (Jn. 14:26).
- He forbids (Acts 16: 6-7).
- He wills (1Cor. 12:11).
- He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30).
- It seemed good to the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:28).
- Holy Spirit said, “Separate to me Barnabas and Saul” (Acts 13:2).
- He was the power behind the signs (Rom. 15:19).
- We are commanded not to blaspheme the Holy Spirit (Mt.12:31).

There are more Scriptures we could examine, but these are enough to prove there is one God made up of three distinct persons who have the same goal and essence. As we progress through the Gospel of John, we will learn more about these three distinct persons in the Godhead.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

The Gospel of John starts off just like the book of Genesis, “In the beginning”. As I pointed out earlier, the word “with” carries the idea of the Word being face-to-face with God. We have already learned that the Word is Jesus. This same phrase “face-to-face” is used many times in Scripture. For instance, 1 Corinthians 13:12 and 1 John 2:1 use this phrase to talk about two distinct individuals. Not only was the Word/Jesus with God in the beginning, He was also God Himself.

John 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Everything that was created, which includes the earth, heavens, and everything that exists, was done through Jesus, which proves He has always existed (Col. 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 1:2, 10). It is also interesting that “all things were made,” which means they were made in the past and nothing new is being created. Even science agrees with this statement. The Word of God teaches that the earth and all existence came into being in six literal days unlike the millions and billions of years that some say. Exodus 20:8-11 proves this to be true because its context demands six literal days for creation.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Jesus is the life and light of all humans because without Him, all will die in their sins (Jn. 8:12, 14:6). Jesus is the true light that cannot be overtaken by evil because no matter how hard evil tries, it will not prevail against Jesus or His church (Mt. 16:18). Christians are supposed to walk in that light (1 Jn. 1:7), and we are to be a light to those who are lost in the dark world of sin (Mt. 5:14-16).

John 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. ⁷ This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. ⁸ He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. ⁹ That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

Simply put, God sent John the Baptist to be a witness of the true light, and the source of that light is Jesus. Even though John is called a light (Jn. 5:35), his light was dim and temporary in comparison to Jesus' light.

John the Baptist:

- Came from God.
- Was not the light.
- His mission was to bear witness of the light so others would believe.

When it says, “Jesus gives light to everyman,” this could mean that everyone has access to the light Jesus offers. It could also mean that in one-way or another, every person whether Christian or nonChristian will benefit from the light that Jesus provides to everyone.

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

Once again, the writer stresses the world was made through Jesus, and now He was in the world living like a man. It is astonishing that Jesus would leave His heavenly home to come to the earth to become like one of us and face the temptations that so easily ensnare us. It did not surprise Jesus when people did not know Him or accept Him as the Son of God because Isaiah said He would be rejected and misunderstood (Isa. 53:1).

Verse 11 teaches that He was rejected by His own, which refers to the Jews in general because many of them did not accept Jesus for He was. After Jesus' resurrection from the dead, His apostles began their ministry, and they felt sorry for the Jewish nation because of their unbelief (Rom. 9:1-5, 10:1-3). Verse 11 could also include how Jesus' hometown rejected Him (Lk. 4:16-30).

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

These verses deal with those who have received Jesus by believing He is the Son of God, and by obeying Him. Jesus gave them the right, or authority, to become a child of God. He made it possible for all to obtain salvation if they will receive Him and His teachings. Some use this passage to teach that a person is saved by faith alone, but that is not true, and it will not stand up to the whole counsel of God. The passage does not state or imply that a person becomes a child of God by merely believing Jesus is the Son of God. James confirmed this truth when he said, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (Jas. 2:17). Verse 13 also proves there is more than just believing because we must be born again to be a child of God. To be born again is spiritual birth as Jesus explained to Nicodemus (Jn. 3:3-5). The only way we can experience this spiritual birth is by obeying the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23), which includes believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of our sins.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

We can learn much from this verse. First, it teaches that the Word that was God and was with God is Jesus. Second, it declares Jesus was made flesh, which confirms what the Bible says about His birth (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4; Isa. 7:14, 9:6-7; Mt. 1:18ff). Jesus' miraculous conception shows He was 100% man and 100% Deity, which teaches against the idea that humans are born as sinners because Jesus had no sin in His life (Heb. 2:14). Some argue that Mary was unique and was without sin, which caused Jesus to be born without sin. However, this cannot be true because Mary was a sinner just like the rest of us (Rom. 3:23, 10).

"We beheld his glory"

John was speaking for all the apostles and for those who saw Jesus and recognized He was the Son of God. The word "beheld" means "to behold, look upon, view attentively, contemplate (often used of public shows)" (Thayer). So, those who beheld His glory did not just see it from a casual glance, they were able to examining it from all angles and test it. The word "glory" means "the kingly majesty which belongs to Him as supreme ruler, majesty in the sense of the absolute perfection of the deity" (Thayer). Jesus' glory was manifested in how treated others in His obedience to the Law and the miracles He did. His glory as Deity was also manifested in the transfiguration (Mt. 17:1ff).

"Only begotten of the Father"

Jesus is the only true Son of God who was begotten of Him. When we become Christians, we become sons of God's as well, but not in the same sense as Jesus because He came down

from heaven and became flesh without an earthly father. Also, the phrase “Only begotten of the Father” has never been said about angels either (Heb. 1:5).

“Full of grace and truth”

Jesus personifies both grace and truth. Grace describes His redemptive work to save humankind, and truth corresponds with His teachings that came from above (Jn. 14:6).

John 1:15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' " ¹⁶ And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.

The Gospel of John never refers to John the Baptist as John the Baptist. Instead, it calls him John. John's main mission in life was to prepare the way for the Messiah. When John baptized Jesus and learned He was the Messiah, he declared Him even more. John understood that he was not even worthy enough to touch Jesus' sandal strap (Mk. 1:7). Even though John was born six months before Jesus (Lk. 1:36), John said that Jesus was preferred or ranked higher than he was, and He was before him. John's statement shows the preexistence of Jesus because John recognized that He was before him even though He became flesh after him. Just as Jesus said, “before Abraham was, I AM.” (Jn. 8:58).

In verse 16, John teaches that we have received the fullness of Christ, which is a reference to His Deity and saving grace. It is only through Jesus and having an obedient faith that we continuously receive grace upon grace.

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

This verse is not teaching there was no grace or truth under the Old Law because there was. However, the Old Law could not completely take away sin because every year there was a reminder of sin (Heb. 10:3). Jesus established a new covenant based on better promises (Heb. 8:6-7). The Old Law pointed to Christ in which He would reveal the truth and grace, which was the forgiveness of sin for Jews and Gentiles. Some say, “Since we are under grace and truth, we are not under a law.” However, that is not true because grace and truth includes law; otherwise, we would have nothing to obey. We know that we have laws to obey because Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (Jn. 14:15). Besides, there are many passages that call the new covenant the Law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; Jas. 1:25, 2:12).

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

John teaches that no one has seen God except Jesus. Well, what about Exodus 24:10 and Job 42:5. Is this a contradiction? No. These people, including Moses, only saw a manifestation of God. No one has seen God as He is except Jesus.

“The only begotten Son”

This is another interesting phrase. Most Bible versions has a footnote that suggest this phrase can be rendered “only begotten God”. Some scholars argue this is how it should be rendered because of the evidence from the documents we get our Bible from. The reason most translation use the word “Son” is because the translators assumed that people would understand that the Son of God and God both show Deity. However, it not always understood that way because some denominations teach that Jesus is something other than God.

Jesus is in the bosom of the Father, which describes Jesus’ intimate union and identity with God. Since He has this close union with God, He is the perfect one to reveal God because He was God in the flesh, and He was the express image of God. He and Father are one (Jn. 10:30; 14:7-11).

John 1:19 Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

Those in Jerusalem had heard about John’s preaching and ministry. Verse 24 reveals that the Pharisees were the ones who urged this group of Levites and Priests to find out who John was. When John was questioned about whom he was, he denied being the Christ. Then they ask him two more questions.

First, they asked him, “Are you Elijah?” They thought the Scriptures foretold that Elijah would be resurrected and sent back as a forerunner for the coming Messiah (Mal. 4:5-6). Notice, John said, no I am not him. However, Jesus said that he was Elijah (Mk. 9: 11-13; Mt. 11:13-14). Is this a contradiction? Jesus said he was Elijah, but John said he was not. Luke 1:13-17 provides the answer. The forerunner would not be Elijah resurrected, he would only be a person that came in the spirit and the power of Elijah. It is in this sense that John was Elijah. So, there is no contradiction.

Second, they asked him, “Are you the Prophet?” They knew what the Scriptures said even though they did not fully understand them. There question came from what Moses said in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. However, this prophecy was about Christ (Acts 3:18-22). Of course John’s answered no to this question as well.

John 1:22 Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" ²³ He said: "I am 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD," ' as the prophet Isaiah said."

Since John was not the Christ, Elijah, or the prophet, they wanted to know, “Who are you then?” He answered with Isa.40:3. Obviously, they did not understand the prophecy referred to the Elijah that was to come in Malachi 4:5-6.

John 1:25 And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

The baptism John was teaching was something new and different. If Christ, Elijah, or the Prophet had come as the Jews understood it, they could anticipate them teaching a new rite like baptism. Since John declared that he was none of these, they cannot understand why John is baptizing.

John 1:26 John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. ²⁷ "It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose." ²⁸ These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

John baptized with water, and his baptism was by immersion, which is what baptism means (Jn. 3:23). His baptism was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin (Mk. 1:4), and it came from heaven (Mt. 21:25). We will see another purpose of his baptism in verse 29ff. John referred to Jesus again in verse 27. We know the name of the place where John was baptizing, but unfortunately, there are two places with this name within a couple of miles from each other. So, we don't know for sure the exact location where this took place.

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ "This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' ³¹ "I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." ³² And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. ³³ "I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ "And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

Another purpose of John's baptism was to reveal who the Messiah was. When the text says that John didn't know Him, it does not necessarily mean he didn't know who His own cousin was because we do not have enough information to know if they knew each other or not. In context, John was simply saying he did not know that Jesus was the Messiah until it was revealed to him on that day when he baptized Him, and the Spirit descended on Him and stayed. This was God's sign to John that Jesus was the Messiah, and this is the reason he called him the "lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Isaiah 53:7 talks about how Jesus would be led as lamb to the slaughter, which is exactly what happened to Jesus. He was an innocent man who was killed on the cross, and it was through His sacrifice that He bore all our sins. Since John was an eyewitness of Jesus, he boldly proclaimed that Jesus is the Son of God.

John 1:35 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. ³⁶ And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

On the next day, John proclaimed Jesus as being the Lamb of God in front of his disciples. John wanted his disciples to understand that Jesus is the Son of God who is here to take away our sins.

John 1:37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

John understood that he must decrease, and Jesus must increase. So, I imagine he was happy when these two disciples decided to follow Jesus. After all, John had taught them everything he knew, and only Jesus would be able to enlighten them further. We can see their eagerness to learn from Jesus, the master teacher, which is why they called Him Rabbi or teacher.

Even though Jesus knew what these men wanted, many times He would ask questions like He did here to make them think and acknowledge why they are seeking after Jesus. They inquired where He lived, and He said, "Come see." When they went to see where He lived, it gave them an opportunity to listen to Jesus and learn more about Him. The tenth hour means it was either 10 A.M. by Roman time or 4 P.M. by Jewish time.

John 1:40 One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ).

One of these disciples was Andrew. The Bible does not teach us much about Andrew, but he was good at bringing people to Jesus.

- He brought his brother Peter.
- He found the lad who had five barely loaves and two fishes (Jn. 6:8ff).
- Andrew and Philip brought some Greeks to Jesus (Jn. 12:22ff).
- He found himself within the inner circle of Jesus' closest disciples at the Mount of Olives (Mk. 13:3).
- Tradition teaches that Andrew was crucified in an X position.

The other disciple is not named, but many believe it was John because he never names himself in this book. We can tell the writer is giving us an eyewitness account of these events. So, I believe John is this unnamed disciple, which means that Andrew and John were two of the first disciples of Jesus.

John 1:41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).

Andrew and John had been looking for the coming of the Messiah. They were both disciples of John the Baptist, and they believed John's testimony that Jesus was the coming one as prophesied by the Scriptures. So, Andrew brought his brother to Christ, and Jesus gave him a new name that means stone or pebble, which comes from the Greek word "Petros."

John 1:43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

The next day, Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He encountered Philip and asked him to follow Him. Philip was from the same city as Andrew and Peter. Bethsaida means "house of fish," which was a good name because this was a fishing village located next to the Sea of Galilee. Again, we do not know much about Philip either. After Pentecost, we do not find him mentioned again. Tradition teaches that Philip died a martyr at Hierapolis.

John 1:45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote -- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." ⁴⁶ And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Philip was doing his best to bring people to Christ as well as we just read. Nathanael was hesitant at first because the city of Nazareth was just a poor city off the beaten path. He could not see how anything good could come from that city. Philip did not argue with him or try to convince him by more words; he simply said, "Come see". Sometimes the only way we can convince a person of something is to allow him to see it with his own eyes and experience it with all his senses.

John 1:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" ⁴⁸ Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Nathanael decided to go to Jesus to see if He was the Messiah. He got more than he bargained for because Jesus called him by name and called him an Israelite without deceit. Nathanael was puzzled at how Jesus could know his name. Then Jesus blew his mind when He told him He saw him sitting under a fig tree. It was one thing to know his name, but to know he was sitting under a fig tree earlier was beyond comprehension. Jesus' miraculous knowledge left no doubt in Philip's mind that Jesus was the Messiah the prophets had talked about, which is why he proclaimed Him as the Son of God and the King of Israel.

It is believed that Nathanael is the same person as Bartholomew. John never mentions Bartholomew, and the other three Gospels never mention Nathanael. These differences are not uncommon in the Bible because one writer will use one name, and another writer will use a different name. For instance, the Gospel of John is the only one that teaches that Peter was called Cephas (Jn. 1:42).

John 1:50 Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹ And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Jesus was telling Nathanael that His being able to see him under the fig tree will not compare to things that he will see Jesus do later. For instance, in chapter 2, Jesus is going to do His first miracle, which will set the stage for more miracles and signs that would prove that Jesus is the Son of God.

Next, Jesus said: "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." The term, "most assuredly" or "verily verily" is unique to the Gospel of John, and it is used exclusively by Jesus. He used this word twice, which can carry the meaning of "amen amen". He said this to emphasize the words that followed, but what did Jesus mean when he said: "hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

I wish I could give provide a definite answer, but I cannot. However, I can give offer some possibilities. First, we do not know for sure if Jesus was talking about something literal or spiritual. If He is talking about something literal His disciples would see, then perhaps it describes the event when Jesus was taken up into heaven (Acts 1). Others have suggested it might refer to Jesus' second coming when heaven will be opened and every eye will see Him.

When examine this as a spiritual event, it could be an antitype of the Jacob's vision (Gen. 28:12). Jesus would be the ladder that takes care of the gap between God and man. So, this statement could be talking about Jesus' work on the earth, which also included His death, burial and resurrection.

One last point I want to make is that Jesus referred to Himself about 40 times as "the Son of man". Jesus is not "a son a man," He is "the Son man". Some use this phrase to teach that Jesus was a mere man, but that is not the case because this phrase "the Son of man" can show His Deity and authority.

He used this phrase "the Son of man" in following ways:

- He was Lord of the Sabbath (Mt. 12:8).
- He had power to forgive sins (Mk. 2:10).
- He will come with the glory of His Father and the angels (Mk. 8:38).
- He would be raised from the dead (Mk. 9:9).
- He came to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10).

So, this phrase does not mean He was just a mere man, and we have already looked at many other passages that prove that Jesus is Deity by His own confession and by others.

John 2

John 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

“On the third day” refers to the 3rd day after Jesus met Nathaniel. Seven days have passed since John 1:19. Only the Gospel of John mentions this place called Cana. The traditional site of Cana is nine miles north of Nazareth. Even though Jesus had just begun His public ministry, He and His disciples took the time to be guests at this wedding. Some have speculated that these were friends or relatives of Mary. However, it is also possible they were friends of Nathaniel because this was his hometown (Jn. 21:2). Historians teach that all the guests of a wedding usually dressed up in special garments. Jesus confirms this tradition in the parable about the wedding feast (Mt. 22).

John 2:3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." ⁴ Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

To run out of wine would have been an embarrassing moment for this family and especially for the host of the wedding. It was the host's job to make sure everything was taken care of, and that there was plenty of wine and food. Mary was concerned when the wine ran out, so she told Jesus about it knowing He would be able to help. Since Mary was concerned about this, it gives us another hint that this family was her friend or relative. It is believed that Mary's husband was dead now, and she was used to relying on Jesus. We need to remember that Mary has not seen Jesus perform a miracle yet, but she knows who He is. So, we should not assume that Mary thought Jesus was going to fix this problem by a miracle.

When Jesus responds to her as “woman,” some have thought Jesus was being rude to His mother. However, this was a common expression that they used, which was not rude at all (Jn. 19:26). Others view Jesus' answer as a mild rebuke. When Jesus said, “My hour has not yet come,” there are two possibilities of what He meant. First, He could be saying, it is not time for me to work a miracle right now to fix this problem. Second, He could be referring to His death in the sense that when He works His first miracle, it would set into motion the events that would eventually lead to His death on the cross. The expression “My hour has not yet come,” is used to describe His death as it is many other passages (John 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1).

John 2:5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do *it*." ⁶ Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. ⁷ Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ And He said to them, "Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast." And they took *it*.

Mary had complete confidence in Jesus' ability to fix this problem with the wine. These water pots varied in size because they were made by hand. This is why it says they would hold 20 to 30 gallons a piece. Next, Jesus has them fill these water pots to the brim. Notice, He did not touch the water pot and by having them filled to the brim, it would make it

impossible to pour something in. This was done to show that a real miracle was taking place. Then the servants took some of this liquid from the water pot and gave it to the master of the feast.

John 2:9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. ¹⁰ And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!" ¹¹ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

The master of the feast would taste the new wine before it was served to the guests. He did this to make sure the wine tasted good. When He tasted this water that was turned to wine, He was impressed with the quality of its taste. We can imagine how shocked these servants were who saw this miracle take place and then saw how much the master of the feast liked the wine. He calls for the bridegroom to find out why he has provided the best wine toward the end of the wedding feast. The custom was to bring out the best wine in the beginning and then the inferior wine after everyone had already had their fill. Of course the bridegroom would have been speechless because he knew he had not provided this wine. This first miracle was just the beginning of miracles that Jesus would perform that would reveal His glory as the Son of God. This miracle also caused His disciples to believe in Him.

We cannot leave this section of Scripture without discussing the question, did Jesus turn the water into fermented wine? The obvious answer is no, but those who want to find justification for social drinking will say, "Yes He did." There was fermented wine available during that time period, but when people drank the fermented wine, they rarely drank it as it was. Plato said, "Wine was always drunk diluted, and to drink it unmixed was looked on as barbarism" (Living Soberly, Righteously And Godly p. 20). Other sources suggest that they would mix six part water with one part wine. It was not uncommon for people to mix their wine with water or milk.

In the current English dictionaries the word "wine" is usually defined as fermented juice. However, if we look in older dictionaries, they will also show that it can mean unfermented juice as well. In the Bible, the word "wine" can mean fermented (Gen. 9:20-26, 19:30-38) or unfermented (Isa. 16:10, 65:8; Joel 2:24). We have to consider the context to decide if the wine is fermented or unfermented.

Those who argue this was fermented wine at the wedding, suggest the ruler of the feast was saying the tradition was to get the people drunk on the most intoxicating wine first. Then the water downed wine should be brought out because the guest will be too drunk to notice. However, that is not what is meant by the phrase "well drunk". It simply means the guests were full of the good wine, so it is acceptable to bring out the inferior. Now, if we say that these guests were already drunk, and that Jesus made the strongest wine yet; then we have Jesus providing a way for these people to become more drunk with the 120 to 180 gallons of wine He made.

When you think about this, it becomes obvious that Jesus did not make fermented wine that would cause these people to become more drunk. The reason we know this is because there are many Scriptures that warn against the use of strong drink (Prov. 20:1, 21:17, 23:21, 31-35; 1 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 5:18). These few verses are enough to show that Jesus would not have made fermented wine. However, I want to make one last point that will prove this beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Everyone agrees that Jesus was a man without sin (Heb. 4:15). If Jesus turned the water into fermented wine that would make people drunk, then He would have been guilty of sin.

Habakkuk 2:15 “Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, Pressing *him* to your bottle, Even to make *him* drunk, That you may look on his nakedness!

So, when the master of the feast said it was the best wine, he did not mean the most intoxicating, he meant it was the best tasting. The first juice that comes out the grapes is the sweetest and best tasting, which is what Jesus had created with His miracle.

Others have suggested the first century people did not have a way of preserving the grape juice without it fermenting. However, this is not true. There were at least three different ways they could do this.

The first method was to boil the grapes down to a thick mixture called defrutum. They would use this to put on their bread and they would add water to it for a drink.

The second method was to use wool or a similar material to filter the particles including the yeast from the grape juice (Isa. 25:6). This would prevent it from fermenting. Pliny said, “For all the sick, the wine is most useful when its forces have been broken by the strainer.” Pliny teaches us that they used this filtered juice for those who were sick, which means that Paul was most likely recommending unfermented wine for Timothy’s sickness (1 Tim. 5:23).

The third method was to put the wine in a sealed container and put into a pond or a well which would keep it from fermenting. The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary describes it this way, “If you wish to have grape juice all year, put grape juice in an amphora and seal the cork with pith; sink it in a fishpond. After 30 days, take it out. It will be grape juice for a whole year.”

All this evidence proves that they were able to preserve their grape juice in the first century. I have also shown from the Scriptures that Jesus did not create fermented wine with His miracle.

John 2:12 After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

This is the first time the Gospel of John mentions Jesus’ brothers. We see that all of them went to Capernaum. Capernaum was an important city during the first century. It was located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus lived in Capernaum to fulfill Scripture (Mt. 4:13-16). Much of Jesus’ ministry occurred in and around this city.

For instance:

- He taught in Capernaum's Synagogue on several occasions (Mk. 1:21; Lk. 4:31-38; Jn. 6:59).
- He called five of His disciples here: the four fishermen (Mk. 1:16-21) and the tax collector (Mk. 2:13-14).
- He performed many miracles in this area:
 1. Raised Jarius' daughter from the dead (Mk. 5:22).
 2. Healed the centurion's servant (Mt. 8:5). This centurion built the synagogue in Capernaum (Lk. 7:1-5).
 3. Healed a paralytic carried by four friends (Mk. 2:1-12).
 4. Healed the fever of Peter's mother-in-law (Mt. 8:14-15).
 5. Healed the nobleman's son in Capernaum from Cana (Jn. 4:46-54).
 6. He cast out a demon (Mt. 12:22).
 7. He paid the tax with a coin from a fish's mouth (Mt. 17:24-27).

This is not a complete list of what Jesus did in this area, but we can see that Jesus was very active in this area. One would think the people there would believe in Him after hearing Him speak and seeing all that He did, but this was not the case. Notice what Jesus says about Capernaum.

Matthew 11:23 "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴ "But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you." (also Luke 10:15)

It is so sad that these people saw all that Jesus did and yet they did not believe. We know how wicked Sodom was and how God destroyed them. Jesus is saying that Capernaum's judgment will be harsher than theirs on the Day of Judgment. Later in history, Capernaum was destroyed. Just recently archeologists have found and confirmed the remains of this city.

This city teaches us some things about evangelism. Sometimes we get frustrated because people will not look at the Scriptures for what they say because they are only interested in what they feel or think. We have just learned about how Jesus spent most of His ministry in and around Capernaum. Even though He was God in the flesh and worked many signs and miracles, the people still did not believe. So, if Jesus had trouble opening the eyes of the people with all that He did, then we need to realize that we are going to have trouble opening the eyes of people as well. So, we should never give up. Instead, we should rejoice knowing that we are making God happy even if no one listens.

John 2:13 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. ¹⁵ When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. ¹⁶ And He said to those who sold doves,

**"Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"
¹⁷ Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."**

Jesus always kept the Passover, and this was the first one He would observe since He began His public ministry. There was nothing in the Law of Moses forbidding the sale of animals and it was convenient for those who had to travel a great distance. Once they bought an animal without blemish, it would be considered as a part of their flock. There were also money changers there as well. The temple tax was half a shekel, but Jews could not use foreign money with images that were considered idolatry. So, the money changers would exchange their foreign money for acceptable money for the temple. Again, there was nothing wrong with these practices.

So, why did Jesus make a whip of cords, turn over their tables, and run them out? I believe the answer is found in Jesus statement, "Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" The problem was that these merchants were taking advantage of the people and charging them outlandish prices making the temple area into a place of profit. We can also see this idea when Jesus comes back to this area a second time at the end of ministry when He runs them out again. Jesus said, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" (Mt. 21:13).

This event shows that Jesus did not ignore their sin or the injustice that was being done. Instead, He took matters into His own hands and stood up for righteousness. This event also shows that Jesus is the Messiah because He called the temple, "My Father's house." When Jesus said this, He was clearly saying that He is the Son of God. Jesus' actions that day reminded His disciples of Psalm 69:9, which was a prophecy of Jesus' zeal to keep the house of God pure and holy.

John 2:18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

The Jews had just witnessed what Jesus had done, and they wanted Him to provide some proof of His authority for doing what He did.

John 2:19 Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."²⁰ Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.²² Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

The answer Jesus gave was not understood by the Jews or by His own disciples. In fact, it was not until Jesus was raised from the dead that His disciples understood what Jesus had meant (Jn. 20:9). When we think about it, we can understand why they were confused because Jesus was standing in the temple when He said this. However, we have the advantage of knowing what He was talking about because we have the fully revealed Word of God. So, Jesus was talking about His body and how it would be raised up on the third day. This would be the greatest sign that would prove that Jesus is the Son of God (Rom.

1:1-4). We also discover that at some point, some of the Jews figured out what Jesus was talking about because they asked Pilate to secure the tomb where Jesus was buried (Mt. 27:62-66). While it is true that some people were confused and unaware of Jesus' teachings in the first century, we cannot use excuses today because we have the fully revealed Word of God (Acts 17:30; 2 Thes. 1:7; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).

John 2:23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. ²⁴ But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, ²⁵ and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

There are many signs and miracles that Jesus did that were not recorded for us, but the ones we have are enough for us to believe (Jn. 20:30-31). Jesus had the ability to know the hearts of the people, and He knew they were not ready to fully embrace that He was the Son of God. Sure, some believed in His authority, but as they would soon find out it takes more than just belief. A person must be willing to follow Jesus all the way by obeying Him and remaining faithful (Rev. 2:10). Most likely, some of these same people who believed in Him are some of the same people who said, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" (Lk. 23:21).

John 3

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, which means he was considered to be a great man, and he was a teacher of the Law (Jn. 3:10). He was convinced that Jesus was a teacher that had come from God because of the signs He had performed. Since he came to Jesus at night, some have suggested he did this to be secretive so none of his fellow Jews would know what he was doing. However, this is just an assumption because he could have spoken to Him at night because it was convenient. The only thing we know for sure is that he spoke to Jesus at nighttime. Nicodemus is only mentioned two other times in Scripture (Jn. 7:50; 19:39), and both instances refer to this meeting at night he had with Jesus. Nicodemus speaks of a plurality of signs, which indicates that Jesus had done more signs than the ones that are recorded for us (Jn. 20:30-31).

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Jesus' answer confused Nicodemus because all he could think of was the physical. He knew that he belonged to the physical kingdom of Israel and as Jew, he was considered to be part of God's chosen nation. Now, Jesus is telling him you must be born-again or you cannot enter the kingdom of God or even see it.

In verse 4, Nicodemus is trying to make sense of Jesus' statement from a physical point of view, which is why he asked, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" He thought Jesus' statement was crazy because he knew it was impossible to be physically reborn. So, Jesus restates what He said to help Nicodemus understand that He was talking about a spiritual rebirth and not a physical one. Jesus makes it clear that a person cannot enter the kingdom of God, which John the Baptist said was at hand (Mk. 1:15), unless he is born-again. This teaching means a person cannot be saved unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Since these two elements are necessary for salvation, we need to take a closer look at what they are and how we are born-again.

First, let's examine the word "water" and how it relates to being born-again. The word "water" comes from the Greek word "hudor," which simply means water. Obviously, water is one of the elements necessary to be born-again, which points to baptism. In fact, we can see that water is required for baptism. For instance, when John was baptizing, he baptized with water (Mk. 1:8-10; Jn. 3:23). When the apostles and disciples were carrying out The Great Commission, they baptized with water (Acts 8:36-39; 10:47). When Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he taught that there is only one baptism that saves (Eph. 4:4-5), and Peter taught that one baptism is by water (1 Pet. 3:20-21). In Romans 6:3ff, Paul describes baptism as a

burial in which we die to our sins and we are made alive with Jesus (Col. 2:13), which is exactly what Jesus was describing to Nicodemus about being born-again. At the point of baptism, we put to death our old man of sin as we are buried under the water, and we are “born-again” as a new creature of Christ without our sins when we are raised from the water. All this evidence proves that water baptism is one of the essential elements necessary to enter the kingdom of God and be saved. In fact, all the early writers, known as the “church fathers,” agree that John 3:5 is talking about water baptism.

In his monumental work, *History of Infant Baptism*, William Wall, a leading scholar in the Church of England, asserted that not a single writer of antiquity denied the identification of the “water” of John 3:5 with baptism. He suggested that John Calvin was the first to disassociate the two items, and that Calvin even conceded that his interpretation was “new” (Oxford, 1862, Vol. I, p. 443 - christiancourier.com).

Not only does the Bible prove that Jesus is talking about water baptism, all these early non-inspired writers understood that Jesus was talking about water baptism as well.

Second, let’s take a look at the word “spirit” and how it relates to being born-again. We need to keep in mind there is only one birth and it consists of water and spirit. Therefore, there are not two births as some teach, but only one. Jesus is teaching that the Holy Spirit is involved in us being born-again. But the question is, how? To answer this question, we must go beyond this one passage and look at the whole counsel of God. When we do this, we will discover that the Holy Spirit instructs us through the Word of God on how to be saved, which is the role He plays in our being born-again.

The Holy Spirit’s main role was to reveal the Word of God to us (Jn. 14:26; 16:13-15). He spoke through some of Jesus’ disciples, who in turn recorded these revelations to us in our Bibles (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). These men would prove that they were speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by working a miracle by the power of the Holy Spirit (Mk. 16:20; Acts 2:43; 5:12; 6:8; 8:13; Rom. 15:19).

Jesus said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life” (Jn. 6:63). Paul refers to the New Testament as being a spirit (2 Cor. 3:6), which teaches us that the Holy Spirit works through the Word to show us how we are to enter the kingdom of God (Eph. 6:17). It is through the Word, or we could say by the Spirit, that we learn how to be saved (1 Pet. 1:23; Rom. 1:16; Jas. 1:18, 21).

To further show how the Holy Spirit works in our conversion with water baptism, notice the following parallel passages:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:25-26)

Notice, the 3 elements: the word, washing of water, and cleanse. The “word” is obviously a reference to the Word of God. “Washing of water” refers to water baptism. “Sanctify and cleanse” refers to being saved with our sin being removed.

“...He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).

Notice the 3 elements: Holy Spirit, washing of regeneration and saved. “Renewing of the Holy Spirit” refers to how the Holy Spirit works through the Word to save us (Jas. 1:21). “Washing” is defined as “Washing, cleansing; water (USB). “Regeneration” is defined as a new birth or renewal or restoration of life after death (Thayer). So, “washing of regeneration” is referring to water baptism and “saved” means salvation.

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13).

Notice the 3 elements: Spirit, baptized, one body. Please notice Paul says, “By one Spirit” and not “With one Spirit.” This detail is important because it shows the baptism being spoken of is not Holy Spirit baptism because it is by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit instructs us through the Word that we must be baptized in water into the name of Jesus for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38). So, “baptism” refers to water baptism. “One body” is the same as saying the kingdom because the body is the church (Col. 1:18, 24), and the church is the same as the kingdom (Mt. 16:18-19). This truth can be seen in following chart:

John 3:5	Spirit	Water	Kingdom
Eph. 5:26	Word	Water	Cleansed
Tit. 3:5	Holy Spirit	Washing	Saved
1 Cor. 12:13	Spirit	Baptized	Body

All these verses prove that the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God, which teaches us what we must do to be born-again. To be born-again, we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God (Jn. 8:24), repent (Lk. 13:3), confess Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10) and be baptized (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 22:16). When we obey the Holy Spirit’s instructions, we are added to the kingdom by God (Acts 2:47), which is Jesus’ church or body (Col. 1:18, 24) that He will save (Eph. 5:23).

Whenever we are born-again, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32), which means we have been sealed by Him (Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22). The word “seal” means “To mark with a seal as a means of identification, *mark, seal* so that the mark denoting ownership also carries with it the protection of the owner (BDAG).” This fits perfectly with The Great Commission (Mt. 28:19), which teaches that we are baptized into the name of, or into the possession of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This seal is our guarantee of a home in heaven if we remain faithful (Rev. 2:10). Just as the Holy Spirit was a witness for Jesus (1 Jn. 5:6), He bears witness that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16). Once we are born-again, we are considered to be the temple of God, and all three members of the Godhead will dwell in us (Holy Spirit: 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Rom. 8:9, 11; Father: 2 Cor. 6:16; Jn. 14:23; Jesus: Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5; Jn. 6:56). How do they dwell in us? It is by our faith (Eph. 3:17). We can know that they dwell in us just like we can know that our sins are being

removed, and we are being united with Christ at the point of baptism (Col. 2:12). Again, it is by our faith in the working of God.

So, Jesus has taught Nicodemus and us a valuable lesson. If we want to be saved and be able to enter the kingdom of God, we must be born-again by obeying the instructions of the Holy Spirit, which includes being water baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of our sins.

Now, I want to deal with the objections some have with these verses.

1. Some would say that Jesus is talking about Holy Spirit baptism. I have already proven the baptism that saves is water baptism, but let's take a look at some more reasons this cannot be talking about Holy Spirit baptism. Holy Spirit baptism only occurs two times in Scripture, and it was followed with the miraculous ability to speak in another language. First, at the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and second, at Cornelius house (Acts 10). Holy Spirit baptism was a promise that Jesus would administer, and He only promised it to His apostles (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33). If Jesus was talking about Holy Spirit baptism, then it would be necessary for every single person to receive it to enter the kingdom of God. Again, we only have two cases of this recorded for us in Scripture.

If Holy Spirit baptism was essential for salvation and water baptism is not, then we are going to have a difficult time explaining why Philip baptized the people of Samaria in water and then left them out of the kingdom (Acts 8:14-16). The only other way that a person could receive the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit was by the laying on of hands by an apostle, which is why Peter and John had to go to Samaria. This ability died out with the last apostle, and is not available today. If Holy Spirit baptism was necessary, then why did Ananias tell Paul to get up and get himself baptized (Acts 22:16)? If Holy Spirit baptism is what saves, then the Holy Spirit could have baptized Paul right then and there even if he was standing on his head. It should be obvious that water baptism is what Jesus is talking about in this verse because it was commanded, which means it is to be done by us (Mt. 28:18). Water baptism was done throughout the book of Acts because it is the one baptism that saves (Eph. 4:4-5).

2. Some have said the water is talking about the amniotic fluid that surrounds a baby in the womb, and the spirit is referring to being born of the Spirit, which brings us back to Holy Spirit baptism. First, it would not make sense for Jesus to say that we must be born from the water of our mother because who isn't born from their mother? So, if Jesus wanted us to know that Holy Spirit baptism was necessary, he would have simply said you must be born of the Spirit. Second, Jesus had the chance to explain to Nicodemus that he had already accomplished the first element in verse 5. Instead, He said that he must be born of water and spirit. Obviously, Jesus was letting him know that he had not experienced this new birth of water and spirit. Third, the word "water" used in this text is never used in the Bible to refer to childbirth, which should be enough to prove the water in this verse does not refer to childbirth.

3. Some have even said that water represents the semen of a man, which I find ridiculous. However, everything I said in point two proves this cannot be what water is referring to.

4. Finally, some say the water refers to the Word of God. However, I have already shown several passages that prove the Spirit is associated with and works through the Word of God (Jn.6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 6:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). Besides, there is nothing in verses 3-5 that would cause us to view the water as being symbolic of something else.

Many in the religious world will say that the kingdom is still in the future. However, this is not true because the kingdom and the church are the same thing. For instance, they are used synonymously in Mt. 16:18-19 and in Heb. 12:22–24, 28. Before Pentecost, the kingdom was always at hand, but after Pentecost in Acts 2, the kingdom is spoken of as a present reality (Col. 1:13).

John 3:6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Jesus sums up His message by teaching that we are born of the flesh from our mothers, but it is our spirit that must be born again and that does not happen until we are baptized. That spiritual birth is accomplished by God (Col. 2:12).

John 3:7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'⁸ "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Since Jesus explained to Nicodemus that the birth He is talking about is a spiritual one and not a physical one, He tells him not to be amazed or surprised that he must be born-again. In verse 8, Jesus used the example of how the wind cannot be seen and compares it to the invisible spirit of a person. When we are baptized into Christ, we cannot see a physical change of our body because the change has happened to our invisible spirit. So, while we cannot see the spirit being reborn, we can see the results of it just like we can see the results of the wind.

John 3:9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?"

Even though Jesus has explained this to him, he still cannot grasp this concept. Since he was a teacher of the Law, Jesus knows he is capable of understanding what He said. Since Nicodemus was teacher, he should have known the Scriptures that foretold of a day when a new covenant would be made and changes would take place (Jer. 31:31-34).

John 3:11 "Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness."¹² "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

Jesus seems to be including His disciples when He uses the word “we,” which means His disciples were there as He was teaching Nicodemus. Jesus wants him to know that if he

cannot believe in the earthly things He tells Him, then how in the world will he ever believe the heavenly things He could teach him.

John 3:13 "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

Based on context, Jesus is letting us know that He has the authority to teach us about heavenly things because He was in heaven before He descended to the earth. No human has ascended to heaven where Jesus was.

What about Elijah and Enoch? It is true, Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven (2 Kgs. 2:11), and Enoch was taken by God (Heb. 11:5), but unless these two men are the exception, they did not go into heaven where the Father is. Instead, they went into that part of heaven known as paradise where Abraham is (Lk. 16). Since paradise is a place where the soul goes, I have to assume that Elijah's and Enoch's physical body was discarded or changed by God as they entered paradise. So, when Jesus said that no one has ascended into heaven He was talking about the part of heaven where the Father is and not paradise.

John 3:14 "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Jesus gives Nicodemus an illustration from Moses' day (Num. 21: 4-9) to show how He would die. The children of Israel had sinned and God sent fiery serpents to bite them. Many of them died, but Moses prayed to God for help, and he told him to make a bronze serpent and to lift it up on his staff. If someone was bitten, they could look at the bronze serpent and they would be healed. In a similar way, we were all lost in our sins, but Jesus was raised up on the cruel cross where He died for our sins, and the only way that we can be healed from our sins is to look to Jesus for our salvation. God has always wanted us to look to Him for salvation (Isa. 45:22).

Verse 15 says that whoever wants eternal life must believe in Jesus. This verse teaches that salvation is available for everyone, which opposes the Calvinistic view of predestination. Those who teach the faith only view like to use this verse and verse 16 to make their case. However, these verses do not teach what they want it to. When we look at these verses in context, we can see that more than just belief is necessary to have eternal life. Jesus just finished telling Nicodemus that he must be born of water and Spirit to enter or even see the kingdom of God. So, there is more to salvation than mere belief. The rest of the Bible makes it clear that we are saved by an obedient faith and not faith alone (Heb. 5:8-9; Mt. 7:21; Jas. 2:24). Our text also teaches that those who believe "should not" or "may not" perish. Again, this tells us that not all who believe will be saved because a person can fall away from God's grace (Gal. 5:4; Heb. 6:4-7).

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

John 3:16 is sometimes called the golden text of the Bible. Most people whether they are religious or not know this verse because it is quoted often. However, many people have no idea what it actually teaches because it has been taken out of context.

“For God so loved the world.” This is a figure of speech used to show that God loves every human in the world and not the world itself. He demonstrated His love by given His best to us, “His only begotten Son.” “Only begotten” describes Jesus as being unique and does not mean He was created by God the Father as the Jehovah Witness teach. Before He became the Son of God in the flesh, He was the eternal Word (Jn. 1:1, 14). Again, we learn that salvation is for “whoever believes.” From our previous verse, I have already shown this is not talking about mere belief and it does not support the faith only doctrine.

In verse 17, we learn that Jesus did not come to condemn the world. He did not have to condemn us because we were already condemned due to our sinful nature. Jesus came to provide a way for us to be saved and it came through His death on the cross.

John 3:18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

As Jesus finishes His discussion with Nicodemus, He points out the difference between the believer and the unbeliever. Notice, all unbelievers are condemned already and they do not like the light where the truth is found because it exposes their wickedness. So, those who love to live in sin hate the light. However, all believers are not condemned, and they love the light of truth. They will do their best to walk in the light by living their life according to the Word of God. What Jesus said gave Nicodemus a lot to think about and it should give us a lot to think about as well.

John 3:22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. ²³ Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. ²⁴ For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

Some unspecified time passes and Jesus and His disciples go somewhere into the land of Judea, and they were baptizing people there. This baptism was not a new one, it was the same baptism that John the Baptist had received from God. Jesus was baptizing people through His disciples (Jn. 4:2) because He did not baptize anyone Himself. One of the reasons the Gospel of John is unique is because it talks about Jesus' early ministry in Judea, and it shows that John the Baptist and Jesus were teaching and baptizing at the same time. Verse 24 proves this is talking about Jesus' early ministry because John had not been put in prison yet.

While Jesus was baptizing in Judea, John was baptizing in Aenon. There is disagreement on the exact location of this place, but one thing that cannot be disputed is that there was much water there. This shows the baptism John and Jesus were administering was done in water. We also learn from the original meaning of the Greek word "baptizo," which means to dip, plunge, immerse or submerge, that they would dip the person all the way under the water, which is why John was at a place with much water. We can see this at Jesus' baptism as well because once He was immersed, He came up out of the water (Mt. 3:16).

Immersion in water is the same method that is used with the baptism Jesus commanded (Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:16). It is to be done in water (Jn. 3:3-5; Acts 8:38; 10:47-48; 1 Pet. 3; 20-21), and a person is to be immersed or buried in that water (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). Some say it is acceptable to sprinkle or pour, but both of these words have their own specific Greek word, and they are not associated with the meaning of baptism. There are no examples in the Bible for sprinkling or pouring for remission of sins.

John 3:25 Then there arose a dispute between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. ²⁶ And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified -- behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"

Some of John's disciples were confused. Apparently they did not know if John's baptism was the same as the one that Jesus was administering. These men were concerned because most of the people were going to Jesus to be baptized.

John 3:27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. ²⁸ "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' ²⁹ "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. ³⁰ "He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

John is not jealous or concerned that Jesus is increasing because he knew that he was just the forerunner for Him. John is correct when he said that Jesus would not have the success He was having unless God willed it (Ps. 127:1-2; 1 Cor. 3:6). John never claimed to be the Christ, but only a witness for Him. He uses the idea of marriage and compares Jesus to a bridegroom and himself as the bridegroom's friend. The friend would not even consider taking away the honor of the bridegroom because he wants Him to be successful. John is rejoicing because he knows he has fulfilled what God has asked him to do, and now he must decrease and Jesus must increase. Jesus' work would bring in the new kingdom that would last forever, which would begin on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

John 3:31 "He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. ³² "And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. ³³ "He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.

John is comparing himself to Jesus. John is from the earth and is limited in his knowledge, but Jesus is from heaven and His knowledge and authority is infinite. Many of those who saw and heard Jesus speak did not believe Him, but John believed, and he continued bearing witness that Jesus was the coming one.

John 3:34 "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. ³⁵ "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. ³⁶ "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Jesus did not receive the Spirit in measure or in part because the Spirit descended on Jesus and remained there after He was baptized (Jn. 1:33). The Father gave all things into Jesus' hands (Mt. 28:18). However, the same cannot be said about us. Not even the apostles had the full measure of the Spirit as Christ had it, and Christians today only have the seal and earnest of the Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:22).

The KJV and NKJV do not fully capture the meaning of verse 36. However, several other translations do:

^{ESV} **John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.**

^{ASV} **John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.**

The second part of the verse uses a different Greek word "apeitheo" than the first part "pisteuo". "Pisteuo" means to obey, which is significant because it shows that one must have an obedient faith to have eternal life and not just belief alone. Those who do not have an obedient faith will suffer the wrath of God (2 Thes. 1:7-9).

John 4

John 4:1 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John ² (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), ³ He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. ⁴ But He needed to go through Samaria.

The Pharisees were prevalent in Judea and were confrontational when someone was teaching something new. Since Jesus was increasing in popularity, He would eventually attract a confrontation with them. Before this happened, Jesus left Judea to continue His work in Galilee.

Verse 2 points out that Jesus did not baptize anyone Himself, but He did it through His disciples. Since Jesus was their master, anything they did by His authority could be attributed to Him. We see this many times throughout the Bible. For instance, when a king is recognized for killing 10,000 men, He didn't kill them all by himself. Instead, his people did most of the killing, but they are under his authority so this is why it can be said that the king killed these 10,000 men. This same idea is true when a person is baptized today. Some like to call it a work of man because someone is dipping another person in the water. However, when a person is baptizing someone, they are doing it by the authority of Jesus, so it is not a work of man but a work of God (Col. 2:12). Since we baptize by the authority of Jesus, we could also say that we are being baptized by Jesus as well.

Verse 4 says, "But He needed to go through Samaria." Why did He need to go through Samaria? Well, we are not told for sure, but there are at least two possible reasons. First, the most direct route to Galilee from Judea was through Samaria. Otherwise, one would have to cross the Jordan River and go around Samaria, which would take a lot more time. Second, Jesus could have known the Samaritans were ready to hear His words and believe, which is exactly what happened.

We need realize that most full-blood Jews would not step foot into Samaria because they considered them an impure race because they were part Jew and part Gentile. The rabbis of that day prohibited Judean Jews from setting foot on Samaritan territory and according to the Babylonian Talmud, if they did, they would be considered unclean. There was not much love between these two groups. To help us better understand why the full-blood Jews despised the Samaritans, let's take a closer look at where they came from and how this all began.

The territory of Samaria was comprised of two tribes, Ephraim and part of Manasseh. After the children of Israel divided into two kingdoms, king Omri started building the city of Samaria around 880 B.C. and his son Ahab finished its construction around 874 – 853 B.C. This city became the capital of Israel. Due to Israel's constant disobedience to God, the Assyrians captured their capital around 722 – 721 B.C. and many of the Israelites were taken away to Assyria (2 Kgs. 17:23).

Next, Assyria takes over the city of Samaria and they bring in various foreigners (2 Kgs. 17:24). Not all the Israelites were gone because some would be left to work the vineyards and the fields and others had escaped (2 Chr. 30:6). These foreigners would eventually marry

these Israelites and this is where the Samaritans got their start (2 Kgs. 17:29). They were called this because they were occupying Samaria. Mixing these different nationalities was a strategy used to blend these people so they would lose their identity and be less of a threat to the Assyrians in the future.

We need to remember that it was against God's Law to marry foreigners, but they did it anyway. Once these mixed people made their way into Samaria, God sent lions to eat some of them because they did not fear God (2 Kgs. 17:25). They wanted to appease God, so they sent for a priest to teach them about the ways of God. From that point forward, they worshipped God, but they also continued worshipping their false gods as well (2 Kgs. 17:26ff).

Later, Judah was captured by the Babylonians, and 70 years later, they began to come back to their homeland. The Samaritans offered to help Zerubbable rebuild the temple, but he refused their help. This made the Samaritans mad, so they tried to prevent the Jews from rebuilding the temple (Ezra 4:1-10). They also tried to prevent Nehemiah from rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:10 – 6:14). When Ezra commanded the Jews to divorce their pagan wives (Ezra 9 – 11), this divided the Jews from the Samaritans even more. According to Josephus, the final event that would forever separate the Jews from the Samaritans was when they built a temple on Mount Gerizim (Ant., XI, vii, 2; viii, 2 ff). They claimed this area, known as Shechem, as being the true "Bethel" (house of God) instead of Jerusalem (Nelson New Illustrated Bible Dictionary p.1120). We will see the significance of this when we examine the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

At some point, the Samaritans put away their pagan gods and they regulated their worship by the Torah. They believed the first five books of the Bible were God's Word, and they did not recognize any of the other books in the Old Testament as being from God. The Samaritans were almost destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 527 – 565. However, two small groups still exist today in Nablus (ancient Shechem) and near Tel Aviv (Nelson New Illustrated Bible Dictionary p.1120).

John 4:5 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶ Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

Most scholars believe that Sychar was probably the same place known as Shechem in the Old Testament. Jacob had bought this plot of land from Shechem's father for 100 pieces of money (Gen. 33:18-20). Joseph inherited this land and eventually was buried there (Jos. 24:32). John 4 is the only one that talks about Jacob's well. It is believed that either he or his servants dug it. He used this well, and it was still being used by these Samaritans.

J. W. McGarvey wrote:

Jacob's well is still there, about one hundred feet from Mount Gerizim, which rises high above it to the west. The well is a perfect cylinder, seven and

a half feet in diameter, walled with stones of good size, smoothly dressed, and nicely fitted together, an excellent piece of masonry. Its depth was stated by the earliest modern who visited it (Maundrel) at 105 feet with fifteen feet of water. In 1839, it was found to be seventy-five feet deep with ten or twelve feet of water. All visitors of more recent date have found it dry and gradually filling up from the habit of throwing stones into it to hear the reverberation when they strike the bottom (J. W. McGarvey, *The Fourfold Gospel* (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Standard Publishing Company, 1914), p. 56).

Jacobs Well, today, is located in a dark crypt of a church, surrounded with icons and candles. A Byzantine Church was built over the well which was destroyed in 1187. In 1860, the Greek Orthodox Church restored the crypt, and in 1914 began the restoration of the Church. In 1960 "it was still unfinished. There were two small structures not unlike builders huts which cover two stone stairways down into the crypt. Water is drawn which is clear and drinkable (hitch.south.cx/Jacobs-well.htm).

In verse 6, John captures the humanity of Jesus because he tells us that Jesus was tired from traveling and He sat down by the well. This shows that Jesus got tired just like every other human and needed rest. This happened about the 6th hour. There is not a clear way to determine if this is referring to Jewish or Roman time. A Jewish day began at sunset, around 6 pm our time. When daylight started around 6 am, they would divide the day up in twelve parts. So, if this verse is referring to Jewish time, it was about noon our time. The Romans' day began at midnight, and they would count the next twelve hours as morning just like we do. Starting at noon, they would start over, and our 1 pm would be called the first hour. So, if our verse is referring to Roman time, it would have been 6 pm our time.

John 4:7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." ⁸ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. ⁹ Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. ¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to her, "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." ¹¹ The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? ¹² "Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

While Jesus was resting at Jacob's well, along comes a Samaritan woman. At that moment, Jesus breaks down the wall of prejudice between the Jews and Samaritans, and He also breaks the social rule of a man talking to a woman. While His disciples were gone getting some food, Jesus engages in conversation with this woman asking her to get Him a drink because He did not have a way of getting it Himself. This implies there was not a community bucket there, and every person that wanted water had to bring their own bucket with a rope long enough to reach the water.

This woman is shocked that Jesus is talking to her because she recognizes that He is a Jew, and she emphasizes that Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus responds to her saying, "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." Jesus is doing the same thing He did with Nicodemus. He is using something physical to teach her a spiritual message. The gift that Jesus speaks of is the gift of salvation that comes through Him. Living water usually refers to a running spring or running water as opposed to stagnate water. However, Jesus was not talking about physical water; He was talking about eternal life that He can offer through His words, which will lead to eternal life.

Just like Nicodemus, this woman was confused because all she could think about was physical water. This is the reason she asked Jesus how He was going to get this water since He has nothing to draw it with from this deep well. First, she refers to Jacob's well, and then she wants to know where He might get this living water from. She knew that Jacob had to dig this well so they could have water in this area because there was not any living water or fresh springs nearby. As she continued thinking of physical water, she seems to be wondering if Jesus knew of a spring close by that Jacob did not know about, which is why she asked if He was greater than Jacob. Of course we know that Jesus is greater than Jacob and every other human that has ever lived on the earth.

John 4:13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,"¹⁴ "but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."¹⁵ The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

Once again, Jesus tries to get this woman to understand that He is not talking about physical water. He does this by telling her that the physical water in Jacob's well will quench your thirst for a while, but you will become thirsty again. However, the water Jesus is offering will cause us to never thirst again. He is referring to the lifesaving message that comes from His words that will lead us to eternal life. When we drink in the Word of God, it is for our soul, and when we allow His Word to dwell in our lives, it will spring up into everlasting life. Sometimes this idea of living water represents the receiving of Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:37-39). Other times it is used to represent eternal life in heaven (Rev. 22:1). Again, this woman was still thinking of the physical because she wanted some of this water she could physical draw up and drink so she would not have to ever come to Jacob's well again.

John 4:16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."¹⁷ The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,'¹⁸ "for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

Since Jesus was not able to get her to understand about the living water, He uses another approach to reach her with the truth. Jesus asked her to bring her husband, and she said she did not have one. There was a lot more to her story, but she avoided the details by simply saying she did not have a husband. Jesus complimented her on her honesty, and He revealed to her that He knew everything about her past and what was going on in her life right now. We have no way of knowing what the circumstance was of her first five marriages, but we

can know that she was not married to the man she was with right now. We are not told what she was thinking, but it is safe to say that she had to be amazed. If I were in her shoes, it would have taken me some time to speak again. Notice her response:

John 4:19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

At first, she recognized Jesus as a Jew, but now she is beginning to see that He is much more than a Jew since He was able to tell her about her past life and her present relationship. Now she considers Him a prophet.

John 4:20 "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

Now that Jesus has her attention, she wants Him to answer the question the Samaritans and the Judeans disagreed on for hundreds of years. Is the true place of worship at Mount Gerizim in Samaria or is it in Jerusalem? Some have suggested she may have asked this question to avoid talking about her current relationship, which is possible, but it is also possible that she wants to know if she is worshipping God where she is supposed to. I wish more people today would sincerely question if their worship to God is acceptable and that they would search the Scriptures to find out. One reason Mt. Gerizim was considered a special place was because it was where the blessing was read as the children of Israel entered the promise the land (Jos. 8:33; Deut. 11:29).

John 4:21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² "You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

Jesus did not have any problems answering her question. In verse 22, He tells her the Samaritans do not know what they worship, but the Jews do. Then He affirms that salvation is for the Jews. The Jews were God's chosen people. However, under the new covenant, both Jew and Gentile Christians are considered to be the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:27-29). So, the answer to her question was that Jerusalem was the place to worship God. Not only did He answer her question, He also revealed that it would not be long until a person would not have to worship God on a specific mountain or in Jerusalem. Jesus was talking about how worship will be done under the new covenant because we can worship Him anywhere.

John 4:23 "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Every Christian should take Jesus' words to heart because He has just taught this woman and us what true worship is all about. Notice, He says, "True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth." Since there are true worshipers, this mean there are false worshipers. The Father is looking for those who are true worshipers because they are the only ones that will please Him.

What is a true worshipper? It is a person that will worship God in spirit and in truth. We worship God in spirit by engaging all our emotions and thoughts toward Him. We worship Him in truth by following the Word of God because His Word is truth (Jn. 17:17). If we worship God with just our hearts, we are not true worshippers. If we go through the motions and worship God according to His Word, but we do not engage our hearts, then we still are not true worshippers. So, both of these elements are absolutely necessary for us to be considered true worshippers.

Unfortunately, there are many in the religious world who have not taken Jesus' words seriously because they are willing to worship Him in spirit, but they have neglected to worship Him according to His truth. The opposite was true for many of the Old Testament Jews because they were willing to obey the physical rituals, but they did not engage their hearts. Again, both elements are necessary. As Christians, we need to understand that God has given us His fully revealed Word in our Bibles, and it contains everything we need to know about worshipping Him (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3), which is why Paul told the Corinthians, "...Not to think beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6). This is why we are instructed not to add or take away from the Word of God (Rev. 22:18). If we go outside God's pattern, then we are worshipping Him in vain (Mk. 7:6-7), and we will not be pleasing to the Father or the Son (2 Jn. 1:9). We should never think so highly of ourselves that we think we can devise something outside God's Word that will please Him (Acts 17:24-25).

Verse 24 tells us that God is spirit. God is not human like us because He is invisible (Col. 1:15). Even though the Bible describes God as having a face, ears, eyes, and hands, these descriptions are given so we can relate to what is being said. Jesus makes it clear that a spirit does not have flesh and bone like we do (Lk. 24:39). This is also an excellent Scripture that refutes the Mormon doctrine that teaches God is flesh and bones.

John 4:25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." ²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."

So, the Samaritans were also looking for the Messiah that would come and reveal the perfect law of God. Since the Samaritans only believed in the first five books of the Bible, this means the coming of Jesus is revealed in those books. Next, Jesus does something that He does not normally do because usually He allowed His miraculous works to reveal His identity. In this instance, He tells this woman point-blank that He is the Messiah. Some say that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah, but this verse proves that He did. We can only imagine what was running through her mind when Jesus told her this. Most likely she was shocked because at first, she thought He was just Jew. Then after He knew about her life, she thought He was a prophet, and now He says He is the Messiah.

John 4:27 And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

While Jesus was revealing His identity to this woman, His disciples were making their way back from getting food. They see Jesus talking to this woman and they are surprised because

it was unheard of for a man to talk to women in a public place, not to mention a Samaritan. His disciples wanted to question Him, but they did not. Apparently, their approach interrupted Jesus' conversation with her as suggested by the next verse, or she was so overwhelmed by whom Jesus said He was that she felt like leaving.

John 4:28 The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ²⁹ "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" ³⁰ Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

We can see how distracted she became from her conversation with Jesus. Her original mission was to get some water, but she met Jesus instead. This meeting caused her to forget about the water, and she even left her water pot behind. She now had a new mission. She went around her city telling everyone what Jesus did, and she did her best to get everyone to come and see Him. She does not tell the people that He is the Christ, but she defiantly thinks it is possible that He is. Her diligence paid off because the people began to come out of the city to go see Jesus.

Her enthusiasm about Christ and how she told others about Him should be the same enthusiasm that all Christians should have. After all, we know who Jesus is, what He did for us, and the promises that come through Him. We should always be ready to share this news with those around us and get them to come see Jesus as their Savior.

John 4:31 In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." ³² But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." ³³ Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?" ³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

Jesus' disciples knew He needed to eat some food to regain His strength. We know He was tired because that is the reason He stayed at the well in the first place. However, Jesus tells them that He has food that they do not know about. His response confuses them because they think He is talking about physical food, but He puts their confusion to rest by telling them that His food is to do the will of the Father. In other words, His strength comes from doing the work that God has asked Him to do. Even though Jesus was hungry for physical food, He was even hungrier to do the will of God. Jesus motives are based on putting God and His Word first just as we are supposed to do (Mt. 6:33). I also like what Job said, "I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). So, when Jesus saw these people coming to Him, His physical hunger went away as He focused in on the task at hand.

John 4:35 "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! ³⁶ "And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. ³⁷ "For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁸ "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

The harvest time starts around April and continues through May, and four months before that would be either December or January. Jesus may be suggesting that this event was occurring during one of these months. It is believed that most of the common people wore plain white clothing because they could not afford the dyes. These people were coming out of the city and walking across the field toward Jesus. Imagine these people walking across the field in their white clothes as we read Jesus words again, "Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" Jesus is teaching His disciples that the harvest of souls is always ready to be harvested year-round.

Next, Jesus teaches His disciples about the importance of sowing and reaping. For example, Jesus had sowed the seed in this woman's heart, and she took that seed and sowed it in the city. Because of Jesus' work and the work of this woman, the disciples would now have the opportunity to reap what they had not sown, but both the sower and the reaper can rejoice together because both of them worked together to bring the lost to God.

We can see an example of this in a Gospel Meeting. Before the visiting preacher arrives, the members of that congregation have gone out and setup Bible studies and invited people to come hear the preacher. They have sowed the seed. When they come to the meeting and hear the truth, they may choose to be saved. When this happens, the preacher has reaped what he did not labor for, but we can all rejoice together knowing that a soul has been won to Christ.

Sowing and reaping are both important, and we should not feel bad if someone else reaps what we have sown. Besides, we would have nothing to sow or reap if it was not for God (1 Cor. 3:5-9).

John 4:39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I *ever* did." ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹ And many more believed because of His own word. ⁴² Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

This woman is a great example of what a Christian can do in the way of evangelism. She did not know much about Jesus or His teachings, but she told the people what she knew and that was enough to cause some of them to believe. So, do not think that a person has to have a vast knowledge of God's Word to lead someone to Christ because he does not. A person just needs to tell people what he knows about Jesus and this will be enough to lead people to Christ.

The Samaritans were so interested in Jesus that they begged Him to stay longer and He did. For two more days, He taught them and many of them believed that He was the Christ based on His teachings and not just by what the woman had said. These people had opened their hearts to Jesus and accepted Him for whom He was, which had to be refreshing after the way some of the Jews of Judea had treated Him earlier.

John 4:43 Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. ⁴⁴ For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. ⁴⁵ So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

After two days with the Samaritans, Jesus makes His way to Galilee. He also makes a statement that, "A prophet has no honor in his own country." This is a statement He made about His hometown and His relatives as well (Mt. 13:57; Mk. 6:4; Lk. 4:24). Some have trouble with this statement if Jesus is referring to Galilee as His country because the next verse talks about how they welcomed Him. However, as we continue, we will see these people were more interested in His miracles than honoring Him for whom He was. These people that welcomed Him had seen all that Jesus had done in Jerusalem.

John 4:46 So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

This is Jesus' second trip to Cana where He performed His first miracle. This nobleman seeks Jesus out and wants Him to come to Capernaum to heal his son, which was about 16 miles away. Jesus' response teaches us that many people during His time were always looking for a miracle, and many times Jesus would not perform one, but would simply say, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Mt. 12:39-40).

John 4:49 The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!" ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. ⁵¹ And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told *him*, saying, "Your son lives!" ⁵² Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." ⁵³ So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household. ⁵⁴ This again *is* the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

This nobleman persisted that Jesus come save his child, but Jesus did something that no one had done before. From 16 miles away, Jesus heals his son by simply saying "your son lives." We can see the faith of this nobleman because He believed what Jesus said. The next day, the nobleman arrived at home and finds out that his son was healed at the very hour Jesus had said his son would live. This left the nobleman with no doubt that Jesus was Lord, and all those in his household believed as well. Verse 54 says this is the second sign that Jesus did. This was the second sign He did in Cana, but we know He also did other signs in Judea that are not recorded (Jn. 2:23).

John 5

John 5:1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

The Bible is always correct when it mentions elevations. For example, our text says Jesus went up to Jerusalem because it is at higher elevation than Galilee. Jesus was going there to attend a feast. John records three Passovers in his Gospel (Jn 2:13; 6:4; 12:1), but in our immediate text, it does not tell us which feast this is. However, it is believed that it was the Passover feast. If this is the Passover feast, it shows that Jesus ministry lasted around 3 ½ years, but if this was some other feast, then it makes His ministry less than 3 years. While we cannot determine if this was the Passover from our text, Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks fits perfectly with Jesus' ministry lasting 3 ½ years.

Daniel 9:27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering...

In the last week of Daniel's prophecy, Jesus began His ministry, and each day represents one year. In the middle of that week is when Jesus died on the cross and took away animal sacrifices. Based on Daniel's prophecy, this was the Passover Jesus was attending since it is necessary to establish His 3 ½ year ministry. Daniel's prophecy shows how important the Old Testament is for the Christian today because it allows us to have a deeper understanding of the New Testament.

John 5:2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. ³ In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. ⁴ For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

Some believe the sheep gate is where they kept the sheep to be slaughtered in the temple. The pool near there was called Bethesda, which means "house of mercy". These five porches were covered areas the people used to get out of the rain or the sun. Archeologists have found two pools in this area. One is 55 feet long; the other is 65 feet long. The shorter one is the one they believe is Bethesda because it had 5 arches over it with a porch beneath (Nelson Illustrated Bible Dictionary p. 180).

A great number of people who were suffering from various illnesses gathered at this place hoping they may be healed by the water. Scholars are divided on whether there is enough evidence from the early Greek manuscripts to include verse 4, which is why some translations leave it out. No matter what view a person takes on verse 4, it explains why these people were gathering around this pool.

The real question is, did this pool have a supernatural ability to heal or is this simply a statement of what the people thought the pool did? I believe it was not a supernatural experience because of several reasons:

1. It does not make sense that God would have an angel stir up a body of water and then only allow the first person that reaches the water to be healed.
2. It is possible that a natural spring fed this pool, which would cause the water to bubble up or move around from time to time, which could easily be confused with an angel stirring the water.
3. Soon Jesus is going to heal this man with His word, which proves the true source of healing comes from Jesus.
4. It is possible this pool of water had a lot of minerals in it, which are known to make people feel better. This phenomenon would add credence to its healing ability.

Some believe this was a supernatural event mainly because these sick people were gathering around this pool. The only early writer I could find that had anything to say about this event was Tertullian who wrote around A.D. 197:

The Law and the Prophets were until John,” and the fish pool of Bethesda was until the coming of Christ. Thereafter, it ceased curatively to remove infirmities of health from Israel (3.171).

An angel, by his intervention, used to stir the pool at Bethesda. Those who were complaining of poor health used to watch for him. For whoever was the first to descend into the pool, ceased to complain after his washing. The figure of physical healing foreshadowed a spiritual healing (3.671, 672).

So, Tertullian thought this was a supernatural event that ceased after the coming of Christ.

John 5:5 Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" ⁷ The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

This man had his sickness for 38 years. We are not told the extent of his illness, but apparently he was crippled and could not walk. After 38 years, we can only imagine how much this man would love to be healed. Jesus saw this poor man lying on his bed and He knew he had been sick for a long a time and desired to be healed. Jesus knows everything about our lives as well. Jesus had compassion for this man and asked him, “Do you want to be made well?” This might seem like a strange question to ask someone who has suffered so long, but Jesus wants him to express his desire to be healed.

When this man answered Jesus, he expressed his desire to be healed. However, he did not think it would ever happen because his condition made it impossible for him to get into the water first, and he did not have anyone to help him. If this man had known who he was talking to, he would not worry about the pool anymore.

John 5:8 Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." ⁹ And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

Without hesitation Jesus says, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." Imagine how this man must have felt when Jesus spoke these simple words and immediately his illness that plagued him for 38 years was gone, and now he is able to walk and carry the bed he was restricted to?

When we look at the miracles of Jesus, we will notice how they differ from the modern day miracle workers. Jesus miracles were instantaneous and there was no doubt that a miracle was done. The supposed miracles that are done today are not verifiable, and they never seem to be able to catch them on video. I searched diligently for several months trying to find a miracle on video that could not be denied such as a withered hand becoming whole, but one does not exist. The supposed miracles that are done today have already happened by the time they get on the stage and it is always something internal. There was one woman who was legally blind who got caught up in the hype of one of Benny Hinn's crusades. They brought her up on stage where the bright spotlights were shining in her face and she was asked if she could see anything. She said she could see, but all she saw was some of that bright light which she could already see, so they deemed it a miracle. When the healing service was over, the woman had to be led out because she still could not see.

I was watching one of Benny Hinn's crusades on TV when a desperate mother brought her severely crippled daughter up to the steps and she begged him to heal her. It was obvious this young girl was crippled. This would have been the perfect opportunity for him to prove that miracles are alive and well today. For the longest time, he ignored the crippled girl, but finally he made way to her. He laid his hands on her and did his usually routine and nothing happened. Then he told the mother she would be healed within a few days. Do you see the difference? If Jesus or one of His apostles had been there, this young lady would have been healed instantly. She would have stood up and walked in front of everyone proving that miracles are alive and well today, but that did not happen because miracles ceased some time around the first century (1 Cor. 13:8-13).

John 5:10 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry *your* bed." ¹¹ He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.' " ¹² Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk?'" ¹³ But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in *that* place.

Many Jews had taken the Sabbath Law beyond what it was supposed to be, and they added all kinds of restrictions based on their own traditions and opinions. They noticed this man carrying his bed and they immediately point out that he should not be carrying it because it would be considered as carrying a burden (Jer. 17:19-27). However, when we examine this text and consider Nehemiah 13:15, we learn that a person was not supposed to be carrying things around that he was going to use for trade or for his business. So to carry something out of necessity or do something good on the Sabbath was allowed (Lk. 13:14-15), which means this man was not violating the Sabbath Law.

Instead of being surprised by this man being healed, all they could think about was who told this man to "Take up your bed and walk." This man did not know who it was. Notice that this miracle did not require faith in Jesus ability to heal. This is another proof text that goes against the modern day miracle worker who says that one must believe to be healed. Many

times when these alleged miracle workers fail to heal someone, they will say that person did not have enough faith.

John 5:14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

For 38 years this man was not allowed into the temple because of his illness, so it should not surprise us that Jesus found him in the temple. When Jesus finds him, He gives him some good advice, "Sin no more," which implies that his illness was caused from sin. While this is not always the case, we have many instances in the Bible where sin caused the illness, and sin can cause illness today because of its consequences. For instance, if a person commits the sin of fornication, he can end up with aids or some other sexually transmitted disease. If a person continues to abuse his body with alcohol or other harmful substances, his body will be damaged, which can lead to all kinds of internal illnesses.

John 5:15 The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. ¹⁶ For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.

When this man found out Jesus was the one who healed him, he told the Jews who He was. We are not told why he did this, but some have suggested he did it so he would not be held accountable for breaking the Sabbath in the eyes of these Jews. Once they knew who it was that healed him, they tracked Him down and wanted to kill Him because they felt like He had broken the Sabbath Law. However, this was their interpretation of the law because Jesus did not violate the Sabbath.

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." ¹⁸ Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

Jesus argued that His Father has been working all the time including the Sabbath. Just as the Father continues to work and do good; Jesus is also working and doing good even on the Sabbath. Since He worked a miracle on that day, it should have proven to these Jews that He was the Son of God and what He did was acceptable to God. Instead, Jesus' statement makes the Jews furious because in their eyes Jesus has broken the Sabbath and has made Himself equal to God. This is another instance where Jesus makes the claim that He is the Son of God, and He will make this statement even clearer later. Of course there are other verses that teach us that Jesus is the Son of God as well (Jn. 1:1-4; 10:30-33; Phil. 2:5-6). The remainder of this chapter contains Jesus' testimony of who He is.

John 5:19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

Jesus tells these Jews that He could not have healed this man on the Sabbath unless God allowed it to happen. He is also teaching us about His close relationship with the Father because He is able to observe the supernatural abilities of the Farther and has an open line

of communication with Him. Healing this man was what the Father wanted to happen. So, if they are going to accuse Jesus of breaking the Sabbath, they are going to have to accuse the Father as well.

John 5:20 "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. ²¹ "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

Jesus stresses His relationship with the Father. The Father loves Him, and Jesus has full access to the works of the Father. No other prophets or apostles had such insight because they only received their information in part, but Jesus could see all and know all that was being done by the Father, which proves His Deity and that He is the Son of God. He then tells these Jews that this miracle is only the beginning because greater works than these will be done in the future such as raising Lazarus and the widow's son from the dead.

John 5:22 "For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, ²³ "that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

The Father has put Jesus in the position of being the judge of humankind. This fact is seen in several passages (Mt. 25:31-34; Acts 10:42; 17:30-31; Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8). The Father made Jesus our judge so that everyone would honor and respect Him just as they honor and respect the Father. If we disrespect the Son then we disrespect the Father, which is why Jesus could say that we only have access to the Father through Him (Jn. 14:6). Since Jesus is representing the Father, all will learn to respect Him; if not in this life, they will at the judgment day (Phil. 2:9-11).

John 5:24 " Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

Jesus is not saying that all a person has to do is hear and believe to have everlasting life. James makes this clear in James 1:21-25. Hearing the words of Jesus requires us to be doers of His word. Jesus teaches us that believing in God the Father is not enough to have eternal life because we must also hear and accept the words of Jesus, which means everyone that only believes in the Father will be lost. However, those who are willing to obey Jesus' words and believe in the Father will not face the judgment of hell. When we become Christians and remain faithful, there is no condemnation (Rom. 8:1), which is what is meant by judgment in our passage because all of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). When we become a Christian, we pass from spiritual death to being spiritual alive in Christ, which shows that we have salvation right now, and we should be confident that we do. However, we can fall from our salvation if we live in sin, but if we continue to be faithful to God till the day we die, we are promised everlasting life in heaven (Rev. 2:10).

John 5:25 "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. ²⁶ "For as

the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, ²⁷ "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

“The hour is coming” is referring to the resurrection at the last day and the phrase “And now is” puts this teaching into a spiritual light. So, the dead spoken of here could include those physically or spiritually dead, but I believe it is specifically referring to those that are spiritual dead. In either case, both will hear the voice of the Son of God. Those who are spiritual dead have to hear the words of Jesus and accept them before they can become spiritually alive, and those who are physically dead will also hear the voice of God at the judgment day as we will see in verses 28-29.

Just as the Father possesses the power of eternal life, Jesus has been given this power as well, which is why He is able to offer eternal life to all who are dead in their sins. Another reason Jesus was given the authority to judge humankind is because He knows how to judge us fairly because He experienced what it means to be a human (Heb. 2:9-18; 4:14-16).

John 5:28 "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹ "and come forth -- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Jesus is speaking of the general resurrection that will happen on the judgment day. This time He does not use the phrase “And now is,” but simply says, “The hour is coming.” When Jesus comes again, all those in their graves both the righteous and unrighteous will be raised. The righteous will be raised to have eternal life in heaven, and the unrighteous will be raised to face eternal life in hell.

These two verses teach against the false doctrine of the rapture. Those who teach the rapture doctrine say there will be three resurrections. The first will be a secret coming of Jesus. The second will happen after the seven years of tribulation, and the third will happen after the 1,000-year reign, which is when the unjust are raised. However, Jesus says there is just one resurrection, and there is no room in these verses to squeeze in seven years of tribulation or a 1000-year reign on earth. These two verses are enough to show there will be a general resurrection of both the just and unjust that will happen on the same day. Now let’s dig a little deeper and notice what the rest of the Bible has to say about this topic.

First, I want to point out that word resurrection means, “To come back to life after having once died - 'to come back to life, to live again, to be resurrected, resurrection ...”(Louw-Nida Lexicon). So, the word resurrection shows that Jesus has the body of a person in mind. When we die, our spirit leaves our physical body (Jas. 2:26; 1 Kgs 17:21-22) and it goes to the Haden realm (Lk. 16:19-31), which is the waiting place until the Day of Judgment. We will either be in Abraham’s bosom or in the place of torment. Jesus teaches that while we are in the Hadean realm we are conscious, and we can feel comfort and pain. However, we cannot return to the earth or cross the great gulf between paradise and the place of torment. When our spirit leaves our body, our body is laid to rest. Just as our body was laid down, it will be raised again just like Jesus was raised from the dead. So, our resurrection will be a bodily one for both the righteous and unrighteous.

Daniel 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. ³ Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

This message is saying the same thing that Jesus did. Those who are in their graves will awake or be resurrected to everlasting life or to everlasting contempt. When the Bible refers to those who sleep in the dust, it is referring to their lifeless body and not to the spirit. As I have already shown with Lazarus, our spirit is awake. Further proof that we do not soul sleep can be found in Revelation 6:9-11. These souls are speaking, showing curiosity and concern, and they were able to understand what was said to them.

Paul also teaches the same message in his defense before Felix.

Acts 24:14 "But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. ¹⁵ "I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of *the* dead, both of *the* just and *the* unjust.

The resurrection will happen at the Day of Judgment, when both the just and unjust will be raised from the dead. But, what happens on that day? In what way will the resurrection occur? The Bible gives us more details on what will happen to the righteous than the unrighteous, but as we will see, both of them will be called from the Hadean realm and they will be reunited with their bodies. However, their bodies will be transformed into spiritual bodies that will last for eternity just as it happened with Jesus.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

At the judgment day death, which refers to those physical bodies that have perished, and Hades, which refers to those souls such as Lazarus and the rich man, will be raised together. To show this idea further, we need to examine the thoughts of 1 Cor. 15, which focuses on the resurrection of the righteous. Paul teaches if there is not a resurrection of the dead, then Christ was not raised from the dead. If this is true, we have no hope and everything that Christ did was a lie (1 Cor. 15:12-19). Verses 20 – 28 confirms that Christ was raised from the dead and He is the firstfruits, which means we will be raised from the dead at the Day of Judgment just as He was. When that day comes, Christ will destroy death, and He will hand the kingdom over to God, which refers to the church. Verses 35 – 49 teaches that our physical body will be changed into a spiritual body that have no corruption, and we will be like Jesus (Phil. 3:20-21). We do not know what that body will look like because not even the apostle John knew (1 Jn 3:2). However, we do know this resurrection will happen when Jesus comes again (1 Thes. 4:13-18). The faithful Christians who have already passed from

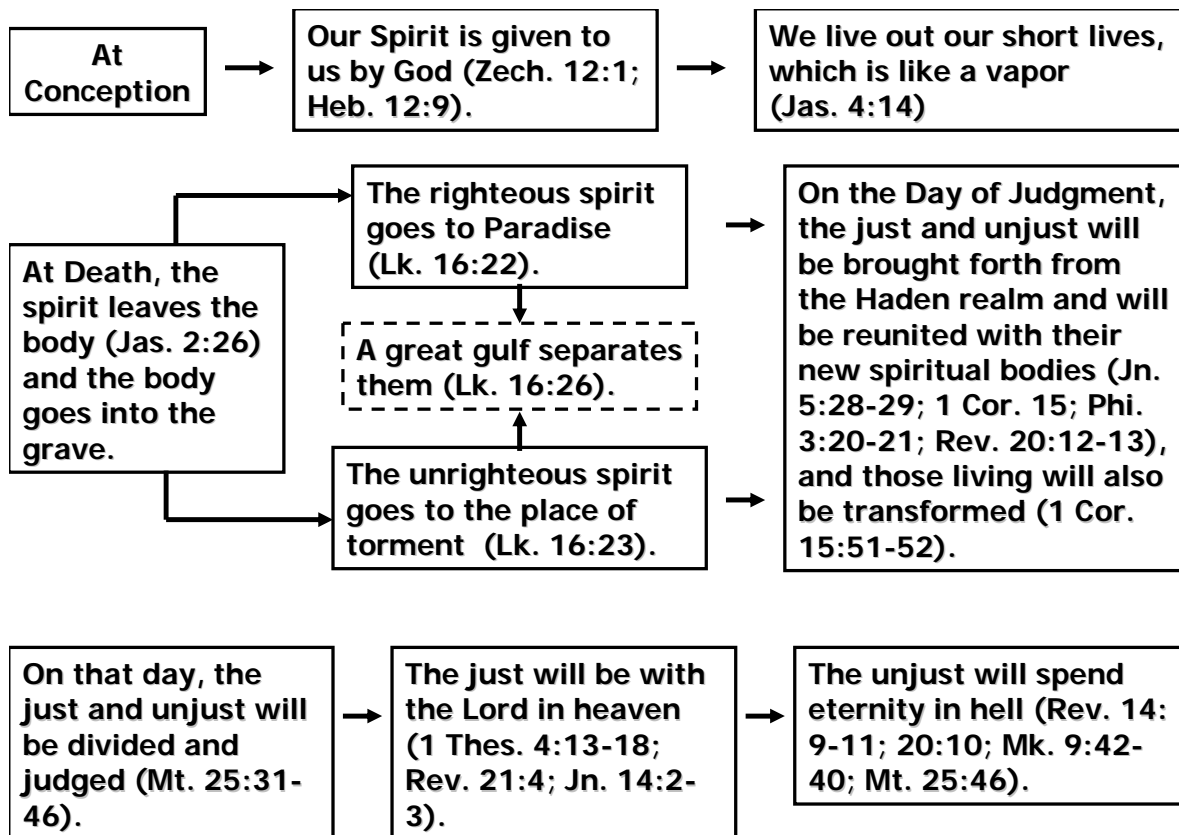
this life will be raised first, and they will come back with Jesus. Then the faithful Christians who are still alive will be transformed, given an incorruptible body, and meet Jesus in the air (1 Cor. 15:50-58).

Some might wonder how God could take our physical body that has been turned to dust and transform it into a new spiritual body that will be united with our spirit. To the Christian, this concept should not be a problem considering that God created us from dust and had the power to create the entire universe. Nothing is impossible for God.

We are not given all the details, but we know the unjust will also be raised, and the unjust still living on the earth will also be given a new body. On that day the just and unjust will be separated and judged (Mt. 25:31- 46), which is also illustrated in Jesus' parables (Mt. 13:24-30, 36- 43; 47-48). Those who are just will enter heaven where there will be no more pain, death, or sorrow (Rev. 21:4). But the unjust will enter hell for eternity where the worm does not die (Mk. 9:42-48), there is no rest day or night from the torment (Rev. 14:9-11; 20:10), and where there will weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 8:12; 13:42; 25:30). This is why Jesus warns us in:

Matthew 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

The only power people have over us is the ability to kill our physical bodies because they cannot touch our soul. However, God has control over the destination of our soul, which means we should fear Him instead of people. When it says that God is able to destroy the soul and body in hell, the word "destroy" does not mean that He is going to make us cease to exist. Instead, it carries the idea of laying to waste or ruin. Strong's says, "...To devote or give over to eternal misery in hell." In other words, a person will not cease to exist if he faces the judgment of hell. Instead, that person will be in constant torment and anguish, and we can only imagine how horrible hell will be. We could explore more Scriptures that talk about what will happen on the judgment day, but these are enough to show there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust at the Day of Judgment, and the just will go to heaven while the unjust will go to hell. To help illustrate this visually, notice the chart on the next page:



John 5:30 "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.³¹ " If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.³² "There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.³³ "You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.³⁴ "Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.

Once again, Jesus is teaching that everything He does is by the will of the Father. So when He judges, it is always a righteous judgment because it comes from the Father. We need to keep in mind that Jesus could know what other people were thinking. This ability made it possible for Him to know exactly what issues to deal with those He met without them having to say a word. These Jews had already accused Jesus of making Himself equal to God, and He seems to know they were thinking His testimony alone was not enough to prove He is the Son of God. So in verse 31, Jesus tells them His testimony alone is not enough, but He does have a witness, His Father in Heaven. Both the Old and New Testament teach us about using multiple witnesses (Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Mt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19).

Some get confused and think Jesus was talking about John the Baptist because in verse 33 Jesus starts talking about Him. However, in verse 32 Jesus says the one that bears witness of Him is continually bearing witness of Him because the word "witness" is in the present tense, which denotes a continuous action. But in verse 33, when Jesus says that John bore witness of Him, the word "witness" is in the perfect tense, which means his witness of Jesus was completed in the past. Jesus shows He did not have John in mind in verse 31 because

He says in verse 34, “Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.” While John’s message was from God, He did not need a human to be His witness since He has God the Father as His witness.

These Jews that wanted to put Jesus to death had heard the testimony of John the Baptist (Jn. 1:19), and he testified that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, the Bridegroom, and the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world (Jn. 1:19-35; 3:23-36). John also said, “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (Jn. 3:36). This is why Jesus is reminding these Jews about John’s message so they might take it to heart and be saved.

John 5:35 "He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. ³⁶ "But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish -- the very works that I do -- bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. ³⁷ "And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.

Verse 35 suggests that these Jews standing before Jesus had accepted John’s testimony, and they rejoiced in his news. However, when they found out that he proclaimed Jesus as being this coming Messiah, they stopped believing. So far, we have seen three witnesses that Jesus is the Son of God: Jesus Himself, the Father, and John the Baptist. A fourth witness was the works that Jesus was doing by the will of the Father. For instance, when He made the lame man walk on the Sabbath, it should have been sufficient to show that He is the Son of God.

Verse 37 teaches that the Father has testified of Jesus. He did this verbally on several occasions (Mk. 1:11; 9:7; Jn. 12:28-30). So, what does it mean when Jesus tells them, “You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.” We have already examined how God has not been seen as He is in chapter 1, but how can Jesus say that they had not heard His voice? It is possible that these Jews were not around during the times the Father spoke from heaven. However, it is also possible that they heard Him speak, but they were unwilling to take heed to what He said. Based on the context, this is the most logical answer to me especially when we consider the Greek word “akouo”, which is translated “hear”, which means “To hear; to attend to, consider what is or has been said; To understand, perceive the sense of what is said...” (Thayer). This is the reason it is important to do a word study because the word “hear” means much more than simply hearing something. This means the Jews could have heard God’s voice from heaven, yet still be accused of not hearing because they did not take heed to what was being said.

John 5:38 "But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. ³⁹ "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. ⁴⁰ "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

Here is Jesus’ fifth witness, the Word of God. Jesus acknowledges that these Jews have searched the Scriptures, but they have not understood them. If they had, they would believe Jesus is the Christ. There are over 300 prophecies about the coming Messiah and His work, and Jesus has been fulfilling those prophecies. These Jews should have been able to

understand this fact and realize He is the Son of God, but since they are not willing to accept this, they will not be able to be saved.

This is the same problem that many in the world have today. They have the Word of God available to them in different languages and versions, yet they will not take heed to what it says. Others have preconceived ideas about what the Bible teaches based on what others have taught, and this causes them not to be able to open their eyes to what it actually says. Just like these Jews, they have a great zeal for God, but not according to knowledge (Rom. 10:1-3). They continue to learn, but they do not grasp the knowledge of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:6-7), which is why it is important that we do not approach the Word of God with preconceived ideas. Instead, we must study it with an open mind so we can understand what it is saying. If we see that changes need to be made in our lives or our beliefs, then we need to make those changes so they conform to the Word of God.

John 5:41 "I do not receive honor from men. ⁴² "But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.

Jesus was not healing people and doing these wonderful works to receive praise from men. He was doing them to glorify His Father in heaven (Jn. 17:4). If Jesus had wanted the praise of men, He could have stayed around after feeding the 5000 and let them make Him a king, but He did not (Jn. 6:15). Since Jesus could read their hearts and because of their disbelief, He knew the love of God was not in them (Jn. 8:47; 1 Jn. 5:3).

John 5:43 "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. ⁴⁴ "How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that *comes* from the only God?

To come in someone's name means that a person will represent him separate and apart from your own will, which is exactly what Jesus did. He came by the authority of the Father to do His blessed will, yet they will not receive Him. However, they had no problem accepting others who came in their own name boasting in their own glory and using flattering words. These Jews loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (Jn. 12:43), which kept some of from confessing Jesus as Lord even though they believed He was (Jn. 12:42).

The Jews were fooled several times by false Messiahs. The German theologian, Schudt, quoting an earlier Jewish writer said:

That at least sixty-four pretenders to the messiahship had been accepted by the Jews at one time or another, including Bar-Kocheba who deceived the chief officer of the Sanhedrin. Gamaliel, "a doctor of the law," and a man highly honored by the Jews, made mention of deceivers in his day who succeeded in leading many Jews astray (Acts 5:34-37). These men came without authority, and to promote their own honor and they were accepted; Jesus, clothed with authority from the Father, and acting in his name they rejected. Thus, far from being perceptive, they were credulous and easily duped by deceivers because of their love for flattery and worldly praise (Guy

N. Woods, A Commentary on the Gospel according to John (Nashville, Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Company, 1987) p.113).

Just as the Jews were fooled by men like this, we must be careful not to get caught up following after false teachers who speak smooth words (Rom. 16:18). Their works will reveal if they are seeking glory for themselves or glory for the Lord (Mt. 7:20). A true servant of God should not be persuaded by the praise of others or the amount of money that is coming their way. Instead, they should preach the Word and glorify God (2 Tim. 4:1-5; Gal. 1:9-11).

John 5:45 "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is *one* who accuses you -- Moses, in whom you trust. ⁴⁶ "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

In these last words, Jesus drives His point home. Jesus lets them know that He does not have to accuse them of anything because the man they put their trust in wrote about Him. Moses is the sixth witness that Jesus is the Son of God. We do not know if Jesus was referring to all the things that Moses wrote about the coming Messiah, but the following verse certainly would be one of them:

Deuteronomy 18:15 " The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren.

The Jews wanted to hang onto the Law of Moses, but it was designed to bring them and everyone else to Christ (Gal. 3:22-25). If these Jews were not willing to believe in what Moses wrote about Jesus, then they would not believe Jesus' words. The Jew's reaction to Jesus' exhortation is not recorded, but they had to be filled with awe as Jesus read their hearts and gave them six witnesses that proved He was the Son of God. He also told them why they did not believe. I want to close this chapter with the words of Abraham, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (Lk. 16:31).

John 6

John 6:1 After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is *the Sea of Tiberias*. ² Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. ³ And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.

Around one year has passed from the events in our previous chapter assuming the feast of John 5:1 is referring to the Passover, because it is almost time for the next Passover. Based on the other Gospel accounts, John the Baptist has been beheaded and Jesus has sent His twelve apostles out on a limited commission in Galilee (Mt. 14; Mk. 14; Lk. 9). Many other events happened before this time as well, but these are some of the last events that happened before they left Galilee and made their way toward Bethsaida to go to a deserted place (Lk. 9:10). The Sea of Galilee has had many names such as, Sea of Chinnereth (Num. 34:11), Sea of Chinneroth (Jos. 12:3), Lake Genessaret (Lk. 5:1), and the Sea of Tiberias as used here. It received this latter name because of the city Tiberius located on the western shore, which Herod Antipas founded around A.D. 20 and named in honor of Emperor Tiberius (F.F. Bruce - The Gospel & Epistles of John p. 142).

They left that area to get a break because the people were following them everywhere, and they did not even have time to eat (Mk. 6:31). The only quiet time they had was while they were traveling across the lake because Mark's account says that the people ran to where Jesus and His disciples were going and they beat them there. So, shortly after they got off the boat, these people gathered around Jesus.

Our next verses record the miracle of Jesus feeding the 5000 men not including the woman or children. This is the only miracle, other than the resurrection, that is recorded in all four Gospels. While each account offers additional information about the details of this event, John's account is more unique. As we examine this miracle, I will put the events in the most logical order based on all the accounts.

John 6:5 Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" ⁶ But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. ⁷ Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little."

I do not know with certainty if the people that ran to meet Jesus gathered around Him as soon as He docked His boat or if it was a little while afterwards, but at some point they made their way to the mountain (Jn. 6:3). John's account is recording what happened when Jesus saw these multitudes of people coming toward Him. As they were approaching Jesus, He asked Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

Jesus did not ask this question because He did not know the answer to it because He already knew what He was going to do. He asked him this question to test him. Philip did not have any idea how they could feed such a crowd. When Philip alludes to the sum of 200 denarii,

this was most likely the amount of money they were carrying. One denarii was the typical pay for a day's worth of work, but 200 denarii would not be enough to feed this crowd. Some commentators suggest that a danarii would be about .17 cents today. However, according a software program called "Manna Bible Maps" during Jesus' time 84 denarii was made from a pound of silver. Based on the current market as of 9-05-07, silver is \$12.15 per oz. This works out to be \$194.40 per pound, which means by silver content alone, one denarii would be worth around \$2.31.

The other three accounts say that Jesus taught these people and healed them at this time as well (Mt. 14:14; Mk. 6; 34; Lk. 9:11). These events happened earlier in the day, but now evening was approaching.

Mark 6:35 When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late." ³⁶ "Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat." ³⁷ But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?" ³⁸ But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish." (See also Mt. 14:15-17; Lk. 9:12-13)

Since the day was almost over, Jesus' disciples wanted Him to send these people away so they could go and buy themselves something to eat. But Jesus tells His disciples to feed them. They did not understand how Jesus expected them to feed this massive amount of people. Once again, we learn that they had 200 denarii in their money bag, but just as Philip had said earlier, this would not be enough money to feed all these people. While Jesus' disciples thought about their situation, Jesus wants them to find out how many loaves they have. The first three Gospels say they had five loaves and two fish. However, John's account gives us more detail.

John 6:8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹ "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

These five loaves and two small fish came from this little boy. These loaves were not big loaves of bread like we have today. Thayer's Lexicons describes it this way: "*Food composed of flour mixed with water and baked*; the Israelites made it in the form of an oblong or round cake, as thick as one's thumb, and as large as a plate or platter ..." The common people usually made their loaves from barley. The disciples knew this was not enough food to feed all these people.

John 6:10 Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

The KJV says that these people were in a desert place, which can be confusing because we understand a desert as being a place where there is little life, and there is nothing but dirt all around. The other versions translate the meaning of this Greek word better because the

NKJV uses “deserted”, the NIV uses “remote place”, and the ESV uses “desolate place.” This place was a quiet uninhabited place and not only was there grass there, it was green (Mk. 6:39). Jesus had His disciples sit these people down in groups of 50 and 100 (Mk. 6:40).

John 6:11 And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

Luke tells us that Jesus took the loaves and fishes and looked up to heaven and blessed them (Lk. 9:16). Today we usually bow our head, but Jesus was looking up when He prayed. There are many postures of prayer given in the Bible, but the posture is not important, it is the condition our heart (Mt. 6:5-8; Lk. 18:9-14). Even though Jesus was the one providing all this food by the miracle He performed, He still gave the Father thanks for it. We should learn from His example and give thanks to God for the food we eat (1 Tim. 4:4-5) and everything else in our lives (Eph. 5:18-20). Once Jesus prayed over the food, He gave it to His disciples and they gave it to the people.

John 6:12 So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." ¹³ Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

Jesus was able to multiply these five loaves and two fish so there was enough for all these people to eat and be full with twelve baskets full of leftovers, which was more food than they started out with. Keep in mind there was 5000 men and an unnumbered amount of women and children (Mt. 14:21). It is possible there were as many as 10,000 people fed that day by Jesus' miracle. We are not told the exact size of the baskets, but based on the original Greek word, this was a common wicker basket they used to carry food in and it varied in size. These baskets were smaller than the large ones used when Jesus fed the 4000 in Matthew 15:32-38.

This miracle shows that God can provide more for us than we could possibly need. When Jesus made sure that all the fragments of bread were saved for later, it teaches us that we should not be wasteful with what God has blessed us with.

John 6:14 Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

Since Jesus worked this amazing miracle with the loaves and fish, they concluded that He was the prophet Moses spoke of (Deut. 18:15-19; Acts 3:22-26).

John 6:15 Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

Within this crowd a mob began to form. Since they knew Jesus was from God and that He was the prophet Moses spoke of, they thought this would be their opportunity to fight

against the Roman Empire and win. In their minds, they thought God would restore their physical kingdom to them like it was under King David, but Jesus did not come to establish a physical kingdom. He came to establish a spiritual one. He accomplished His goal, and His kingdom began on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. He is still reigning over His spiritual kingdom right now (Acts 2:29-36). Even Jesus' disciples thought He had come to establish a physical kingdom for the Jews all the way up to the time just before His ascension (Acts 1:6). After the day of Pentecost, they realized that Jesus' kingdom was a spiritual one, and they preached that all Christians are a part of that kingdom today (Col. 1:13).

When Jesus read these Jews minds and what they were planning, He sent His disciples back across the Sea of Galilee. He also sent the crowds away and He went back on the mountain by Himself to pray (Mt. 14:22-23; Mk. 6:45-46). I believe this is one of the reasons the Jews stopped believing in Jesus because He would not allow them to make Him a King. Those who teach the rapture view think Jesus failed to establish an earthly kingdom because the Jews were not ready yet, which is why they say Jesus will come again and establish a kingdom on the earth for 1000 years. However, the verses I just mentioned prove that Jesus did not fail to establish His spiritual kingdom. To say the Jews were not ready to accept Him as a king is proven wrong by the event we just examined in verse 15.

John 6:16 Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. ¹⁸ Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. ¹⁹ So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid.

These events are also recorded in Matthew and Mark, and they offer additional information to John's abbreviated account. Once again, I will put these events in the most logical order that makes sense to me. Jesus has sent His disciples away and apparently He told them He would meet them later. As they were on their way, a great wind came across the lake that was making it difficult for them to make headway. At that point, they were halfway across the lake somewhere around 3 ½ miles (Mt. 14:24; Mk. 6:47).

Mark's account says Jesus saw them straining at rowing because of the strong wind (Mk. 6:48). Since Jesus was on the shore and His disciples were halfway across the lake, how did Jesus see His disciples straining at rowing on a stormy night? One of the difficulties in answering this question comes from examining the meaning of "saw" from the Greek because it can mean to see something with the eyes and it can mean to perceive by any of the senses (Thayer). For instance, when the wise men did not come back to Herod to tell him where Jesus was, "He saw that he was deceived by the wise men" (Mt. 2:16). In this instance, Herod did not literally see these men deceive him, but he observed they did not come back and perceived that they had deceived him. Another example comes from Jesus' death on the cross. "So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Mt. 27:54)! When these people observed the things that happened at Jesus' death, it caused them to perceive that Jesus was the Son of God. So, Jesus could have either literally seen His disciples straining at rowing, or He could have perceived they were straining at rowing by observation. Let take a look a few possibilities of how Jesus could have perceived they were straining at rowing at this time.

Someone might say that Jesus saw their lamp on their boat and observed that it was not moving. On a calm night, a person can see a light from a great distance away, but this was a stormy night, which would make it more difficult to see the small amount of light the first century lamps were capable of producing. Even if He could see the light, it would be difficult to judge whether the boat was having trouble moving forward based on the movement of the light from that far away. Since they were rowing, it means they were traveling at a low speed, which adds to the difficulty of judging their progress from that distance. It is doubtful they would be able to keep their lamp lit during this hard wind they were fighting against. Another factor is the size of their boat.

ISBE says:

The boats were probably of a size and build similar to the few employed on the Lake today, which are between 20 and 30 ft. in length and 7 ft. in breadth (Ships and Boats).

This is backed up by archeology:

An ancient fishing boat, dating to the New Testament period, was found in the mud just north of Magdala in 1986. It was 26.5 feet long, 7.5 feet wide, and 4.5 feet deep, and was made of cedar and oak (Nelsons New Illustrated Bible Manners & Customs p. 457).

Since these boats were not that deep, they would be splashed with water multiple times, which adds another difficulty in keeping the lamp lit. Based on this information it does not seem likely that Jesus used their lamp, if they even had one, to perceive they were straining at their rowing.

Since Jesus perceived His disciples straining at rowing, I believe the most logical way He did this was by observing the storm and the affect it was having on the water. Just about anyone could perceive this especially if they had some experience of being on the water when a storm came through. While this is a possibility based on the word "saw", I want to point out that the word "saw" is only used a couple of times where someone perceives something from observation. Most of time it used to describe someone literally seeing something. So, I personally would say that Jesus literally saw them straining at rowing.

If our text is saying the Jesus literally saw them, I believe He used the same ability He used to see Nathanael from a long way off (Jn. 1:48). Jesus was not limited to what He could see with His human eyes. Over and over again we see how He was able to know what people were thinking before they said anything. He was able to know about events that would soon take place before they happened. So, it should not surprise us that He would be able to see His disciples in the middle of a stormy night straining at their rowing.

Next, Jesus starts walking on the water toward His disciples at the fourth watch, which is between 3 and 6 A.M. Mark's account says that Jesus would have kept on walking past His disciples, but they saw Him and were afraid. At first, they thought He was a ghost (Mt. 14:26). If you were out in a small boat in a storm and saw someone walking on the water you might think the same thing.

John 6:20 But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."

Jesus calls out to them to let them know it is Him. Matthew gives us more information of what happens at this moment.

Matthew 14:27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." ²⁸ And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." ²⁹ So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw that the wind *was* boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" ³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³² And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³ Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

Here is where Peter's character shines through. He is seen many times in Scripture as acting quickly with good intentions, but many times his faithfulness does not hold out (Mt. 26:35, 69-75; Acts 15:6-11; Gal. 2:11ff). At first, Peter's faith is strong and he is able to walk on the sea like Jesus, but he began to notice the wind and he took his focus off Jesus. This caused him to start to sink, but Jesus was there to lend him a helping hand as he cried out for the Lord to save him. This can happen to us when we lose our focus on Jesus. When we allow the world to distract us, it can cause us to lose our faith and we can sink deep in sin. But just like Peter, Jesus is ready to lend us a helping hand so we do not become overwhelmed by the world and our sin.

When Jesus gets into the boat the storm stops, and His disciples are amazed. They worship Him saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." Mark's account adds the following:

Mark 6:51 Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. ⁵² For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

Jesus' disciples should have understood that He could override nature when He produced all that bread and fish from the small amount that was given to Him, but they did not. There are many instances like these that show how slow Jesus' disciples were at perceiving the things He did.

John 6:21 Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

When Jesus stepped in the boat, immediately it was on the other side of the sea where they were going. This is possibly another miracle since the boat was somewhere around the middle of the sea (Jn. 6:19) and immediately they traveled around three miles from where they were to the other side.

Matthew 14:34 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. ³⁵ And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, ³⁶ and begged Him that they

might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched *it* were made perfectly well. (See Mk. 6:53-56)

Both Matthew and Mark teach that they went to Gennesaret, which is the same city identified as Chinnereth in the Old Testament (Jos. 19:35). The term “land of Gennesaret” does not necessarily mean that they anchored at the city itself because this term can include the plains of Gennesaret.

This district was a plain extending two kilometers (one mile) from the Sea of Galilee along a 5 kilometer (three mile) section of Galilee’s north shore (Nelson’s New Illustrated Dictionary p.487).

When He arrived the people recognized Him and spread the word that He was there. Everyone that was capable came to Him just to touch the hem of His garment. Mark adds that this was happening everywhere Jesus went. John’s account gives us more information than the others.

John 6:22 On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone -- ²³ however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks -- ²⁴ when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

Jesus had managed to get away from these Jews during the middle of the night. They saw Jesus’ disciples leave in their boat, which was the only boat there, but they knew Jesus did not go with them. The next day, they began to look for Jesus but they could not find Him. That same day some boats came from Tiberias. James Coffman makes the following observation about these boats: “John’s mention of the boats from Tiberias in this place is a reference to taxi boats which, after the storm subsided, had gone to Bethsaida Julius in search of fares” (Commentary on John). This idea is also backed up by the ISBE, “Bethsaida at the northern end of the Lake and Tarichea at the southern end were great centers of the trade” (Ships and Boats). Since Bethsaida was a popular trading place it makes sense that boats would come in and out of that place regularly. Whether these boats from Tiberias were taxi boats or not, these Jews used them to go find Jesus at Capernaum.

John 6:25 And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?"

Eventually they found Jesus in the Synagogue in Capernaum (Jn. 6:59), and the first thing they wanted to know was when Jesus got there. They did not know how Jesus had left without them knowing or how He left so they hoped Jesus would satisfy their curiosity. Instead, Jesus is going to rebuke them because their motive to seek Him out was wrong.

John 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷

"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

These Jews had missed the spiritual message of Jesus' miracle of the fish and loaves. All they could understand was their physical needs had been met, and they were seeking after Jesus to continue to take care of their physical needs. If Jesus wanted to, He could have kept feeding people and increased His following, but He was not interested in huge crowds. He just wanted people who were willing to open their hearts to the truth and understand that He was primarily there to provide for their spiritual needs.

We see this attitude in the religious world and even sometimes in the church today. Some will only go to a place of worship as long as it fulfills their needs. If they do not like the singing or if the preacher steps on their toes one too many times, then they go and find another place to worship. Many today have forgotten that the purpose for worship is to worship God and to be pleasing to Him. If the truth is being taught from the Word of God and it steps on our toes, we should not run away from the message. Instead, we should take it to heart and make a change in our life. As Christians, we have to look at the spiritual benefits and not the physical ones.

When Jesus said "Do not labor for the food which perishes," He is not saying that we should not work for our physical food because God commands us to (2 Thes. 3:10; Gen. 2:15; 3:17-19). In this statement, He is teaching these Jews that the most important thing in life is not food or material things. Instead, it is taking care of your spiritual needs that lead to everlasting life. Jesus is the one that provides that spiritual food through the Word of God (Mt. 4:4; Job 23:12). He taught His disciples about this kind of spiritual food earlier when He was at the well (Jn. 4:32-34).

When a king would seal a document it showed that the document was authorized by the king and no one could change what it said. It also proved that the document came from the king. In a similar way, the Father put His seal on Jesus because He came from the Father and everything He spoke was authorized by the Father. Nothing can change the truth that Jesus spoke, which is why He is the only way we have access to the Father (Jn. 14:6).

Jesus said that we must labor for that spiritual food that brings about eternal life, which teaches against the false doctrine that we are saved by faith alone (Jas. 2: 17, 22, 24). The works being spoken of in our verse is not talking about works where we earn or deserve something. No, it is talking about obedient works. God has provided us with His Word and His plan of salvation, and we must accept it by obeying what He has told us to do.

John 6:28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Now these Jews know that they must work for that food that brings about eternal salvation, which is why they want to know what they must do to obtain that salvation. Our text clearly shows the difference between the works of God and the works of man. We cannot be justified by the works of man, but the works of God are absolutely necessary.

Some in the religious world claim there is nothing we can do to be saved. These verses teach otherwise. Jesus clearly teaches that believing on Him is a work of God. If there are no works involved in our salvation, then we must conclude that it does not require belief to be saved. However, we know this is false because the Bible teaches over and over again that we must believe to be saved. Paul also refers to the work of our faith in 2 Thessalonians 1:2-3.

Usually the word “believe” or “faith” is used as a synecdoche. This word means “A figure of speech in which a part is used for the whole or the whole for a part...” (dictionary.com). In other words, belief and faith includes everything involved for someone to be saved, which includes repentance, confessing Jesus as Lord, and water baptism. James makes it clear that belief alone will not save a person, “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (Jas. 2:24).

Many in the religious world who misunderstand the difference between works of merit and works of God will say that baptism cannot be a part of our salvation because it is a work of man. However, this is not true.

Colossians 2:11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, ¹² buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

When we submit ourselves to water baptism, we are simply obeying God’s command and doing what He said is necessary for our salvation. Paul teaches that when we go down into the watery grave of baptism, it is by our faith in the working of God that we are being buried with Christ for the forgiveness of our sins (Col. 2:13; Acts 2:38; 22:16). So, what happens to us at baptism is a work of God and not a work of man or a work of merit. Just as faith is a work of God, so is baptism.

John 6:30 Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? ³¹ "Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' " ³² Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ "For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

These Jews were not satisfied with the miracle of the fish and loaves. They wanted more proof that Jesus was the Messiah. They began to quote the Scripture found in Nehemiah 9:15 or Psalm 78:24 dealing with the manna that came out of heaven. Apparently, they wanted Jesus to do the same and then they would believe. However, Jesus is not going to grant their request even though He could. Instead, He corrects them on two different errors.

First, they were claiming Moses as the one who provided them the manna, but Jesus tells them that it was the Father and not Moses. Second, He teaches them that the manna is not the true bread from heaven because it was only temporary and perishable (Ex. 16:20).

The true bread of heaven is Jesus Himself, and He was sent down from heaven to give eternal life to the world, which means to everyone (Jn. 10:10). Jesus is the antitype of the manna. The manna was only for the Jews and it sustained their physical needs. However, Jesus was given for all, and He will sustain the spiritual needs of those who follow Him. The manna was perishable, but Jesus is everlasting, and He makes it possible for everyone to have eternal life that does the works of God. Similar to the woman at the well in John 4, they say, "Lord, give us this bread always."

John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ³⁶ "But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸ "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰ "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Here Jesus makes one of the seven great "I am" statements in the Gospel of John in which He claims "I am the bread of life." Jesus is trying to teach them who He is and what He has to offer. He tells them they must come to Him, which means we must choose to follow Jesus, and He tells them they must believe. As we have already discussed, this is not just mere belief or faith only, it is an obedient faith. When He says this will cause a person to never be hungry or thirsty again, He is talking about the spiritual just like He did with the woman at the well in John 4. However, these Jews, like the woman at the well, have their minds on the physical and we will see that they do not understand what Jesus is talking about.

In verse 36, Jesus is referring back to verse 26. These Jews had seen the miracles Jesus had done including the feeding of the 5000. Even though they had seen these things with their eyes, they still had not understood that He was the Son of God. These miracles proved this (Acts 2:22; Jn. 11:40ff), but their senses were dull in perceiving it (Mt. 13:15).

Verse 37 is not teaching the false doctrine once saved always saved. When Jesus says He will not cast out those that come to Him, He is talking about those who have become His disciples and who choose to stay with Him. This idea is illustrated in Romans 11 where Paul teaches that the unbelieving Jew was cut off from the root, which is referring to Jesus, and the Gentile was allowed to be grafted into that root. However, Paul warns them not to boast about this and warns them that God can remove them from the root once they have been grafted in. Paul says: "For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off" (Rom. 11:21-22). Also, Jesus compares Himself to a vine in John 15 and specifically says, "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned" (Jn. 15:6). While we should take great comfort in knowing that Jesus will not cast us out or cut us off while we faithfully

follow Him, we should not be fooled into believing the false doctrine once saved always saved.

Verse 38 confirms once again that Jesus has come by the authority of the Father to carry out His will and not His own.

In verses 39 and 40, Jesus claims God as being His Father again, and He is reaffirming that all those who will come to Him believing and choose to remain faithful will have everlasting life because it is the Father's will. These faithful followers will be raised up on the last day, which is the Day of Judgment.

John 6:41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." ⁴² And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

After Jesus made this bold claim, these Jews began to discuss what He said, and they did not like it. Some of the Jews were apparently from Nazareth because they knew that Jesus was the son of a lowly carpenter. In their minds, the coming Messiah was going to be someone great and majestic who would come in and reestablish a physical kingdom for the Jews, but Jesus did not fit their description. They could not see how a poor man like Jesus who was raised in a poor town could possibly be from God or be that bread which came down from heaven. They were not allowing Jesus' miracles to serve as proof. Instead, they were allowing their prejudgment of Him to speak louder than His miracles.

There are many who are guilty of this today when it comes to rightly dividing the Word of God. Some people have their preconceived ideas on what they believe on certain topics, and they are not willing to look at all the Scriptures about that topic with an open mind. Instead, they want to believe what they have already been taught or what they believe is true, and they will not consider any Scriptures or logical thoughts that show their view to be wrong. As Christians, we must approach the Word of God with an open mind and be willing to reconsider any given topic and be willing to change our view if new evidence shows that we are wrong.

John 6:43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. ⁴⁴ "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵ "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. ⁴⁶ "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.

Jesus knows exactly what these men are murmuring about and He rebukes them. He lets them know that no one can come to Him unless the Father draws them. Those who teach Calvinism would say this is a proof text for irresistible grace and predestination because the Father will draw those that will be saved and will not draw those that are destined to be lost. However, this is not true because we have a free will to choose whom we will serve (Jos. 24:15) and to accept God's salvation (Rev. 22:17). God does not force us to be a Christian, nor does He show partiality by saving one and condemning another (Rom. 2:11).

The next verse shows exactly how God draws people to Himself. He draws them through hearing the Word of God and by them learning what it says, which is exactly what Isaiah 54:13 and Jeremiah 31:31-34 prophesied. The Word of God is the power of God to salvation (Rom. 1:16). Without it we cannot learn how to be saved or be drawn by God (Rom. 10:14). It is by the Word of God that we are called (2 Thes. 2:14).

Once again, Jesus declares His Deity and close relationship with the Father because He came from the Father and has seen Him as He is. No one else on the earth has seen Him in His true form.

John 6:47 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ "I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

Once again, this shows the necessity of belief in order to have everlasting life, and that Jesus is the bread of life. The manna the Jews ate in the wilderness sustained them physically, but all of them died. However, when we feed partake of Jesus, we will be sustained spiritually and we will live forever. Jesus stresses the point that He is that living bread which came down from heaven. He also predicts how He will give up His life for the world so that all will be able to have the choice to have eternal life.

John 6:52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this *Man* give us *His* flesh to eat?" ⁵³ Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶ "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. ⁵⁸ "This is the bread which came down from heaven -- not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." ⁵⁹ These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

The Jews were not happy with Jesus' words because they understood them as being literal instead of spiritual. They thought Jesus was saying they would have to eat His flesh. As they quarreled among themselves, Jesus added more flame to the fire by saying not only do you have to eat of my flesh, you have to drink of my blood, and only then will you be able to abide in Me and be able to live. When we make this out to be literal, we can understand the reason these Jews were so upset by what Jesus was saying.

Of course Jesus was saying all of this in a figurative way. We must recognize that Jesus' death on the cross happened so we could benefit from it and live our lives according to God's Word. For instance, Jesus said, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him" (Jn. 6:56). However in John 15:7,10 Jesus said that we can abide in Him by

letting His words abide in us and by keeping His commandments (See also: 1 Jn. 2:6; 3:24). Jesus said, "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die" (Jn. 6:50). Yet Jesus also said, "If anyone keeps My word he shall never see death" (Jn. 8:51). When we compare these verses, we can surmise that eating of Jesus' flesh and drinking His blood means to believe on Him and the great sacrifice He made on the cross for us and how we are to keep His commandments. At the end of this chapter, Jesus makes it clear that eating His flesh and drinking His blood are equivalent to receiving His Word when He says, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life" (Jn. 6:63).

Those in the Catholic Church think our verses in John 6 are referring to the Lord's Supper. When their priest bless the bread and the fruit of the vine, they teach that they literally become the flesh and blood of Jesus.

In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist, "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained." ... It is by the conversion of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood that Christ becomes present in this sacrament ... It has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council (the Council of Trent) now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation (Catechism of the Catholic Church (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publishing, 1994), p. 346-347).

This false doctrine is called transubstantiation. Even when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He called the bread His body and the fruit of the vine His blood, but He did not mean it was literally His flesh or blood. He meant it symbolically. Jesus said, "I am the door of the sheep" (Jn. 10:7). Is He a literal door for literal sheep? Of course not! He was talking symbolically just like He was talking symbolically about the Lord's Supper. Think about this, if we are literally eating Jesus' flesh and drinking His blood, then all Christians are cannibals. The false doctrine of "transubstantiation" is not supported by the Scriptures. I do not believe our text in John 6 is talking about the Lord's Supper specifically, but it certainly would include it since Jesus is telling us to keep His commandments.

John 6:60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this*, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" ⁶¹ When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?" ⁶² "What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?" ⁶³ "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life." ⁶⁴ "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. ⁶⁵ And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." ⁶⁶ From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

Many of those who followed Jesus and witnessed the miracles He did were stumped by what He said. They considered it a hard saying. Now this could mean two things, it was too hard to comprehend or it was too hard to accept. There are many saying that Jesus taught throughout His ministry that people today consider to be too hard to accept such as His teachings on divorce and remarriage, the exclusiveness of His one church, the roles of men and women, that baptism is essential for salvation, etc.

Jesus did not waver on what He taught or try to make it work so He did not offend anyone. He simply preached the truth, which should be the same attitude all Christians should have as they teach those around them because there is no need to apologize for the truth or to compromise it. Likewise, preachers should not preach only on safe issues they know will not offend anyone. Instead, they must preach the whole counsel of God, and if they lose their job over preaching the truth, then so be it.

Jesus knew what these men were saying and asked them, "Does this offend you?" These Jews were looking for an earthly king like David and Jesus was not matching up to their expectations. If Jesus' words offended them and made them stumble, then what is going to happen when they see Him die and then ascend back to His Father? Again, this would not fit with their idea of the Messiah.

In verse 63, He makes it clear that everything He has just said has to do with the spiritual and not the flesh because the flesh will profit nothing, but the spirit will give us life by believing and obeying God's Word.

Jesus knew the hearts of those who were following Him, and He knew that many of them did not believe. They were only following Him because of the signs and miracles He did. Since these people had not been drawn to Him by the truth, many of them turned away and stopped following Jesus. This hard saying separated the true believers from the fake ones, and God's truth still does that today. There have been many who were interested in Jesus until His teachings conflicted with their lifestyle or an event that happened in their life, which has caused many to turn away from God and follow Him no more.

John 6:67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."⁶⁹ "Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

I can imagine being one of the twelve apostles watching as these people got up and walked away from Jesus. Seeing that would be enough to cause some to be tempted to follow the crowd. Then Jesus asked them, "Do you also want to go away?" Since Jesus asked this question, it proves we have a choice to either follow Jesus or not to follow Him. There was no irresistible grace or overwhelming power that was keeping the apostles there. If they had walked away, others would have been chosen and God's plan would have continued.

Answering for all of them Peter said they had no one else they could go to that has the words of eternal life. They believed and knew that Jesus was the Son of the living God, which separated them from the others that walked away from Jesus that day.

John 6:70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" ⁷¹ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

Even though Peter spoke for the twelve, Jesus knew that Judas would later betray Him for thirty silver pieces. At this point, the disciples had no idea of whom He was talking about. Now a person might wonder why Jesus picked Judas to be one of His apostles. While I cannot be dogmatic in my answer, I lean toward the idea that He chose him because He knew Judas would betray Him and fulfill the prophecy. It is important to understand that Jesus did not make Judas do anything. He simply used him to carry out what was already in his heart just as God used Joseph's brothers to bring about the preservation of the Jews (Gen. 50:20).

John 7

John 7:1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. ² Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.

After feeding the 5000 and telling the people at the Synagogue in Capernaum that He was the bread of life, Jesus made His way to Galilee. He stayed there because the Jews wanted to kill Him for allegedly breaking the Sabbath and claiming to be the Son of God (Jn. 5:18).

The Feast of Tabernacles was observed on the 15th day of the seventh month called Tishri, which coincides with part of our September and October. It lasted for seven days. On the first day and the eighth day following the feast there was a holy convocation (Lev. 23:35-36). The feast was one of three pilgrimages the Jews were required to attend in Jerusalem. The feast celebrated the completion of the autumn harvest and it was also a time to remember how their ancestors left Egypt and lived in tents on their way through the wilderness. During this week, they would make temporary booths made of palm and willow trees. They would stay in them in honor of their ancestors and for what God did for them, which is why this feast is also called the feast of booths.

Six months have passed between chapter 6 and 7, and the remainder of John covers the last six months of Jesus' life. So, John has skipped over 6 months of Jesus' Galilean ministry.

John 7:3 His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. ⁴ "For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." ⁵ For even His brothers did not believe in Him. ⁶ Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. ⁷ "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. ⁸ "You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come." ⁹ When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

Jesus' brothers could not understand why Jesus was hiding out if He was the Messiah, and they think He is wasting His time in Galilee. With their idea of the Messiah, they think He should go into Judea and work His signs and miracles and openly proclaim who He is. There were different ideas among the Jews of how the Messiah would make Himself known. One example comes from a rabbinic tradition that says: "He will come and stand on the roof of the holy place; then he will announce to the Israelites, "Ye poor, the time of your redemption has arrived (Pesiqta Rabbati I62a)."' According to verse 5 His brothers did not believe in Him, but they would later (Acts 1:14).

Jesus told them it was not His time yet. He was waiting for the right moment to face these Jews in Jerusalem. That time would be at the Passover when Jesus made His triumphant entry and would become the sacrificial lamb for the world.

Jesus' brothers can go to the feast because they have not made the Jews angry like He has. These Jews despised Jesus and they want Him dead. They believed His works were evil and

from the devil. So, Jesus told his brothers to go to the feast without Him, and He stayed in Galilee because His time had not fully come, which is referring to the fate He would suffer at the Passover.

John 7:10 But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. ¹¹ Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, "Where is He?" ¹² And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people." ¹³ However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

Some believe that we have a contradiction in these verses because Jesus said He is not yet going to the feast, but we find Him going to the feast in verse 10. We need to understand that Jesus did not say He was not going to the feast at all. Instead, He was telling His brothers that He was not going to go at that moment. We find out in verses 14 that He did not go to the feast until it was halfway over, and when He went, He did so secretly.

The Jews hoped He would show up so they could find some way to kill Him. Jesus had become one of the main topics people were talking about, and they could not make up their minds if He was good or bad. When they talked about Him, they did it quietly because they knew if the Jews heard them talking about Him, they would have to face their wrath.

John 7:14 Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. ¹⁵ And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

Without being seen, Jesus shows up in the temple area and He began to speak. He captivates the Jews by His knowledge of the Scriptures. Even at the age of twelve, He astonished the teachers of His day (Lk. 2:46-47). The Jews that heard Jesus speak, cannot understand how He could know the Scriptures so well when had not been in any rabbinical schools. Only those who had studied for years under exceptional teachers could have a similar knowledge like Jesus, but even the greatest student would not have compared to Jesus' knowledge.

John 7:16 Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. ¹⁷ "If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own *authority*. ¹⁸ "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. ¹⁹ "Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"

Jesus claimed over and over that the things He did and said were not His own because He was doing everything the Father showed Him and told Him to do. This fact explains the reason He has so much wisdom and knowledge of the Scriptures. So, the words Jesus spoke were the words of God the Father. These Jews could test Jesus' words by comparing them to the Scriptures. If Jesus was making things up, they could prove He is speaking by His own authority, but if they searched the Scriptures and learned that He was speaking the truth, they would have to conclude that His words were from God.

Jesus compared the difference between a person speaking for himself and speaking for God. The person who speaks for himself seeks his own glory. This person might use some of God's Word, but they will end up adding their own wisdom and thoughts. They think they know how to do things better than God, and they get people to follow their false teachings. This is a great description of the Pharisees who had made up several new laws for the Sabbath and made them binding as if they were from God.

In comparison, Jesus said the person who is speaking for God is a person that seeks out ways to give God the glory. This means that person is humble in spirit and only wants to do those things God has commanded in His Word. When someone has that attitude, unrighteousness will not be found in him.

Jesus knew the Jews wanted to kill Him, so He accused them of not keeping the Law of Moses. There are many ways these Jews had not kept the Law of Moses especially when it came to all their own rules of the Sabbath day. Jesus may also be referring to how these Jews wanted to kill Him even though it would mean breaking one of the Ten Commandments.

John 7:20 The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"

Not everyone knew about the plot to kill Jesus, which is why some would have answered this way because no one was preventing Him from talking. It is also possible that some of the Jews that wanted to put Him to death said this to hide their real intentions even further. This was not the first time that Jesus had been accused of being out His mind, and it would not be the last.

John 7:21 Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. ²² "Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. ²³ "If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? ²⁴ "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

It is believed that Jesus is referring to the man He healed at Bethsaida on the Sabbath. Jesus made a strong point against these Jews based on their own actions. First, He points out that circumcision did not originate with Moses because it began during the time of Abraham (Gen 17:10ff), but it was reinstated under the Law of Moses (Ex. 12:44ff). Circumcision was to be done on the 8th day after a boy's birth (Lev. 12:3). If the 8th day fell on the Sabbath, they would circumcise the boy on that day. So, if it is acceptable to circumcise on that day, what is wrong with healing a person's whole body on the Sabbath? This was just one of many examples Jesus used to show that the Jews did good things on the Sabbath as well (Lk. 13:15; 14:5).

Jesus' main point was that they were making a judgment based on appearance and what they thought was breaking the Sabbath Law. Instead of doing this, He wants them to judge with righteous judgment, which means they need to judge His action based on what the Word of God actually says. This is the same judgment we are taught to judge with because Jesus

judges this way (Jn. 5:30). However, we have no authority to judge people based on appearance or to put ourselves in the place of God (Mt. 7:1ff).

John 7:25 Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill? ²⁶ "But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? ²⁷ "However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

This passage teaches us that at least some of the Jews knew the Jewish rulers wanted Jesus dead. Since they allowed Him to speak boldly without arresting Him, some began to speculate that the rulers thought He was the Christ. However, they could not see how this could be possible because they thought they knew where Jesus was from, which to them meant that Jesus could not be the Christ.

John 7:28 Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. ²⁹ "But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me." ³⁰ Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. ³¹ And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this *Man* has done?"

Jesus appears to be using a little sarcasm here because these Jews thought they knew who Jesus was and where He was from. If they really knew who He was and where He was from, they would know He was sent by the Father in heaven. As Jesus said many times, no human has seen the Father, except for Him. In fact, Jesus knows Him and is from Him. Once again, Jesus established that He is the Son of God, and this makes the Jewish rulers angry. They wanted to take Him away, but no one touched Him because it was not His time to die. God's providence was at work here.

Many of the people that heard this believed in Him because it made sense that Jesus is the Christ. If He was not the Christ, would a future Christ be able to do more signs than He did? They could not see the being possible, which is why they believed in Him.

John 7:32 The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. ³³ Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and *then* I go to Him who sent Me. ³⁴ "You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come." ³⁵ Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? ³⁶ "What is this thing that He said, 'You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come'?"

Normally the Pharisees and Sadducees (chief priest), did not work together, but they did when it came to Jesus. They did not like the idea of the crowds following Him, so they sent some officers to arrest Him. Before we find out what happens to these officers, John continues telling us more of what Jesus said.

In verse 33, Jesus is teaching that He will not be on this earth much longer, and He will be going to the Father in heaven. They will continue to look for Him, but they will not find Him. When He says, "Where I am you cannot come," He is saying that they cannot follow Him into heaven especially in their physical bodies because flesh and blood cannot enter heaven (1 Cor. 15:50). Jesus is not saying that no one can go into heaven because those who faithfully follow Him will (Jn. 14:1-3; 12:26).

Some commentators suggest that Jesus was saying that those who do not believe in Him will not be able to follow Him to heaven. While it is true that nonbelievers will not step foot into heaven, we find Jesus making this same statement to those that were following Him in:

John 13:33 "Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,'"

Since He is telling this to His apostles, this teaches us that this is not a statement just for sinners because He is saying that they cannot physically go into heaven right now.

Even though Jesus statement was clear, these Jews began to twist what He said, and they avoided grasping His simple message or perhaps they thought there was a hidden meaning in what He said. They accused Him of planning to take His teaching to the Greeks and hiding out among them. The more they discussed the matter, the more confused they got.

John 7:37 On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The feast lasted for seven days, but it officially ended on the eighth day with a holy convocation, which marked the end of the feast when the people left their booths and went back to their homes. One of the highlights of the feast that happened everyday is pointed out by Mr. Woods:

Each day, during the feast a priest carried a golden pitcher to the pool (of Siloam), filled it and returned to the court of the temple, accompanied by throngs of people rejoicing greatly and poured it on the altar. Immediately, the Hallel, consisting of Ps. 113 -118 was chanted by the Levites and the people repeated each line after the priests. It was a ceremony of much joy and satisfaction. Ancient rabbis are quoted as having said that he who had never witnessed this ceremony did not really know what rejoicing meant. At the close of the singing of the Hallel there was a pause in the activities and it was evidently at this moment that the voice of the Lord rang out... (Woods, p. 155).

Also Westcott records:

On each of the seven preceding days water was drawn in a golden pitcher from the pool of Siloam and carried in procession to the temple and offered by the priests as the singers chanted Isa 12:3: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation..." (Westcott).

Some believe that pouring out the water was done to acknowledge God for giving them rain for their crops. Others believe they did it to remember how God had given their forefathers water in the wilderness (Ex. 17:5-6; Num. 20:7-11). Perhaps both are correct. They also poured the water out looking forward to when the Spirit would be poured out during the time of the Messiah (Joel 2:28), which happened on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 16-17).

Since the golden pitcher was empty, Jesus was offering the rivers of water that would never dry up. Just as their forefathers thirsted in the wilderness and were physically satisfied by the water that came from the rock, Jesus was offering them to drink from Him, so they could become spiritually satisfied. Notice, Jesus said they must believe and come to Him, which proves that a person must have an active faith and be willing to obey what the Scriptures teach. Those who do this are promised the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit had not been given yet because Jesus would have to be glorified first (Jn. 16:7), which is speaking of His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. The Holy Spirit was given as promised on the day of Pentecost (Act 2).

John 7:40 Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." ⁴¹ Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? ⁴² "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" ⁴³ So there was a division among the people because of Him. ⁴⁴ Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

Once again, there is great confusion among these people. Some thought He was the prophet Moses spoke of (Deut: 18: 15, 19), which they did not understand was talking about Christ. Others thought He was the Christ. One of their major problems they had with Jesus being the Christ was they knew He had been raised in Nazareth, and they assumed He was born there. They knew the Scriptures taught that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem and would be in the lineage of David (Mic. 5:2). If they had only known that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and was in the lineage of David, they would not have been so confused. Those that did not like what Jesus represented wanted to seize Him, but they did not because it was not His time yet.

John 7:45 Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" ⁴⁶ The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

These officers were sent to arrest Jesus back in verse 32. However, after hearing Jesus speak with authority, these officers were amazed and they did not arrest Him. They went back to chief priest and Pharisees and they told them the reason they did not arrest Him was because, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" Jesus' words had impressed these men enough

that they were willing to disobey the orders of their superiors, which show that Jesus was a masterful teacher.

John 7:47 Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived?"⁴⁸ "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?"⁴⁹ "But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

The Pharisees were not happy with the officers, and they questioned them about being deceived. The rulers refer to the Sanhedrin. Since the Jewish leaders were confident they knew the Law well, they made the argument that none of them believed in Jesus. Therefore, He must not be the Son of God, and the only reason the common people believed in Him, was because they were gullible and did not know the Law.

F.F. Bruce writes:

Even the liberal Rabbi Hillel, of the generation before Christ, summed up this attitude when he said, "No member of the common people is pious". From the Pharisees point of view, the common people could easily be misled by any plausible teacher, because of their shocking ignorance of the true interpretation of the law (F.F. Bruce *The Gospel & Epistles of John* p.185).

These men were so wise in their own eyes, they could not see the truth. When we read the Scriptures, we discover that God tends to use those who are considered weak or foolish. As Paul said: "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27 Also see 1 Cor. 3:18-20). Those who really wanted to know about Jesus would stay with Him and learn more about Him, but the Jewish leaders were too wise for that, so they would dismiss Jesus' words without really listening to them.

Unfortunately, there are many people who have this same attitude these Jewish leaders had. They think they are so wise that they have everything figured out. When we become wise in our own eyes, we become impossible to reason with, and the Scriptures teach that there is more hope for a fool than a person like that (Prov. 26:12). The Scriptures also state that we should never become wise in our own eyes (Prov. 3:7; 12:15; Isa. 5:21; Rom. 12:16).

John 7:50 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them,⁵¹ "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

This is the same Nicodemus we read about in John 3. He was a Pharisee and one of the rulers. These Jews could not rightly accuse Nicodemus of being ignorant of the Law of Moses or of their oral traditions, which is why he was able to remind them that a person must be heard first before he is judged (Ex. 23:1; Deut. 1:16). Even their rabbinic literature states, "Flesh and blood may pass judgment on a man if it hears his words; if it does not hear them, it cannot establish its judgment" (F.F. Bruce *The Gospel & Epistles of John* p.186). Nicodemus' actions prove that not all the rulers were out to get Jesus. We also learn that some of these rulers believed in Jesus, but they were not willing to confess Him because they did not want to be put out of the Synagogues (Jn. 12:42).

John 7:52 They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." ⁵³ And everyone went to his *own* house.

Since Nicodemus was willing to say something in defense of Jesus, they accused him of being ignorant as well by asking him, "Are you also from Galilee?" Since these rulers and Pharisees had not investigated Jesus' background, they did not know He was born in Bethlehem and was just living in Galilee. Since they did not know the facts, they were mocking Nicodemus because in their opinion not only would Christ not come from Galilee no prophet had. However this was not true because Jonah was from Gath-Hepher in Galilee, which was located about twelve miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee (2 Kgs. 14:25). Some scholars believe that Elijah was from Galilee because he was a Tishbite, while others think he was from the Transjordan east of the Jordan River in Gilead.

Even though they were mistaken about this, their main goal was to take away any possibility of anything great coming out of Galilee. Another passage that could have been used is Isaiah 9:1-3 because it prophecies how the Christ would be a great light in Galilee, and Jesus fulfilled this prophecy (Mt. 4:12-16). There was not going to be any agreements on that day, so everyone left and went to their own homes.

John 8

John 8:1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. ³ Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, ⁴ they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. ⁵ "Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" ⁶ This they said, testing Him, that they might have *something* of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *His* finger, as though He did not hear. ⁷ So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." ⁸ And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. ⁹ Then those who heard *it*, being convicted by *their* conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. ¹⁰ When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹ She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

In John 7:53 we learned that the people could not agree on who Jesus was, so they went to their homes, and verse 1 tells us that Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives was a ridge of hills east of Jerusalem that was covered with Olive trees. A person standing on the Mount of Olives could see over the walls of Jerusalem and peer into the city. This is same place the Garden of Gethsemane was located, and Jesus frequently met with His disciples there (Jn. 18:2).

Before we continue, I need to mention that John 7:53 – 8:11 has been debated over the years to whether these verses belong in the Gospel of John. If we examine our notes in our Bible on these verses it probably says these verses are not in the most reliable manuscripts. However, these verses do exist in more manuscripts than not.

J.W. McGarvey made this valid point:

This section is wanting in nearly all older manuscripts, but Jerome (A.D. 346-420) says that in his time it was contained "in many Greek and Latin manuscripts," and these must have been as good or better than the best manuscripts we now possess (J. W. McGarvey, *The Fourfold Gospel* p. 544).

More sources could be cited, but this shows that these verses were in existence early on because those manuscripts Jerome had access to were much older than the ones we have available today. Also, this story fits perfectly into the text, and it does not contradict anything in the Word of God. Therefore, I believe this is sufficient evidence that these verses belong and are not a later addition.

In verse 2, Jesus goes to the temple early in morning and teaches the people there. While they were listening to Him, the Scribes and the Pharisees rudely interrupted Him.

They brought a woman caught in adultery and put her in the middle of them. They did this because they were trying to trap Jesus, and they wanted a multitude of witnesses to attest to what they thought would bring about Jesus' downfall. They said, "Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" As verse 6 teaches, they were trying to find something they could accuse Jesus of. They came up with this scheme that seemed impossible for Jesus to escape. If He said the Law requires her to be put to death, then they could have gone to the Roman officials and had Jesus arrested because Roman law would not allow the Jews to execute anyone. If Jesus said don not put her to death, they could accuse Him of going against the Law of Moses.

Obviously these men had planned this out. This woman was caught in the act of adultery, which indicates she was married. If this woman had been paid to pretend to be adultery, Jesus would have known. Since she was caught in the act, it is possible that she was set up by one of these Jews, and maybe one them was involved in this adultery. This plot is further implied since they only brought the woman to Jesus because the Law of Moses demanded that both parties were to be put to death (Deut. 22:22-24; Lev. 20:10). However they accomplished this, it certainly put Jesus in a difficult position, and it seemed like these Pharisees and Scribes had finally found a way to trap Jesus.

Instead of answering them right away, Jesus built the suspense by stooping down and writing on the floor. Even though this was a stone floor, there was sand and dirt on the floor from the feet of all those who visited the temple area, and this is what Jesus was writing in. This is the only time we find Jesus writing something in the Scriptures. There have been many speculations of why Jesus did this, and many would love to know what He was writing on the floor. Some have taught that Jesus was using this delay to gather His thoughts, but that is unlikely because He was always able to provide an answer right away. I believe His silence was intentional and He did it to focus their attention on Him. Some have speculated that He was writing out what He was about to say, while others believe He was writing out a list of sins these Jews were guilty of.

As Jesus wrote on the ground, these Jews kept asking Him the same question over and over. So, Jesus stood up and said, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." Then Jesus stooped back down and started writing again. When these Pharisees and Scribes came up with this diabolic plot, they never expected an answer like this. Jesus had turned the tables. Now they had to examine themselves and decide what they were going to do. The Law of Moses taught that the witnesses were to be the first to cast the stone, and the others that were there were supposed to join in the execution (Deut. 17: 2-7). Since Jesus knew their hearts, He knew this was the perfect thing to say because apparently they had been guilty of adultery or perhaps other sins that were worthy of death under the Law of Moses. It is also possible that they felt guilty because they arranged for this act of adultery to occur making them accessories in this sin. So, they became convicted by their own conscience and starting with the oldest man, they left one by one.

Those who like to live in sin and do not like it when someone points out their sins have two favorite sayings from the Bible: "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." and "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Mt. 7:1). They take verses like these out of context and make them teach that we have no right to condemn sin if we have sin in our

lives. While it is true that we should not judge someone of a sin that we are doing (Rom. 2:1), this does not mean that we cannot condemn sin in other peoples lives altogether.

When Jesus told these Scribes and Pharisees “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first,” He was exposing their hypocrisy. They were not concerned about this woman’s adultery. They were just using her sin to try to trap an innocent man. If we allow people to take verses like these out of context, then we are allowing them teach that no one can be judged or punished for their sins. But we know this is not true because Jesus and the rest of Scriptures clearly show that sin is to be dealt with, which is why Jesus said, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment (Jn. 7:24).” This means that we can judge others, but it has to be a judgment made from God’s Word, which is why Paul commanded the sinful Corinthians to withdraw fellowship from a man living with his father’s wife (1 Cor. 5). There are many other Scriptures that demand that sin be dealt with (Mt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20).

After these men left, Jesus stood up again and only saw the woman. He said to her: “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.” For the woman to be condemned to death, there had to be two or three witnesses (Deut. 19:15; 17:6-7). Since, no one was left to establish her sin, Jesus was not going to condemn her to death either. In saying this, He was not condoning her adultery because He told her to, “Go and sin no more.” In this statement, Jesus was telling her to repent and change her ways, which is the same thing Jesus wants from us (Lk. 13:3). If we are not willing to “Go and sin no more,” then we will never be prepared for heaven. This event teaches that God loves us and wants us all to repent and sin no more. Just as Jesus intervened for this woman, He will be an advocate for all who follow Him faithfully (1 Jn. 2:1).

John 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." ¹³ The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true." ¹⁴ Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. ¹⁵ "You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶ "And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me. ¹⁷ "It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. ¹⁸ "I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me." ¹⁹ Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also." ²⁰ These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

This is Jesus’ second “I am” statement in which He claims to be the light of the world. This is interesting because God was considered the light in the Old Testament (Ps. 27:1; Isa. 60:19), and there are several prophecies that teach that God would provide a light for the Gentiles, which would happen through Jesus (Isa. 49:6; 42:6; Mal. 4:2). John calls Jesus the light of the world in (Jn. 1:6-9). Jesus teaches us that we are supposed to be a light for the

world as well (Mt. 5:14), but we are only a reflection of the true light found in Jesus. If we want to have the forgiveness of sins, we must walk in that light (1 Jn. 1:7). The light represents the righteousness of God, while darkness represents the sin of the world. Jesus had just finished shining light on the sin of the woman who committed adultery, and He exposed the sin of the Scribes and Pharisees. Notice, Jesus said He was the light of the world and not the light of Israel. This means that both Jew and Gentile could follow Him and have the light of life. This statement and the things Jesus said after this confirmed that He is Deity, the Son of God.

These Pharisees talking to Jesus were not the ones that had walked away. They were either there beforehand listening to Jesus teach, or they had just walked up and started listening to Jesus. They accused Him of being a false witness because He was His only witness. This does not mean that a person's words are untrue, it simply means their truth cannot be established as the Law of Moses requires (Deut. 19:15). Jesus agreed with this statement earlier when He said, "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true (Jn. 5:31)." However, He gave them six witnesses in that discussion and nothing has changed because Jesus was not His only witness.

However, Jesus was the only one who could be a witness for the true light of God because He came from God in heaven, and He will be going back there after His death. That gives Christ all the credentials He needs to be a true witness, but they did not accept this because all they could do was make a judgment based on appearance. Since all they saw was Jewish man who was the son of a carpenter from Galilee, they were unwilling to see that He is the light of God.

When Jesus said He does not judge, He is talking about judging people by appearance. While He was on the earth, He was not there to condemn people to sin but to save them. Jesus said:

"And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him -- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (Jn. 12:47-48).

When the judgment day comes, we will be judged by what Jesus said, and He will be the judge (Acts 17:31). Then Jesus told them that even if He does make a judgment, His judgment will be true because the Father is with Him guiding Him all the way. This means His judgment comes from the Father. Jesus also appeals to the law they brought up about having two witnesses, and He tells them He is a witness and His Father in heaven is a witness.

Jesus met their requirement, but they would not accept it. So, they asked Him, "Where is Your Father?" They wanted His Father to appear and be His witness, but no one could see the Father except for Jesus. Besides, Jesus had offered many proofs that He was the Son of God through the signs and miracles He did (Act 2:22). Also, God spoke out from heaven and proclaimed that Jesus was His Son (Mt. 3:17; 17:5), which is why Jesus told them if they knew Him, they would know His Father because He came from Him. He said all these things in the treasury, which is also known as the women's court. The women were not

allowed to go beyond this area. This court was just over 200 feet square (40,000 sq feet), and it contained thirteen chests for the Jews to put their money in (Mk. 12:41-44). This was the most public part of the temple because all the Jews would pass through this area. Jesus spoke with boldness and without fear of anyone who heard the truth. No one laid a hand on Him because it was not time for Him to face His death on the cross.

John 8:21 Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come." ²² So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come?'" ²³ And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."

Once again, Jesus is teaching about His death, burial, and resurrection. When He was raised from the dead, He went back to heaven where He was before. This was not the first time Jesus said, "I am going away, and you will seek me... Where I go you cannot come." He said this in John 7:34 as well. When He said it in John 7:34, they thought He meant He would take His teaching to the Greeks, but in our immediate text, they think He is going to kill Himself. They were wrong on both accounts because Jesus is trying teach them that if they seek after Him on the earth, they will not find Him because after He gives His life for humanity He will be raised from the dead and will ascend into heaven.

Next, He responds to their suicide question by telling them He is from above, which refers to heaven, and they are from below, which refers to the world. If they refuse to believe that He is the "I am," then they will die in their sins. Most Bible versions add the word "he" or some other words after the phrase "I am", but these words were added by the translators. Most Bible versions italicize the words they add to make the verse more readable. However, in this case, Jesus was saying they must believe that He is the I am, which literally means "to be". We will see how Jesus was using this phrase to describe His self-existence and Deity later in this chapter. Since a person must believe that Jesus is Deity, the Son of God, proves that a person can only obtain the forgiveness of sin through Jesus, because there is no other way (Jn. 14:6).

John 8:25 Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. ²⁶ "I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him." ²⁷ They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

After everything Jesus told them, they still wanted to know who He is. Jesus does not come right out and say who He is again. Instead, He tells them He has been telling them the same thing He has told them from the beginning, but they were dull of hearing and they could not grasp the truth. Jesus told them He had many more things to say to them that would expose their sins and the judgment they would receive from the Father. He wanted them to understand that the words He would be speaking would come from the Father in heaven. Once again, they could not understand the simple truth that Jesus was talking about the Father in heaven.

John 8:28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. ²⁹ "And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." ³⁰ As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

Jesus was teaching them how He would die on the cruel cross. He lets them know that when this happens, they will know He is the Son of God. Jesus was correct because after His death on the cross, many priests believed He was the Son of God (Acts 6:7). Again, Jesus shows His close connection with the Father by claiming:

- Everything He said and did was taught to Him by the Father.
- He was sent by the Father.
- Everything He did was done to please the Father.
- The Father is always with Him.

These are characteristics we would expect the Son of God to have. Since the Father was always with Jesus, He could always draw strength from Him, so He was never really alone. In difficult times like these when the Jewish rulers would break His heart because of their unbelief, He could be comforted knowing the Father was there with Him. God is there for us today as well. We should realize that we are never really alone because God is always there for us, and He is willing to help us if we will simply ask.

After Jesus said these words, many of those standing there believed in Him. However, I do not believe they professed their belief verbally. I believe that Jesus read their hearts and knew that many had. Next, He is going to tell them what they must do to have an obedient faith that will save them.

John 8:31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Jesus is now speaking to those who believed in Him, and He tells them what they must do to become His disciples and be set free. Notice, their belief alone did not do this, nor would one act of obedience accomplish this. They would have to abide in His words. The word "abide" means to "...remain, not to depart, to continue to be present ..." (Thayer). This proves that faith alone will not save a person or make them a disciple of Christ because a person must continue to keep God's Word and be doers of it (Jas. 1:22-25).

Verse 32 proves that we can know the truth from God's Word and when we take the time to read it, study it, and abide in it, we can be set free from our sin. This verse is exactly what Jeremiah said would happen under the new covenant that would come through Jesus (Jer. 31:31-34).

John 8:33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* you say, 'You will be made free'?"

Their answer was not true because they were currently under bondage to the Roman Empire, and the Jewish nation had been under bondage many times in their history. The Romans had given them the freedom to practice their religion as long as it did not cause problems. Part of their religion was restricted because they could not put anyone to death even if the Law of Moses required it. These Jews had physical or political bondage in mind, but Jesus was talking about being set free from sin.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵ "And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. ³⁶ "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Jesus did not leave them any doubt that He was talking about freedom from sin. Every person is a slave in this world no matter what their social status may be. They are either slaves to sin or slaves of righteousness (Rom. 6:16-18). Every time we engage in sin it can cause us to become a slave to it, but knowing the truth and abiding in it can set us free from the bondage of sin.

In verse 35, Jesus illustrates the difference between a slave and son. A slave belongs to its master and he or she is not a permanent member of that household. However, the son is and he is the heir. If he decides to free his slaves they will be free. That is exactly what Jesus came to do. He came to set the human race free from their sin and better yet, He would make it possible for them to be adopted as sons and daughters so they could become part of the master house (Eph. 1:3-6).

Burt Coffman quotes another possible implication of these verses from Hendriksen:

The old dispensation with its special privileges for Israel has ended. Abraham's true children will remain in his household (the new covenant) and enjoy its privileges permanently; but Abraham's slaves (think of Hagar) will be driven out. Only a son enjoys freedom. If therefore the Son of God will make them free, they will be free indeed" (Coffman's Commentary on John).

John 8:37 " I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ³⁸ "I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." ³⁹ They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. ⁴⁰ "But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. ⁴¹ "You do the deeds of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father -- God."

Jesus did not deny they were physical descendants of Abraham, but He was pointing out that they needed to be like Abraham. Abraham was a friend of God (Jas. 2:23) and would never try to kill a messenger from God, but these Jews were willing to do it. According to Paul, Jesus was the singular seed in which all the promises of Abraham would be realized (Gal. 3:16).

So, in order to become a spiritual seed of Abraham, a person has to be found in Christ, which only happens by obeying the gospel plan of salvation. After a person believes (Jn. 3:16), repents (Lk. 13:3), and confesses Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10), God's Word teaches that a person must be baptized to be put into Christ and to become the spiritual seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3).

In verse 38, Jesus compared the origin of their thoughts to His. He said His words and thoughts came from the Father in heaven, but their words and thoughts came from the devil. He does not say the devil specifically here, but this is what He is referring to as we will see in verse 44.

In response to this, they immediately claim that Abraham is their father. Again, it is true that they were physical descendants of him, but they were nothing like him because the works he did came from an obedient faith (Heb. 11:8-10). These Jews were willing to kill the messenger of God. Jesus is trying to teach them that being a physical descendent is not enough because a person has to be part of the spiritual seed. Romans 8 and 9 explain the difference between a physical and spiritual descendant of Abraham, and these two chapters teach that a person must be a spiritual descendent of Abraham to be pleasing to God.

After Jesus accused them of doing the deed of their father the devil, they responded by saying that their true father is the Father in heaven, and they were not born of fornication. What did they mean by not being born of fornication? J.W. McGarvey explains:

Perceiving that he spoke of spiritual parentage, and recognizing the fact that he had shattered their claim of spiritual derivation from Abraham, they fell back upon the citadel of Jewish confidence and pride -- spiritually they were begotten of God; they were not begotten of an idolatrous but of a godly stock. Fornication is here used as the common symbol for idolatry -- Exo. 34:15,16; Hos. 1:2; 2:4 (McGarvey and Pendleton).

They wanted the record to be straight that they were pure descendants of Abraham and the Father in heaven was their spiritual Father. Also, their bloodline had not been corrupted with those outside the children of Israel.

John 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. ⁴³ "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. ⁴⁴ "You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. ⁴⁵ "But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶ "Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷ "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

Jesus was a master teacher and debater. Since they claimed the heavenly Father as being their father, Jesus tells them they should love Him because He came from the Father by the

direction of the Father. These verses teach that it takes more than just believing in Jesus because a person must have love because mere belief will not motivate someone to do the right thing. They must be motivated by love, which is why Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments (Jn. 14:15)."

In verse 43, Jesus asked a question and then answered it Himself. He wants to know why they cannot understand His speech. He has been teaching them clearly about whom He is and about their spiritual condition. Since their minds are on carnal things and they are blinded because of their pride and arrogance, they cannot listen as they should. Then Jesus strikes a hard blow when He tells them that their father is the devil. The devil was a murderer from the beginning of human history, and he is the father of lies. Satan told two lies to Eve, which led to the death of Adam and Eve. He lied about what God said and the reason He did not want them to eat from that tree (Gen. 3:4-5). The devil was the father of these Jews, and they were his disciples. Since the devil cannot stand the truth, they could not stand it either, which is why they would not believe Jesus even though His message was from God the Father.

Jesus challenged them to offer proof that He had sin in His life. If they could have done this, they would have something to work with and a reason not to believe in Him, but they could not produce any evidence that would convict Jesus of sin. So, they should have believed Him, but they did not.

In verse 47, Jesus told them that they are not of God because they refuse to hear God's Word. There are many religious institutions in the world today who fall into this category because they claim to be followers of God and even claim that Jesus is the Son of God, but they refuse to hear God's Word when it comes to issues that teach against their false doctrine. Remember, Jesus said that we must abide in His doctrine to be set free. So, when religious groups do things their way and stray away from God's truth, they make themselves slaves of sin and they make the devil their father. Those are strong words, but just as it was true for these Jews of Jesus' day, it is true for those who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 Jn. 1:9).

John 8:48 Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" ⁴⁹ Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. ⁵⁰ "And I do not seek My *own* glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

The Jews despised the Samaritans more than they did the Gentiles, and they accused Jesus of being one and having a demon. This was their way of saying, "We are not sons of the devil you are." Jesus told them He did not have a demon and that He was only honoring His Father in heaven, but they were dishonoring Him. This truth could be proven by looking at Jesus' life and how the words He said were always true. Jesus only came to this earth to glorify God and not Himself. He did not allow their comment to enrage Him, and He pointed out that God is the one who sees and judges.

John 8:51 "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death." ⁵² Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon!

Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' ⁵³ "Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Whom do You make Yourself out to be?"

They cannot get their minds off the physical because they think Jesus is talking about physical death when He is talking about spiritual death. Those who faithfully follow the Word of God will never have to face spiritual separation from God, which means they will not have to go to the horrible place called hell. Instead, Jesus will give them eternal life in heaven where there will be no more death or pain (Rev. 21:4).

Since these Jews were thinking physically, they were convinced that Jesus had a demon in Him because not even Abraham or any of the prophets before Him were able to remain alive. So, if these prophets could not physically live forever who were faithful servants of God, how could Jesus offer such a claim? This is why they preceded to ask Him if He was greater than Abraham and all the other prophets that are dead and gone. Even though Jesus proved to them over and over that He is the Son of God, they still asked, "Whom do You make Yourself out to be?"

John 8:54 Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. ⁵⁵ "Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. ⁵⁶ "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad."

Jesus is trying to get through their thick skulls that He did not come to the earth to honor Himself, He came to honor the Father and the Father honors Him (Mt. 3:16-17; Jn. 12:27-28). Once again, Jesus claimed He is the Son of God, and He tells them they do not know the Father, but He does. If Jesus said otherwise, He would be a liar like them. Notice, He calls them liars. What does it mean to know God? John teaches us that we know God if we keep His commandments, otherwise we are liars (1 Jn. 2:3-4). If these Jews would have studied the Scriptures and opened their hearts to what it said, they would have realized that Jesus was greater than Abraham.

In verse 56, we learn that Abraham rejoiced because He was able to see through the prophetic promise that all nations would be blessed through His seed, which would happen through Jesus (Gal. 3:8, 16-18).

John 8:57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." ⁵⁹ Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

These Jews knew that Jesus was not old enough to have seen Abraham, but they did not understand His nature. He was the "I AM", which means that He has always existed and was alive before Abraham was born (Jn. 1:1-2). We can see Jesus at work in the Old Testament time as well. When we examine the Old Testament and what it has to say about the Angel of the

Lord or Angel of God, we will discover that the Angel of the Lord has characteristics of Deity. The best person of the Godhead that fits the Angel of the Lord or Angel of God is Jesus.

Just as Jesus was claiming to be the "I AM," this is the same thing we see the Angel of the Lord saying from the burning bush that Moses was talking to (Ex. 3:2-6). Also we learn that the same statement made in Exodus 3:6 was made by the Angel of the Lord to Jacob (Compare Gen. 28:13-14 to 31:11-13). The Angel of the Lord had three encounters with Abraham, but the most revealing was when Abraham took his son to sacrifice him at the request of God (Gen. 22). Even though Genesis 22:1-2 tells us that God requested that Abraham do this, notice what the following verses reveal:

Genesis 22:11 "But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." ¹² And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me."

It was the Angel of the Lord that made this request, which was God. Notice what else He said:

Genesis 22:15 Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, ¹⁶ and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son* -- ¹⁷ "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

Here we see the Angel of the Lord swearing by Himself because he had no one higher to swear by.

Hebrews 6:13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, ¹⁴ saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you."

These facts make a strong case that the Angel of the Lord is Deity, and He said the reason Abraham was receiving this blessing was because he obeyed His voice. Again, only Deity could make such a promise and as I stated earlier, Jesus is the best choice of being the Angel of the Lord. So, this teaches us that Jesus did see Abraham, and He even spoke with him.

When Jesus claimed to be the "I AM", these Jews had no problem understanding that He was claiming to be the Son of God, which is why they picked up stones to kill him. Since it was not His time to die, He slipped through their midst as He left the temple, which may of have been a miraculous escape, but we are not told either way.

Out of the seven "I am" statements most people list in the book of John, verse 58 is not included because Jesus simply says "I AM." However, this is a significant statement because

it proves His Deity and self-existence. In this chapter alone, Jesus has claimed His Deity as being the Son of God around a dozen times. Even though these Jews wanted Him dead and were not listening, Jesus never backed down from the truth. We must learn from His example and never compromise God's truth just because people do not like it.

John 9

John 9:1 Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

It is unknown how much time has passed since Jesus left the temple and escaped from being stoned to death. He and His disciples were walking along when they passed by a man that was blind since birth. It is interesting to note that no one was healed of blindness in the Old Testament. This man was accustomed to being blind, but I cannot imagine living my entire life without being able to see my loved ones or the beauty of God's creation with my eyes.

When Jesus' disciples saw this man, they assumed he was born blind because he had sinned or his parents had sinned. Since they knew he was blind from birth, someone must have mentioned this to them earlier. Anytime someone suffered from a disease or a physical ailment, many assumed that person sinned just like Job's friends assumed about him.

It is possible for someone to suffer a disease or a physical ailment if they engage in sin (Gal. 6:6-7). For instance, if a person abused his body with drugs, alcohol, or he commits fornication, it can cause disease and health problems. It is also possible for a child to be born blind or have other problems if his mother sins by abusing her body with drugs, or if the husband sins by beating his wife while she is pregnant. Sometimes several generations can be affected by the sin of their parents even though their descendants are not guilty of their parent's sin (Ex. 20:5).

Even when a child is born with a physical ailment, it does not mean that he is a sinner because it is impossible for them to be one, and his parent's sin cannot be passed onto him (Ezek. 18:20). An infant cannot speak or even think about sin because they do not know what it is. Therefore, I find it strange that these disciples asked if this man had sinned to cause himself to be blind from birth, which would mean he could have sinned from the womb, which cannot happen.

Many times a person can suffer physically or even get diseases naturally without sin being the cause (Lk. 13:1-5), which is the case with this blind man. But the disciples had made a judgment call and assumed the worse without knowing the facts. We have to be careful that we do not find ourselves guilty of this today. It is important that we do not prejudge someone based on what we initially perceive with our eyes. Instead, we need to gather all the facts we can before we make a judgment call.

John 9:3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. ⁴ "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Jesus told His disciples neither this man nor his parents were guilty of sin, but the works of God will be revealed in him. I do not believe God caused this man be blind from birth for this purpose. Instead, Jesus would use this opportunity to work another miracle to glorify

God. Just as Jesus used His opportunities wisely, we should do the same. When Jesus said neither this man nor his parents sinned, He was only saying that their sins did not cause the blindness because they were not sinless.

In verse 4, Jesus is saying that He must continue to do the works of the Father while He is alive, which is what is meant by day. The night represents death when no one can work. Jesus is our perfect example because He was obedient to the Father in every way and used His time wisely to serve God. We must learn from this example and realize that we only have a short time on this earth. Once we die, it is over. There are no second chances, so we must redeem the time we have (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5).

Once again, Jesus claims to be the light of the world. It was prophesied that He would be this shining light (Isa. 9:2; Mt. 4:14-16; Lk. 1:79). Jesus called Himself this light on many occasions (Jn. 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46; Rev. 22:16). His light exposes the darkness of sin, and it reveals the truth. Even when Jesus was physically taken out of the world, He did not leave us in darkness because He left us His Word, which reveals that same light (2 Tim. 1:10; 2 Pet. 1:19; Ps. 119:105).

When we step into that light and obey it, we become Christians. We can have the same confidence David did when he said:

Psalm 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?

Not only does Jesus continue to be the light for us through His Word, He will be the eternal light of heaven (Rev. 21:23). So, if we want to be pleasing to God, we must believe on the light and become sons of light (Jn. 12:36), walk in the light (1 Jn. 1:6, 7), put on the whole armor of light (Rom. 13:12), and shine as a reflection of that light (Isa. 60:1; Phil. 2:15; Acts 13:47). We must strive to emulate Christ's obedience to the Father.

John 9:6 When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. ⁷ And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

On several occasions Jesus used something with His miracle, but He always used something that had nothing to do with the miracle itself. I do not know the reason Jesus used things like this because if He wanted to, He could just say your healed and the person would be healed, but I have no doubt there was a purpose for it. Though not mentioned, I can imagine that some tried to reproduce this miracle by using clay and the pool of Siloam, but they would find out that it would not work for them.

The blind man did not know who Jesus was, but he had nothing to lose. So, He allowed Jesus to anoint his eyes, and he obeyed the command to go wash in the pool of Siloam. According to one commentator:

Its name was derived from the fact that its waters were “sent” into the pool by a channel:

South of the temple mount is a basin hewn out of the rock in part and partly built of masonry, fifty-three feet long, eighteen feet wide and nineteen feet deep, which is identified as Siloam. A stream, rising in the fount of Siloam, passes through the reservoir, which is used for domestic purposes.

This pool is located in the southeast part of the city where the Tyropoean Valley joins the Kidron. Its waters come from the Gihon Spring by way of the tunnel built by Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chron. 32:30). At the Feast of Tabernacles the waters of Siloam were used to symbolize the blessings of God upon the people, and Jesus had related the symbolism to Himself (John 7:37-38). John wants his readers to see that the blessings which the man was to experience really came from Messiah, the Sent One. In Isaiah 8:6 these same waters were used to describe God’s provision for His people (Power Lectureship, *The Sayings of Jesus* p. 424).

Make no mistake, there was not any power in the clay, spit, or the pool of Siloam. The miracle happened because of Jesus and the man received his sight because He obeyed, which is similar to the story of Naaman (2 Kgs. 5). Naaman was a leper and Elisha told him if he wanted to be made clean, he would have to dip in the Jordan River seven times. At first, he did not want to do it, but his servant talked him into obeying this command. When he did, his leprosy was taken away. There was nothing magical about the Jordan River. It was simply the place God designated where Naaman would be healed. In both these instances God was the source of the healing, and they received their healing by obeying.

This same principle applies to every person today because everyone is stained with sin, and the only way to be cured from that sin is through the power of God. However, we must choose to accept it by having an obedient faith. We must believe, repent, confess Jesus as Lord, and be baptized. Many people get hung up on the idea of baptism, but the water is not what takes away our sin just like it did not open the blind man’s eyes or cure Naaman’s leprosy. It is simply the place God has told us to go. When we obey His command and we are baptized, we can know that God is removing our sin and making us a child of God (Col. 2:12).

John 9:8 Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?" ⁹ Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him." He said, "I am *he*." ¹⁰ Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" ¹¹ He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight." ¹² Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."

We can only imagine what these neighbors thought. Here was a man they saw begging day after day because he could not see. Maybe some of them had even seen him earlier that day

being blind, but now he could see. Some were so shocked by this event that they began to question their own sanity, which is why they asked if he was that man while others said he certainly looks like the man.

By this time there was probably a small crowd gathered because people always come together to see something extraordinary. This former blind man removes all doubt about his identity because he tells them he was that blind man. Of course everyone wants to know how it happened, and the man had no problem telling them what Jesus did for Him and how it was done. When they found out it was Jesus, they wanted to know where He was, but the man did not know. While many of these people probably knew who Jesus was, the blind man did not.

John 9:13 They brought him who formally was blind to the Pharisees. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." ¹⁶ Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. ¹⁷ They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

The neighbors knew this was a miracle, so they brought this man to the Pharisees. We find out that Jesus healed this man on the Sabbath. Once again, this man explained how Jesus healed him, but all the Pharisees could focus on was their own laws they had made for the Sabbath. In their man-made traditions, Jesus had broken the Sabbath because He healed a man, spit in the ground, and made clay. However, Jesus had not broken the Sabbath according to the Law of Moses (Heb. 4:15).

The Pharisees were only concerned with Jesus because they did not like Him. They never said a word about the blind man who washed, which would have broken their view of the Sabbath. Because of their narrow minds, they did not pay attention to the miracle that happened.

Some of them understood the significance of this miracle, and they posed a great question. "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" If the Pharisees could have seen past their traditions and focused on this genuine miracle, they would have to conclude that Jesus was from God. They could not accuse Him of having a demon because when does a demon or the devil do something kind like making the blind see? Once again, the Pharisees held to their stubborn position while others had been convinced, so a great division occurred that day.

Now they want to know what this blind man thinks about Jesus. This man was like the woman at the well (Jn. 4) because he is progressing in what he thinks about Jesus. First, he said that a man named Jesus healed him. Now, he is saying He must be a prophet since He was able to heal his blindness.

John 9:18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. ¹⁹

And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰ His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹ "but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." ²² His parents said these *things* because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed *that He was Christ*, he would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

These Jews did not believe in Jesus, so they wondered if this man had really been blind. So, they investigated this man's story by asking his parents if he was indeed born blind, and if he was blind, how was it that he could see now. Much to the disliking of the Pharisees, his parents confirmed that their son was born blind, so there was no denying that a genuine miracle happened. One would think these parents would be overwhelmed with joy that Jesus gave their son his sight and would proudly say that Jesus was the one that did it. Instead, they decided to lie so they would not get kicked out of the Synagogue.

To be kicked out of the Synagogue was a Jew's worse fear because not only were they not allowed to worship there, the other Jews would not talk with them or do business with them. So, this is why they would not tell these men what they knew, and why they shifted the focus back on their son.

John 9:24 So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." ²⁵ He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner *or not* I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."

Since the Pharisees were not successful with the parents, they turned their attention to this man again. They are trying their best to intimidate him to get him to deny that Jesus had anything to do with his eyesight. Unlike his parents, he did not cave under the pressure. He did not care if Jesus was a sinner or not, and he did not care what these Pharisees were saying because he knew that he was blind and now he could see. Nothing was going to change that fact.

John 9:26 Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" ²⁷ He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear *it* again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

Once again, the Jews wanted this man to tell them how he was healed. They were probably hoping his story would change so they could find some way of disproving Jesus' involvement. This man was growing tired of these Pharisees, so he does not tell them the story again because they do not want to hear the truth. He then mocks them by asking them if they want to be His disciples.

John 9:28 Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. ²⁹ "We know that God spoke to Moses; *as for this fellow*, we do not know where He is from."

They did not like what he said one bit, so they began to defend themselves and said they were Moses' disciples. As we learned earlier in our study, Moses prophesied about Jesus, and He had been fulfilling those prophecies. If these Jews were really Moses' disciples, they should have believed that Jesus is the Messiah. We also find these Pharisees lying because they claimed they did not know where Jesus was from, but back in John 7:27, they said they did. Even if these were not the same Pharisees of John 7, we know they shared the news about Jesus to their fellow Pharisees because they were all looking for a way to bring Him down, and they all knew who He was. These Pharisees were willing to say anything that would keep them from admitting the truth.

John 9:30 The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes!"³¹ "Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him."³² "Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind."³³ "If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."³⁴ They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

This blind man had a greater understanding than these Pharisees. He understood that the only way that Jesus could have healed his blindness was if God was working through Him. The blind man could see this, but the Pharisees would not open their eyes to this simple truth. Instead, they cast him out of their site claiming that he had no right to teach them anything because he was born in sin.

Let's take a closer look at what the blind man said. Even though this man was not inspired by God, he claimed that God does not hear sinners, which is true, and it is supported by several Old Testament Scriptures (Ps. 34:15-16; Prov. 1:28-31, 15:29, 28:9; Mic. 3:4; Zech. 7:12-13). When we examine these verses, we will find that God does not hear the prayer of those who are not willing hear or obey the Law of God.

However, if a person is seeking after God, and they are trying to obey God's Word, He will hear their prayer just like he heard Cornelius' prayer (Acts 10:4). Even the blind man in John 9 said, "If anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him (Jn. 9:31)." There are many passages that imply this truth as well (Prov. 8:17; Acts 10:4; Jas. 4:8).

While God may hear the prayers of those that are drawing near to God, they will not be able to boldly approach the throne of grace as Christian can because Jesus is not their high priest, and they are on the outside looking in (Heb. 4:14-16). It should have been obvious to these Pharisees that the blind man was right because no miracle like this had ever been done in the past.

John 9:35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"³⁶ He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"³⁷ And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."³⁸ Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

Jesus found the blind man and wanted to know if he believed in the Son of God. The blind man wants to believe in the Son of God, but he does not know who He is. This fact disproves the fake miracle workers today who claim that a person can only be healed if he has enough faith in Jesus because this man was healed, and he did not know who Jesus was. When Jesus healed this man, he only heard His voice and did not know what He looked like. At first, he called Jesus a man, and later he concluded that He was a prophet. This man was ready to believe in the Son of God when Jesus pointed out who He was.

When Jesus told him that He was the Son of God, he did not question it; He simply believed and worshipped Him. Jesus did not stop him from worshipping Him because Jesus was worthy of worship. He was both man and God in the flesh.

John 9:39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind." ⁴⁰ Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.

When Jesus came into the world it was not to condemn it, but to save it.

John 3:17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

However, as He began to reveal the truth through His words, He was laying the foundation by which all be judged (Jn. 12:48). Not only did Jesus come to save those that were willing to accept His words of salvation, these same words will judge those who refuse to accept them like these Pharisees.

Jesus also added that He came to open the eyes of those who cannot see and make blind those who can see. Jesus is using this saying in reference to the blind man that had his eyes opened, but He is talking about this in a spiritual sense. Yes, this man was healed of his physical blindness, but as time progressed, his eyes were opened spiritually. Now, He believes that Jesus is the Son of God, which is what is meant by making the blind to see. Every sinner in this world is spiritually blind until they allow their eyes to be opened by the Word of God.

On the flip side, those who think they can see, like the Pharisees, were made spiritually blind by the truth that Jesus was teaching because they were unwilling to accept it, which was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah (Mt. 13:14-15; Isa. 6:9-10).

What did Jesus mean when He said, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains." When Jesus said they would have no sin, He was not saying they would have no sin whatsoever because all have sinned (Rom. 3:23). If He was talking about spiritual blindness, I believe He was saying they would have no sin in not knowing who Jesus was if they had not heard who He was or who He claimed to be.

If He is talking about physical blindness, He could be saying that if they were like this blind man, they would not have sin for not believing in Him because He did not know who Jesus was, and he had not been able to see any of the signs that Jesus had done. When Jesus opened the blind man's physical eyes with a miracle it led to the blind man having his spiritual eyes opened because this miracle and Jesus' proclamation that He was the Son of God was all the blind man needed for proof.

These Pharisees had heard about and seen some of the miracles that Jesus did. On many occasions Jesus pointed out to them how He was fulfilling the prophecies of the Messiah. Jesus gave them plenty of evidence that should have cured their spiritual blindness, but because of their stubborn pride, they refused to believe in Jesus. Since they were claiming they could see and knew what the Scriptures said, they would continue to remain in their sins because they were still denying that Jesus was the Son of God.

John 10

Chapter 10 picks up where chapter 9 leaves off. After Jesus told the Pharisees, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains” (Jn 9:41), He continued speaking to them through verse 21. The phrase “Most assuredly (NKJV)” or “Verily Verily (KJV)” proves this because this phrase is not used to introduce a new topic. Jesus was about to teach these Pharisees that He is the true Shepherd.

John 10:1"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² "But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ "Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

In my introduction to this study, I stated that there are no parables in the Gospel of John. Some consider this to be a parable and they call it, “The parable of the shepherd and the sheep.” Even the KJV calls this a parable in verse 6. However, the Greek word used here is “paroimian” which means a wise saying, proverb, maxim, or allegory, so it is not a parable. In comparison, the Synoptic Gospels never use the word “paroimian” to describe a parable. They use the Greek word “parabole,” which means “something that serves as a model or example pointing beyond itself for later realization” (BDAG). This saying of Jesus was used to describe the role of a shepherd and symbolically show that He is the true Shepherd.

A shepherd was a man who would protect and lead his sheep to safety. There were many dangers he would face, but he was willing to give his life to protect his sheep. At nighttime, if he could find a cave to put the sheep in, he would lay at the entrance making himself a door to the sheep. Any animal that wanted to eat the sheep would have to go through him first. If there was not a cave available, he would build a protective wall from stones or thorns and lay at the entrance of it as well.

When the shepherd brought the sheep back into the village, he would put them into the sheepfold. A sheepfold was a place build in the village to hold the sheep, but it did not have a roof, and a guard would be hired to watch the gate of the sheepfold. However, those that wanted to steal sheep would climb over the wall and take them.

Jesus gave an accurate description of what is involved in being a shepherd, but at the same time, He was calling these Pharisees thieves and robbers because they were not the true shepherds. Throughout the history of the Jews, they had deviated from God’s plan over and over. As time went on, the Scribes and Pharisees had been leading the people astray by all their manmade regulations. In essences, this made them thieves and robbers because they did not gain their followers by entering through the door of truth.

Since shepherds spend a lot of time with their sheep, they learn to trust their shepherd and follow their lead. The shepherd can call them by name and they will follow. Sometimes in these sheepfolds there would be different sheep from different shepherds, but when a

shepherd came to gather his sheep, all he had to do was call them, and they would follow him. The sheep that did not belong to him would stay in the pen.

Jesus is symbolically calling Himself the Shepherd and calling these Pharisees the strangers. In our example of the blind man in John 9, he heard the voice of Jesus and after he received his sight, he would only follow the voice of Jesus. Even though the Pharisees tried to get him to listen to their voice, he would not because he trusted in Jesus' voice. Verse 6 tells us that the Pharisees did not understand what Jesus was talking about.

John 10:7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ "All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

In verses 7 and 9, we have our third "I am" statement. Jesus metaphorically calls Himself a door, which gives us two different thoughts. First, this means the only way to have salvation is through Jesus, which is taught elsewhere as well (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12). The only way a person can go through Jesus is by obeying His Word (Jn. 14:15). Second, if a person wants to have spiritual fellowship with the sheep, they must go through Jesus and abide by His authority.

Those who do not enter the flock through the door are considered thieves. These thieves are only interested in themselves, and they do not care if the flock is killed or destroyed, which is exactly what the Jewish leaders were guilty of. They did not care about anyone but themselves. There is great example of this is Ezekiel 34:1-10. Even though these Pharisees did not have the peoples' best interest at heart, Jesus did. He came to the earth, so we could have life more abundantly.

There are many nonChristians who think the life of a Christian is boring, depressing, and restricted. However, this is untrue because the life of a Christian is exciting and it is full of joy and happiness because we know we have a God that loves us and has promised us eternal life in heaven. The life of a Christian is far from being boring. While it is true that a Christian is restricted from living in sin, the rewards that we receive as Christians far out way sinful living. Paul understood this idea (Phi. 3:7-11).

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹² "But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ "The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd; and I know My *sheep*, and am known by My own.

"I am the good Shepherd" is the fourth "I am" statement of Jesus. Not only is Jesus the door, He is the true Shepherd. Jesus is the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy (Ezek. 34:23-24). These verses in Ezekiel are not talking about David himself because he was already dead

when this was written. He is talking about a future son, which is Jesus because He is in David's lineage. Even the opposing Pharisees knew that Christ was the son of David (Mt. 23:41-42).

Since Jesus is the good Shepherd, it also proves He is God because God was considered the only Shepherd of the Jews (Ps. 23:1; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7). Jesus is the good Shepherd because He was willing to give His life for ours because He loves us. However, the hireling was someone that was paid to watch the sheep, and they did not love the sheep. They were not that concerned about them because they did not belong to them. So, if danger came along, they would flee for their life and leave the flock defenseless.

The hireling represents the Pharisees because they were not willing to put their lives on the line for the people because they were only concerned about themselves. Sometimes we can find hireling in the church. For example an elder can be hireling if they only took the position for power or to feel important. Preachers can become hirelings if they do not preach all God's truth because they do not want to lose their job.

In verse 14, Jesus confirms again that He is the good Shepherd and He knows His sheep and is known by His sheep. It should be comforting to every Christian to know that Jesus knows who we are and even knows our name. As His sheep we must know who He is by studying God's Word.

The reason many thieves have been able to steal from God's flock is because the sheep are not making an effort to know Jesus. Many today have lost their desire to learn about Jesus' authority in the Scriptures. When this happens, it allows a person to be "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting" (Eph. 4:14). Jesus said that those that know Him will not follow a stranger's voice, but those that neglect the Scriptures will.

John 10:15 "As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶ "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.

Verse 15 shows Jesus close relationship with the Father. No human knows the Father like Jesus does. However, we can know the Father through Jesus. Jesus makes it clear that He is going to give His life for the sheep. There is no greater love that can be shown than for Jesus to willingly give His life for us (Jn. 15:13; Rom. 5:6-8).

When Jesus talked about there being other sheep that are not of this fold, He is talking about the Gentiles. When Jesus died for us, He died for all. Both Jews and Gentiles would be able to become part of the one flock with one Shepherd, which is Jesus. Paul taught the Ephesians about this in Ephesians 2:11-22 (See also Gal. 3:27-29).

Some teach that Jesus was referring to denominations with the term other sheep, but that is twisting this Scripture because it is obviously talking about Gentiles. Besides, the Word of

God teaches against denominations (1 Cor. 1:10 ff). There is only one body/church that Jesus purchased with His blood and built (Mt. 16:18; Act 20:28).

John 10:17 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. ¹⁸ "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

Jesus was perfect in following the will of the Father. The Father loves everyone that is obedient to His will. Jesus lets these Pharisees know that no one can take His life until He chooses to give it. This statement was true because over and over again the Jewish leaders sought Jesus' life, and many times people picked up stones to throw at Him, but nothing ever came of their attempts because it was not His time to die.

In these verses, Jesus was speaking of His death and resurrection. He knew once He laid down His life that He would be raised from the dead because it was the Father's will.

John 10:19 Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. ²⁰ And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?" ²¹ Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Division was a common occurrence when Jesus taught the people. Some would open their eyes to the truth and realize that Jesus was the Son of God while others were too rideful to accept the truth. Some of them tried to accuse Him of having a demon, but others made a valid argument that a demon could not open the eyes of the blind. Since they talked about Him opening the eyes of the blind, it implies that this event is a direct continuation of chapter 9 because they are referring back to the blind man Jesus healed. Jesus ability to heal the blind shows His Deity because only the Lord could do this (Ex. 4:11; Ps. 146:8). As far as I know this never happened in the Old Testament, but Jesus was able to do it on several occasion, therefore He is Lord. Those who were unwilling to open their eyes to the truth would remain spiritual blind and in their sins.

John 10:22 Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. ²³ And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.

About three months have passed between verses 21 and 22. It was now winter and it was time for the Feast of Dedication.

According to F.F. Bruce:

The festival of Dedication was a relatively recent institution. After the temple had been defiled for three years (167 – 164 BC) by the installation of a pagan cult under Antiochus Epiphanes, and the idolatrous altar, the 'abomination of desolation' (a mocking pun on the pagan divinity's name), had been erected on top of the altar of Israel's God, the sacred site was recaptured by Judas Maccabaeus and his followers and the temple was reconsecrated to its proper use on 25 Kislev (= 14 December), 164 BC. The festival of

Dedication (Hanukkah) commemorating this event, may have had a prehistory as a festival of the winter solstice, but from then on it was given a place in Israel's religious calendar, and to this day it is celebrated as the Feast of Lights (so call from the lighting of the lamps or candles in Jewish homes to honour the occasion) (The Gospel & Epistles of John p.229-230).

This feast lasted for eight days. We are used to hearing it called Hanukkah instead of the Feast of Lights. Since it was winter, Solomon's porch was a great place to go to get out of the weather.

According to Johnson:

It is generally supposed to have been in the southeast part of the temple enclosure, overlooking the valley of Kedron. Josephus describes it as a stadium in length, and as having three parts, two of them thirty feet wide each, and the middle one forty-five feet (The New Testament Commentary (Cincinnati, Ohio: Christian Standard Publishing Company, 1886), p. 164).

One dictionary said that a stadium was twice the length of a football field (Peloubet's Dictionary), which gives us a good idea of how big Solomon's porch was. Not only did Jesus teach in this area, Peter and John taught the people about God in this area after they healed the lame man (Acts 3). Also, the apostles gathered at Solomon's porch where miracles were done (Acts 5:12).

John 10:24 Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. ²⁶ "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. ²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸ "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand. ³⁰ "I and My Father are one."

Once again, these opposing Jews are doing their best to trap Jesus. They are trying to get Jesus to say that He is the Christ. However, Jesus knew what they were up to, and He had already told them over and over that He was the Christ in many different ways, but they were not willing to believe. The miracles and signs Jesus did proved that He was the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus told them the reason they do not believe is because they are not of His sheep. He taught them plainly several months before that He was the true Shepherd and only those who know Him will follow Him. Only those that choose to allow Him to be their Shepherd can have eternal life.

When Jesus said that no one can snatch His sheep out of His hand and then said that no one can snatch them out of His Father's Hand shows that Jesus is Deity. Only Deity can offer eternal life, and only Deity can make the claim that no one can take you from Him. Once

again, Jesus shows that He is of the same nature of the Father because He said, "I and my Father are one." This does not mean they are the same person as some denominations teach. It means they are one in nature and Deity. This same word "one" is used by Jesus to describe His disciples in,

John 17:11 "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are."

This verse proves that Jesus is not talking about being the same person or every Christian would have to be the same person. So, the Father and Son are two different persons, but they are one in nature and thought, which is the same way Christians are to be. The only way to achieve this unity in thought with God is by allowing His Word to be our guide.

Some try to teach the false doctrine of "once saved always saved" from our text because it says that no one can snatch us out of the hand of God. Since no one can snatch us from the hand of God, they would say it is impossible for us to be lost once we are saved. However, this is not what this text is teaching. It is teaching that no external force can take us away from God because God is all-powerful and in control. A great commentary on this can be found in Romans 8:31-39. Both of these passages deal with external sources, but they do not touch on the individual's free will. We have been given the privilege to choose whom we will serve, so it is possible for us to choose to leave the hand of God and to follow the evil way. This is why the "once saved always saved" is a false doctrine because we always have the choice to either stay in the hand of God or to leave it.

John 10:31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. ³² Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" ³³ The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."

These Jews had no problem understanding what Jesus was claiming, which is why they were ready to stone Him because they thought He was committing blasphemy. According to Leviticus 24:11-16, blasphemy was punishable by death whether a person was a Jew or a Gentile. However, the person accused was supposed to have a trial, but they were ready to forgo that and commence to stoning even though the Roman law did not allow them.

Again, Jesus points out the good works He did by the will of the Father. He wants to know for which good work are they willing to stone Him. While these works of Jesus proved He was Deity, they claimed they did not want to stone Him for His works, but because He made Himself God.

John 10:34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" '? ³⁵ "If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶ "do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? ³⁷ "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; ³⁸ "but if I do, though you

do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." ³⁹ Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

The Jews appealed to the Law of Moses to justify stoning Jesus for blasphemy, but now Jesus is appealing the Law to show that He can call Himself Son of God and it not be blasphemy. He quotes:

Psalm 82:6 I said, "You *are* gods, And all of you *are* children of the Most High.

God was calling these Jewish leaders gods even though they were not judging the people as they were supposed to (Ps. 82:2). God even told Moses that he would be as a god to Aaron (Ex. 4:16). In our text, the word "gods" is in lowercase even though it comes from the same Greek word for God almighty.

Gingrich, Greek NT Lexicon explains it this way:

...*God, god* a term generally used in the ancient world of beings who have powers or confer benefits that lie beyond the capacity of mortals. In translation the capitalized term *God* refers to a specific deity and ordinarily to the One God of Israel." Also Thayer gives several definition for this Greek word "theos", "a god or goddess, a general name of deities or divinities 2) the Godhead, trinity 2a) God the Father, the first person in the trinity 2b) Christ, the second person of the trinity 2c) Holy Spirit, the third person in the trinity 3) spoken of the only and true God 3a) refers to the things of God 3b) his counsels, interests, things due to him 4) whatever can in any respect be likened unto God, or resemble him in any way 4a) God's representative or viceregent 4a1) of magistrates and judges.

When we put this all together, we learn that when God called the judges gods, He was not calling them Deity; He was calling them representatives of God. So, if it was Scriptural for God to call these men gods, who were supposed to be representing God by judging according to His Word, then there was nothing scripturally wrong with Jesus saying that He was the Son of God because He was sent by the Farther into the world and sanctified by Him.

The works that Jesus did proved that He was sent from the Father, and if they would allow His works to prove He was Deity, they would have no problem understanding that Jesus and the Father are one in nature and are in perfect unity. When Jesus made this argument, I do not believe that He was classing Himself with the ordinary rulers of the Jewish nation, but He was showing there was nothing scripturally wrong with calling Himself the Son of God.

When Jesus said the "Scripture cannot be broken," this means He believed in the authority and genuineness of the Scriptures. It also proves that He did not believe the first five books of the Bible were the only Scriptures because He quoted from the book of Psalm in this context, which proves that the book of Psalm is also considered unbreakable because it was inspired by God. Many have tried to find flaws in the Scriptures, but no valid ones have

been found. Archeologists keep making new discoveries about our past, and every time a new discovery is made it always confirms the validity of the Scriptures. So far Archeologists have never found anything that contradicts or disproves the events recorded in the Word of God.

In verse 39, we learn that they were not interested in Jesus' teaching from the Law, and they wanted to seize Him for claiming to be one with the Father, but it was not His time to die. Once again, He managed to escape from their presence.

John 10:40 And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. ⁴¹ Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." ⁴² And many believed in Him there.

Jesus was staying near the place where John the Baptist had been baptizing. John had bore witness that Jesus was the Christ, and many of these Jews were now willing to believe that Jesus was the Christ. Even though Jesus' teachings had been rejected in Jerusalem, many in this area of Perea believe in Him.

John 11

John 11:1 Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ² It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

This chapter records one of the greatest miracles Jesus ever did, which is the 7th miracle of Jesus in John's account. It all begins with Lazarus being sick. Lazarus and Mary were common names, but John gives us some details so we can know which Lazarus and Mary he was talking about. There were two places called Bethany. One was located less than two miles east of Jerusalem on the southeast slope of the Mount of Olives, which is where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived at (Jn. 11:18). The other Bethany, which Jesus was at, was on the east side of the Jordan River where John the Baptist had been baptizing (Jn. 1:28; 10:40).

Verse 2 teaches that this Lazarus was the brother of the Mary that anointed Jesus with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair. We could wait until chapter 12 to discuss more about this Mary, but I want to deal with it now. We need to keep in mind that John was writing his Gospel after these events had already happened. He chose to identify Mary by her kind act of anointing Jesus with the oil before she had anointed Jesus chronologically. We know this because chapter 12 teaches that Mary anointed Jesus in the last week before His last Passover, which happened around two months after the events in chapter 11.

John 12:1 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. ² There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. ³ Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. ⁴ Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, who would betray Him, said, ⁵ "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. ⁷ But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. ⁸ "For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

Out of all the people raised from the dead in the New Testament, this is the only account that gives us information about what happened to somebody after their resurrection. Lazarus appeared to be living a normal life because we find him sitting at the table with Jesus eating a common meal. It would be safe to say that he had a greater appreciation of life now. He was also getting more attention than he was used to because many of the Jews wanted to see the man that had been raised from the dead (Jn. 12:9).

Mary takes a pound of expensive oil of spikenard and anoints Jesus' feet with it, and then she wipes His feet with her hair. Thayer defines spikenard as follows:

Nard, the head or spike of a fragrant East Indian plant belonging to the genus *Valeriana*, which yields a juice of delicious odor which the ancients

used (either pure or mixed) in the preparation of a most precious ointment (Thayer).

One reason this oil was so expensive was because it was transported for thousands of miles to be sold in Jerusalem. Based on our text, we can tell that it was a strong perfume because it filled the house with its fragrance. This was a humble act by Mary, but Judas did not like it because he wanted to have access to the money it could have been sold for. He claimed he wanted it for the poor, but John tells us that his true motive was to take the money for himself because he was a thief, which shows the greedy nature of Judas and it explains the reason he was willing to sell Jesus out for thirty silver pieces. But Jesus rebuked him because He approved of what Mary did for Him. The value of the oil was 300 denarii, which means it would take a typically laborer about a year to make that much money.

When Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial." He was basically saying, "Do not bother her, because she was going to use this oil for my burial, but she has given it to me beforehand." This same event is recorded in Matthew and Mark, but the information is slightly different.

Matthew 26:6 And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, ⁷ a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured *it* on His head as He sat *at the table*. ⁸ But when His disciples saw *it*, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?" ⁹ "For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to *the poor*." ¹⁰ But when Jesus was aware of *it*, He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. ¹¹ "For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. ¹² "For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did *it* for My burial. ¹³ "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

Mark 14:3 And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured *it* on His head. ⁴ But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted?" ⁵ "For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply. ⁶ But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. ⁷ "For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. ⁸ "She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. ⁹ "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

Here we have another classic example of where these different accounts work together to tell the full story. Both Matthew and Mark agree that the event happened in Bethany in Jesus' final week, but they add that the oil was in an alabaster flask, which was a vase with "a rather long neck which was broken off when the contents were used (BDAG)." They teach us that she anointed His head, and John adds that she anointed His feet and wiped them with her hair. They also teach us that the house they met in belonged to Simon the leper.

While they do not name this woman, John does. Finally, they tell us that Jesus wanted this woman to be remembered wherever the gospel is preached.

Before we leave this topic, we need to examine another story that is given in Luke's account.

Luke 7:36 Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. ³⁷ And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, ³⁸ and stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw *this*, he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman *this is* who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." ⁴⁰ And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." ⁴¹ "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² "And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" ⁴³ Simon answered and said, "I suppose the *one* whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." ⁴⁴ Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head. ⁴⁵ "You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. ⁴⁶ "You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. ⁴⁷ "Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little." ⁴⁸ Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹ And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰ Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Some believe this is just another account of Mary the sister of Lazarus, and it adds that Mary was a sinner, and Simon the leper was a Pharisee. However, I do not believe this is talking about the same story because the facts say otherwise. While there are similarities in these stories, I will provide enough evidence to show that Luke's story is talking about a different event that happened at a different time, location, and with different people.

First, we have two different men named Simon. There is Simon the leper and Simon the Pharisee. Not only are they identified differently, their characteristics are different. In Luke 7, Simon the Pharisee was not that great of a host because He did not greet Jesus with a kiss as the custom was, and he did not provide Him with water for his feet or oil for His head. He was also very critical of Jesus.

However, Simon the leper does not have any negative things recorded about him. While I cannot be dogmatic about this, it is possible that Jesus healed Simon of his leprosy because he was no longer a leper or he would not be able to be around these other people at this time. While it is possible for Simon the leper to have been a Pharisee, there is not enough evidence to prove that these two men were one in the same.

Another big difference is that Jesus rebukes Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7, but in the other accounts, He rebukes the disciples and points out Judas as being the main instigator of those complaining about the wasted money. Another big problem is that Luke's story is recorded while John the Baptist was still alive (Lk.7:19), yet the story in Matthew, Mark, and John happened in the last week of Jesus' life. Also, Luke's account happened when Jesus was in Galilee (Lk. 7:11), but the other accounts happened in Bethany in Judea.

The Marys are different as well. The Mary of Luke 7 was a known sinner, and the Jews would have had nothing to do with her. However, the other Mary and Martha are considered godly women and there were many Jews who were willing to come and comfort them when their brother Lazarus died (Jn. 11:19). If she had been a known sinner, she would not have had many Jews comforting her.

Finally, there were two different purposes for the anointing. Luke's account was about a sinful woman who came before Jesus in need of forgiveness. She was so grieved by her sin that she wept and got tears on Jesus' feet, and then she wiped her tears with her hair. Next, she anointed His feet with the oil and kissed them. There is no hint of her doing this for the preparation for His death. Instead, it was done as act of humiliation and grief for her sins. Jesus forgives her of her sins.

When we compare this anointing to the other accounts, we see a difference. Mary is not crying, nor does the text say anything about her being a known sinner or having her sin forgiven by Jesus. Instead of wiping tears away from Jesus feet, she used her hair to wipe away the excess oil. Her anointment was for the preparation for the burial of Jesus. All this evidence proves that Luke's account is talking about a similar, yet different anointing than the account found in Matthew, Mark, and John.

John 11:3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick." ⁴ When Jesus heard *that*, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Since Lazarus was sick, his concerned sisters sent word to Jesus about him. They did not make any demands, but they wanted Jesus to know that His good friend was sick. Most likely, the messenger heard Jesus' words that his sickness was not unto death but for the glory of God, and he probably took these words back to Mary and Martha. Jesus already knew that Lazarus was going to die from his sickness, but He also knew that He was going to raise him from the dead, which would be done to glorify God and prove once again that Jesus is the Son of God.

John 11:5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.

Jesus did not just love the family of Lazarus as a whole; He loved each member of the family. Every Christian today is loved individual by Jesus. Even though Jesus loved Lazarus and knew that he was going to die, He stayed behind two more days. Some might view Jesus' delay as unloving since He could have healed His friend, but He always puts the Father's will

first. His human side may have wanted to go and heal Lazarus. As far as that goes, He could have healed him from where He was because He had done that before (Lk. 7:1-10), but Jesus was willing to uphold the will of the Father no matter how difficult it may have been for Him.

John 11:7 Then after this He said to *the* disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸ *The* disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

From the disciples point of view, this did not make much sense to them because they had no idea why Jesus would want to go to Judea again where the Jews wanted to stone Him. They did not know that Jesus wanted to visit Lazarus because He only said He wanted to go to Judea without specifying Bethany.

John 11:9 Jesus answered, "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. ¹⁰ "But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

Jesus was saying the same thing He had been saying before, it was not time for Him to die and He must continue to do the works the Father has sent Him to do (Jn. 9:4). In this illustration, Jesus alludes to the 12-hour Jewish day from sunrise to sunset when the work was done because they could see. In a similar way, Jesus is saying that His day is not over and that He is not walking in the dark because His mission from the Father is clear. His enemies are not going to be able to change that or kill Him before His time.

John 11:11 These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." ¹² Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." ¹³ However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead."

Again, His disciples would have been confused because they thought He was talking about Lazarus being asleep and not dead. It would not make any sense for Jesus to risk His life just to go wake up Lazarus from a common sleep. Then Jesus tells them plainly that Lazarus is dead. There are many times in the Scriptures that death is called sleep (Dan. 12:2; Mt. 27:52; Acts 7:60; 1 Thes. 4:13). Being asleep is a comforting way to describe death because sleep is temporary.

Burton Coffman describes it this way:

Of all that Jesus ever said of death, this is the most encouraging. (1) Sleep is a temporary thing; and so by this our Lord revealed that death too is not permanent. (2) Sleep refreshes and rejuvenates; thus in the resurrection this mortal shall put on immortality and this corruptible shall put on incorruption. (3) From sleep, men awaken; and the promise is secure in the Master's words that all that are in the tombs "shall come forth" (John 5:29). (4) Sleep is a time of rest; and the dead also "shall rest from their labors"

(Revelation 14:13). The respect of the human race for this word of Jesus Christ is revealed in the fact of their inscribing these words, "Asleep in Jesus," upon millions of tombs in all ages since then (John 11 Coffman Commentaries).

When Jesus talked about Lazarus being asleep, He was not teaching the doctrine of the Jehovah Witnesses who teach that a person is soul sleeping when he dies. When the Scriptures talk about someone being asleep, they are talking about the body and not the soul. It is the body that returns back to the earth, and the spirit returns to God (Dan. 12:2; Ecc. 12:7). This can be seen in the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31). The wicked are said to be under punishment prior to the judgment day, which means their soul is alive and well (2 Pet. 2:9). There are many other passages that teach that our soul does not remain in the body after death and that we are conscious after death (Lk. 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21-23; Rev. 6:9-11; 7:15-17; 20:4). Jesus was going to wake up Lazarus from the dead.

John 11:15 "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him." ¹⁶ Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

Jesus was glad His disciples would be able to see Him raise Lazarus from the dead because it would bring their faith to a higher level. If Jesus had been there and healed Lazarus from being sick, it would have been more of what they had already seen. But to raise a man from being dead for four days would prove beyond doubt that Jesus was the Son of God.

Thomas took the lead and suggested they all go with Jesus and die with Him. Obviously, Thomas was ready to die with Jesus, and he thought if they went back to Judea, Jesus would be put to death.

John 11:17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.

Lazarus had been dead for four days and his body would have started to decompose. One possible reason Jesus waited that long before raising Lazarus from the dead was because of what the Rabbis believed at that time.

Hendricksen wrote:

According to rabbinical tradition, the soul of a deceased person hovers around the body for three days in hope of a reunion, but takes its final departure when it notices that the body has entered a state of decomposition (William Hendriksen, op. cit., II, p. 146 "Quoted from Coffman's Commentary on John").

If Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead on day one, two, or three, these Jews could have said it was just a coincidence and that his soul had decided to go back into his body. However, they could not make such a claim on the fourth day, and that is the reason this miracle would send a strong message to the opposing Jews that Jesus is the Son of God.

Whether this was the reason or not, bringing back a man who had been dead for four days would be an undeniable miracle.

John 11:18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. ¹⁹ And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

Verse 18 tells us which Bethany this was. Since it was close to Jerusalem many Jews were able to come and comfort Martha and Mary, which suggests their family was well respected by the Jews. Many of these Jews would be some of the same ones that wanted Jesus dead. In regards to the tradition of their mourning, note the following:

... The rules laid down by rabbis, required seven days' public and thirty days' private mourning for distinguished or important personages (J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel*), p. 522.).

John 11:20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. ²¹ Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

Martha is known for being industrious. When she heard that Jesus was coming, she left the house and found Him. She probably did this to meet Him in private to avoid a conflict between Jesus and these Jews. We can see her great faith in Jesus' ability to heal because she believed He could have healed her brother if He had been there before he died. Verse 22 hints at the idea that Martha believed that Jesus could even do something about her brother now because she believed that God would give Jesus anything He asked for. However, she could just be stating her confidence in Jesus' ability to accomplish what He wants through the Father.

John 11:23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

When Jesus said that Lazarus would rise again, Martha thought He was referring to the general resurrection on the last day, which all Jews believed in except for the Sadducees. She did not know that Jesus was saying that he was going to rise that day.

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

This is the fifth "I am" statement in John, and these words should bring comfort to all Christians because Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and those who believe in Him and keep His Word will never die (Jn. 8:51). This does not mean we will not physically die because all of us will unless the Lord comes back before we die. When we do die, it is not the end of life. Instead, it is the beginning of our eternal life as we wait in paradise for the general

resurrection on the last day when we will be given a new incorruptible body (1 Cor. 15:42; Phil. 3:21), and we will spend eternity in heaven.

When Martha made this great confession, she was not saying that she just now believed in Jesus, but that she has believed in Jesus. Several Bible versions show this by translating the verse as saying, "I have believed that you are the Christ."

John 11:28 And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." ²⁹ As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly and came to Him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. ³¹ Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

Jesus wanted to speak to Mary, so He had Martha go get her. She told her sister in secret that Jesus wanted talk to her, so she gets up quickly to go to Him. We are not told specifically why this was done in secret or why Jesus did not go to the house, but I believe He was avoiding the conflict His presence would have caused with the Jews. The Jews mourning with Mary assumed she was running to the tomb to weep there, which was a common practice.

John 11:32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. ³⁴ And He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus wept. ³⁶ Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" ³⁷ And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

When Mary saw Jesus, she fell down at His feet and said the same thing her sister did. They may have both talked to each other about how their brother would have still been alive if Jesus had been there. Mary's words and actions show her faith in Jesus as well, but unlike her sister, she did not hint at anything being done for her brother now.

The Jews had followed Mary and they were all mourning together. When they mourned back then it was not a silent mourning because they would wail loudly. Sometimes families would even hire professional mourners to help them mourn. As Jesus observed their mourning, he groaned in His spirit. The word "groaned" can mean to be moved with anger and some suggest that Jesus was angry at death. However, this word can also mean, "To feel strongly about something, be deeply moved" (BDAG).

Jesus had compassion for their sorrow. Their suffering moved Him and caused Him to be troubled in His own spirit. Jesus wanted to know where Lazarus' tomb was, and they were ready to show Him. John records that "Jesus wept." Jesus was moved to tears by their mourning even though He knew He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead. This shows that Jesus does not like to see us hurting and when we do, He hurts right along with us. We are instructed to have this same compassion for one another (1 Cor. 12:26).

Some of the Jews believed Jesus wept because of His love for Lazarus, and some of them were chiding Him for not being there to keep Lazarus from dying. When they made the statement about Jesus opening the eyes of the blind, they were referring to the miracle where Jesus made the blind man see in chapter 9. The Jews did their best to deny that miracle, but this shows that it had made an impression on them.

John 11:38 Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days."

Some believe Jesus was groaning in Himself again partially due to these Jews' statement, but we do not know that for sure. He arrived at the tomb. It was common for the Jews to bury their dead in caves. They would seal the opening of the cave with a stone to keep animals away from the body. Jesus instructs them to remove the stone. If Jesus wanted to, He could have miraculously moved the stone, but Jesus did not use His miracles to do what people could do for themselves.

Martha was still unaware of what Jesus was going to do, and she did not see the point in removing the stone because she knew that he had been dead for four days. If they removed the stone, the stench would have been overwhelming. I have read that a dead body starts to stink within 24 hours, and by three days the smell is strong because the body is beginning to decompose. Without going into further details, we can understand that Lazarus' body would have smelled bad, and no one could deny that he was dead.

John 11:40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. ⁴² "And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me."

Jesus reminded Martha of their earlier conversation when He told her that He is the resurrection and the life. The stone was removed and Jesus prayed out loud to the Father for the benefit of those standing there. He wanted them to understand that the Father always listens to His prayers, and He wanted them to believe that the Father sent Him into the world. He would prove this by raising Lazarus from the dead. This also teaches us that when we become Christians and we direct our prayers to the Father, He is always listening.

John 11:43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" ⁴⁴ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

Jesus said with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth!" and He did. This resurrection was a precursor to the final resurrection in which we will come from our graves at the voice of Jesus (Jn. 5:28-29). However, at the final resurrection, our resurrection will be like Jesus'

resurrection in that He was raised through His grave clothes and out of His grave. Lazarus would have been buried in the traditional way with linen wrapped around his body from his neck down to his toes and his face would have been covered with a face cloth. He would have been anointed with spices and oils just like Jesus was at His burial (Jn. 19:40).

Even though Lazarus hands and feet were bound with these grave clothes, he managed to work his way out of the tomb, which would not have been an easy task. Once he appeared, Jesus told them to unwrap him from his grave clothes.

John 11:45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.

This was a miracle that no one could explain away. Not only had Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead after four days, He would have to completely restore his body back to the way it was. Otherwise, Lazarus would have looked like a zombie straight out of a horror movie. After seeing this with their own eyes, it would be hard for any of them to deny that Jesus is the Son of God. Many of the Jews believed in Jesus because of this miracle. However, some of them went and told the Pharisees what Jesus had done.

Some have suggested that these Jews went to the Pharisees out of sincerity to tell them that Jesus was the Son of God. Others believe these Jews believed that a miracle was done, but they did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, so they went and told the Pharisees what Jesus was doing now. Both of these are possible, but the last one is the most plausible to me.

John 11:47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸ "If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

The Sadducees and Pharisees gathered to discuss this situation. They did not know what to do about Jesus since He worked many signs. Notice, they did not deny Jesus worked miracles, yet they were unwilling to believe in Him. They knew if Jesus kept working miracles, everyone would believe in Him. They feared this would cause a great rebellion and cause the Romans to come in and destroy all the freedoms and power they currently had.

John 11:49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰ "nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." ⁵¹ Now this he did not say on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

Caiaphas was the high priest at this time, and he was the head of the Sanhedrin council. What he said was not by his own authority because it came from God. He was prophesying about how Jesus would die for the nation. John elaborates on this and teaches that Jesus was

not just dying for the nation of Israel, but for every nation. The gathering together of the children of God is referring to all those who would become Christians under the new covenant, who belong to the one church (Eph. 4:4).

John 11:53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.⁵⁴ Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

The Sanhedrin council wanted Jesus dead, and that would be their main objective from that point forward. Since it was not time for Jesus' death, He and His disciples went to Ephraim, which was about twelve miles north of Jerusalem. He would not go back to Jerusalem until about six days before the Passover. John does not record what Jesus did during this time, but Coffman suggests the following events occurred:

- He started the last journey to Jerusalem, via Samaria and Galilee; healing ten lepers en route (Luke 17:11-37).
- He gave two parables on prayers, those of the importunate (pleading) widow and the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:1-14).
- He gave his teaching on divorce (Mark 10:1-12; Matthew 19:1-12).
- He received little children (Mark 10:13-16, etc.).
- He spoke with the rich young ruler and gave the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Mark 10:17-31, and parallel accounts).
- He gave the third prophecy of his death and resurrection and rebuked ambition of Zebedee's sons (Mark 10:32-45, etc.).
- He healed Bartimaeus and a companion at Jericho (Mark 10:46-52, and parallel accounts).
- He visited Zacchaeus, gave the parable of the pounds, and went on up to Jerusalem (Luke 19:142:8) (Coffman's Commentary John 12)

John 11:55 And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.⁵⁶ Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think -- that He will not come to the feast?"⁵⁷ Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it*, that they might seize Him.

All Jewish males were required to attend the Passover, and many had arrived early so they could make themselves ceremonially clean. Many of them were talking and wondering if Jesus would show up for the feast. Earlier, the Sanhedrin council had secretly sought to kill Jesus, but now they have made it known publicly that they want to seize Jesus. While this would have seemed like another Passover to most, it would be Jesus' last Passover.

John 12

John 12:1 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. ² There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. ³ Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. ⁴ Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, who would betray Him, said, ⁵ "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. ⁷ But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. ⁸ "For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

Jesus came to Bethany on Friday, and at some point during that week His friends made Him supper. Lazarus was still alive and living a normal life except for the extra attention he was receiving for being raised from the dead. Lazarus is the only person in the New Testament that has anything written about his life after being raised from the dead. The Sanhedrin council had ordered the Jews to report to them if Jesus was in the area, but Jesus' friends were not going to abide by their wishes.

We have already examined how Mary anointed Jesus' feet in chapter 11, which is the same event recorded in Matthew and Mark's account. We also discussed how Luke's account recorded a different anointing than the one being done here. Judas was not happy about the waste of the fragrance because it was worth around a year's worth of wages, and his suggestion also caused some of the other disciples to agree with him. Even though he claimed his motive was for the poor, John tells us his real motive was his own greed. Judas was also a thief. He had been taking money from the money box, and he wished he could have had the money from that expensive oil. But Jesus told them to leave Mary alone because, "she has kept this for the day of My burial." They would always have the poor to contend with, but Jesus would not be with them much longer.

John 12:9 Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

Many times when the Jews are mentioned in the Gospels, it is talking about those that opposed Jesus. But sometimes it is used to refer to the Jews that believed in Him as in our verse here. When the Jews found out Jesus was there, they went to see Him and Lazarus who had been raised from the dead, which is why I said earlier that Lazarus was living a normal life except for the extra attention. I imagine some of these people touched Lazarus to see if he felt any different from anyone else.

Many of the Jews believed in Jesus because of this great miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead, which put Lazarus on the chief priests' hit list. They probably thought if they could kill him, it would stop more Jews from believing in Jesus.

John 12:12 The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³ took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!"

This is known as the triumphal entry and it is recorded in all the Gospels. The use of Palm branches was customary for the reception of popular heroes and Kings.

F.F. Bruce notes:

From the time of the Maccabees palms or palm-branches had been used as a national symbol. Palm-branches figured in the procession which celebrated the rededication of the temple in 164 BC (2 Macc. 10:7) and again when the winning of full political independence was celebrated under Simon in 141 BC (1 Macc. 13:51)... On this occasion, then, the palm-branches may have signified the people's expectation of the imminent national liberation, and this is supported by the words with which they greeted the Lord (F.F. Bruce The Gospel and Epistles of John p. 259).

This explanation makes sense because most of the Jews believed that when the Messiah came that He would establish an earthly kingdom. Since these Jews believed He was the Messiah, they thought He would help them overthrow the Romans and establish a kingdom like they had under David. Not only did they put down the palm branches, they even put down their own clothes on the pathway.

Hosanna literally means "help" or "save, I pray" (BDAG). They welcomed Him in the name of the Lord and even called Him the King of Israel.

John 12:14 Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: ¹⁵ "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt."

Jesus was fulfilling a prophecy about Him:

Zechariah 9:9 " Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He *is* just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion *shall be* 'from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.'

Notice, He would come in riding on a donkey and not on horse. A horse represented war and a donkey represented peace and humility.

According to Raymond Hagood:

Kings ... would enter upon an ass or mule, which was symbolic of their humility and their desire to be at peace with their subjects. It was not appropriate for a king to enter a city upon a horse, but rather to enter meekly and humbly upon an ass. Jesus is the king of His kingdom, the church. It was appropriate for Him to enter the holy city the way that a king would enter it, riding upon an ass (Denton Lectures electronic edition on John).

In Matthew's account it says:

Mt. 21:5 "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.' " 6 So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. 7 They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set *Him* on them.

Just as the prophecy states, He was riding a donkey showing His humility and His desire for peace. Some think there is a contradiction in Matthew because it says they put their clothes on the donkey and the colt, and they set Jesus on them. They think Matthew has Jesus riding on two donkeys at once, while the other accounts have Him on the colt.

First, it is grammatically possible for the colt to represent both donkeys according to a rule called "plural of class" (Winer, Grammar of New Testament). However, a much simpler explanation comes from Raymond Hagood:

The explanation is found in Luke's account in Luke 19:30, when he says "whereon yet never man sat." Luke is describing a young animal still attached to his mother. They are linked together because of their mother-and-son relationship. The Lord would be riding a young, untamed colt, still closely attached to its mother, which is the reason the Lord needed them both, even though he would ride the young colt only. The mother would provide the comfort and support to allow this young animal to perform his important task (Denton Lectures electronic edition on John).

This is just another case where the whole counsel of God gives us the complete picture. Matthew lets us know the mother donkey was there beside the colt, but Jesus was riding the colt. This humble act should have showed the people that He was not coming to overthrow the Roman government because He was the King of peace.

John 12:16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him.

This passage teaches us that Jesus' disciples did not fully understand the spiritual significance of this event because they were thinking of a physical kingdom too. There was much they did not understand. For instance, they did not understand that Jesus was going to be raised from the dead (Jn. 20:9). However, after Jesus was raised from the dead, their eyes became open, especially after they received the Holy Spirit who guided them in all truth (Jn. 14:26).

John 12:17 Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. ¹⁸ For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. ¹⁹ The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"

This 7th miracle Jesus did in the Gospel of John was the one that drew the crowds to Him. The Jews that witnessed this miracle were letting every person know what He had done. Even though the opposing Jews did everything in their power to make Jesus out to be evil, they had failed. These Pharisees believed the whole world had gone after Him.

John 12:20 Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. ²¹ Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

John is the only one that records this event. These Greeks would have been Gentile proselytes who had accepted the Jewish religion. We do not know if they had honorable intentions or not, but they wanted to see Jesus. First, they talked to Philip, and Philip told Andrew, then Andrew and Philip told Jesus. We are not told if the Greeks got to see Jesus or not, but notice Jesus' response:

John 12:23 But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. ²⁴ "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵ "He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him *My* Father will honor.

Jesus knew His death was approaching when He would be glorified. His death would be a blessing for the Jews and Gentiles. He illustrates this by comparing His death to a grain of wheat. Since farming was a way of life for the 1st century people, this example would have meant a lot to them. The grain of wheat must die before it can produce more wheat, which is exactly what had to happen to Jesus. He had to die before those in the world could live and be saved.

When Jesus said the grain of wheat remains alone, it seems like He is referring to how He would be abandoned and left alone when the Jews took Him at the Garden of Gethsemane as prophesied by Jesus (Mt. 26:31).

In verse 25, Jesus has made this statement several times throughout His ministry. He is saying that if a person loves their life more than they love God, they will be lost because a person like that will live his life for himself. However, when Jesus said, "He who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life," He was saying those who are willing to deny themselves and seek God first in their lives will have eternal life. Paul put it this way: "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?"

(Rom. 6:16). So, if people serve themselves or the world, they will lose their soul to the devil, but those that are willing to serve God and follow Jesus will save their soul and be honored by the Father.

John 12:27 " Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸ "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, "I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again." ²⁹ Therefore the people who stood by and heard *it* said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." ³⁰ Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. ³¹ "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

Jesus humanity is showing in that His soul was troubled about His pending death. The word "troubled" means: "To cause one inward commotion, take away his calmness of mind ... to render anxious or distressed" (Thayer). Even though this was bothering Jesus, He was not going to avoid His death because He knew that all humanity would be lost without the shedding of His blood, which was His purpose for coming to the earth.

When Jesus prayed to the Father, He asked Him to glorify His own name. Notice Jesus did not pray for Himself, but for glory of the Father. The Father spoke from heaven saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." Every time the Father keeps the promises He has made, His name is glorified. The Father would glorify His name again when He raised Jesus from the dead. In the New Testament, this is the third time the Father has spoken out from heaven. The first time was at Jesus' baptism and the second was at the transfiguration.

When these people heard God speak from heaven, some thought it was thunder and others thought it was angel that spoke to Him. Some people only want to hear what they want to hear, which is true today as well. God does not speak to us directly from heaven today, but He does speak to us loud and clear through His Word. Unfortunately many today are not willing to hear what the Word of God says. Instead, they listen to what others teach and continue to live in sin because they have closed their eyes and ears to God's Word. When the Father spoke from heaven it was for the benefit of those who heard it because Jesus knew the Father was always with Him and heard His prayers.

When Jesus died on the cross, the power of the devil would be overcome. His head would be bruised as predicted in Genesis 3:15. His power was sin because sin separates us from God, and Jesus gave us the power over sin through His blood (Heb. 2:14-18). When we choose to become Christians and serve God, we have the power to send the devil packing (Jas. 4:7). This does not mean that he will not try to tempt us today because Peter said: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). He is tricky because he can even appear to be angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). As Christians, we need to understand that he cannot force us to do anything. He can only tempt us through things that are common to man. If we look hard enough, we will find a way to avoid temptation, which is provided by God (1 Cor. 10:13). The best way we can prevent the devil from getting into our life is by putting on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:11). When we do that, the devil will have hard time bringing us down.

The wonderful thing about being a Christian is if the devil does tempt us and we sin, he has not defeated us because we can repent and confess that sin to God and that sin will be gone.

John 12:32 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself." ³³ This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

Once again, Jesus is predicting His death and how it would be done. He made this prediction several times in His ministry (Jn. 3:14; 8:28). Not only did Jesus know He was going to die, He knew how He was going to die. His death would draw all peoples, which included Jews and Gentiles. The way people will be drawn to Christ is by the Word of God (Jn. 6:44-45).

John 12:34 The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how *can* You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

These Jews and even Jesus' disciples were confused about the kingdom of God the Messiah would establish. There are several passages from the Old Testament they may have had in mind (Ps. 110:4ff; Isa. 9:7; Ezek. 37:25; Dan. 7:14). These verses imply or state that the Messiah's reign will last forever, which is true, but He will reign from heaven over His spiritual kingdom, which is the church. Even though Jesus called Himself the Son of man on many occasion, they wanted to know who this man was, and why he had to be lifted up. Jesus responds:

John 12:35 Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶ "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

Jesus does not specifically answer their questions, but He does call Himself the light because He is light of the world. He tells them to walk in that light lest darkness overtake them, which is talking about the evil way. As Christians today, we must always walk in the light of truth and stay away from the darkness of error. When we become Christians, we become sons of light, and we are to be a light for the world just as Jesus was during His life on the earth. After Jesus taught them this message, He left and hid from them.

John 12:37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, ³⁸ that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" ³⁹ Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: ⁴⁰ "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with *their* eyes, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them." ⁴¹ These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. ⁴² Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

John writes this sad news. Even though these people had seen the great signs that Jesus did, which proved that He was the Messiah, they did not believe Him. Their disbelief was no surprise because Isaiah prophesied this would happen in Isaiah 53, which is also the same chapter that teaches about Jesus' death. Isaiah tells us the reason they could not believe: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with *their* eyes, Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn, So that I should heal them" (Isa. 6:9-10).

How did God do this? It was the same way Pharaoh's heart was hardened. The truth hardened their hearts. God did not force them to be blind to the truth; they chose not to see it. Since they had their preconceived ideas of what the Messiah was supposed to do and be like, they rejected all the evidence that Jesus is the Messiah.

Verse 42 says that Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus when he said these things, yet Isaiah 6:1-10 says that it was Jehovah that he saw which shows Jesus preincarnate existence and that He is God. To show there is more than one person in the Godhead, Isaiah 6:8 says, "And who will go for Us?"

Not everyone was blinded to the truth that Jesus was the Messiah. Even some of the rulers believed in Jesus, but they would not confess Him because of their fear of being kicked out of the synagogue. They were more concerned about the praise of men than the praise of God, which is great example that proves that faith alone will not save a person. These rulers believed, but their faith was empty because they would not confess or do anything else except believe. There have been many people who have lost their souls to the devil because they were more concerned about what others think about them instead of what God thinks about them. We have to be careful not to fall into this trap or we could lose our soul to the devil as well.

John 12:44 Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. ⁴⁵ "And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. ⁴⁶ "I have come *as* a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. ⁴⁷ "And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him -- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. ⁴⁹ "For I have not spoken on My own *authority*; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. ⁵⁰ "And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

Jesus summarizes His teaching and points out when we believe in Him, we believe in the Father who sent Him. When they saw Jesus, they were seeing the Father, which is same thing that Jesus told Philip in John 14:8-9. Jesus was the true representative of the Father, and He explained this many times throughout His ministry. He and His Father are one, and everything that Jesus did and said came from the Father. Whenever someone believed in Jesus, they believed in the Father, and when someone did harm to Jesus it was the same as if they did it to the Father.

Jesus was sent into the world to be its savior and not its judge, but the words that Jesus spoke will be the words that we will be judged by on the last day (2 Cor. 5:10). We have control over our destination. We can choose to live according to God's Word or we can live how we want to. One way will get us to heaven; the other way will get us sent to hell. There are not going to be any judgments made from a human perspective because they will all be based on the Word of God. If a person will take the time to learn the Word of God and live by it, there will not be any surprises on the Day of Judgment.

Jesus is teaching us that the words He spoke came from God and not from man, which is why He can claim that every word that came out of His mouth was by the authority of the Father. If we refuse to live by the doctrine Jesus has left us, then we will lose the Father and the Son (2 Jn. 1:9).

It is also comforting to know that we have a similar relationship with God because when people do good or bad things to us when we are doing things in the name of God, it is just like they are doing it to Jesus. Jesus gives us this idea in Matthew 25, which is the same way we should feel about one another (1 Cor. 12:26).

John 13

John 13:1 Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. ² And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray Him.

In this chapter, John is giving us more information about what happened before and after Jesus' last supper. At this point in our study, I want us to understand more about the Passover and the feast of the unleavened bread. The Passover was a yearly remembrance of how God passed over the children of Israel and spared their firstborn, but He did not spare the Egyptians' firstborn. This last plague is what caused the Pharaoh to let the Jews leave. We learn more about the Passover in:

Exodus 12:1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ² "This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. ³ "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth *day* of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. ⁴ 'And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ 'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ 'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. ⁷ 'And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.

Not only was God instituting the Passover, He was making this a new year and a new beginning for the Children of Israel. Their new year begins in our March or April. On the 10th day of their new year, a goat or a lamb was to be selected. The Passover was a family event and every household was to participate. God would allow two smaller families to share a goat or lamb. They could not use any lamb or goat because it had to be carefully chosen, it could not have any blemishes, and it was supposed to be one of your best. The second provision was it had to be a male, and it had to be within its first year. On the 14th day, the animal was to be killed at twilight or the evening (tradition says between 3 and 5 P.M.), and some of its blood was to be applied to the two door post and the lintel (the top part of the door).

Exodus 12:8'Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it.

The bitter herbs were to remind the children of Israel of the bitter experience they had in Egypt.

Exodus 12: ⁹ 'Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire -- its head with its legs and its entrails. ¹⁰ 'You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire.

The lamb had to be roasted and it was not to be eaten raw or boiled. Every part was to be eaten from its head to its feet before morning came. Historical tradition teaches that each person's portion was not very big. Whatever was left over was to be burned in the fire.

Exodus 12:¹¹ 'And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It *is* the LORD's Passover.

The children of Israel were to be ready to leave in a moments notice. The girding of the loins is what the Jews would do when they needed to run or fight.

Exodus 12:12 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. ¹³ 'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

This passage teaches us the purpose of Passover meal. It was to be observed as a memorial for how God passed over the children of Israel and how that event caused their salvation from Egyptian bondage. The Passover was to be observed every year. Next, we learn about the feast of unleavened bread.

Exodus 12: ¹⁵ 'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ 'On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but *that* which everyone must eat -- that only may be prepared by you. ¹⁷ 'So you shall observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. ¹⁸ 'In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ¹⁹ 'For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether *he is* a stranger or a native of the land. ²⁰ 'You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.' "

The feast of the unleavened bread (sometimes called the feast of the Passover) also represented their escape from Egyptian bondage because they did not have time to make bread with leaven before they left Egypt in a hurry. The feast was to begin after the Passover lamb was slain on the 14th day of the evening, and it lasted for seven days until the 21st which

was to be observed every year. God was serious about them not having leaven because if someone was caught eating food that was leavened during the feast, they would be expelled from the congregation of Israel.

Exodus 12:25 "It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. ²⁶ "And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' ²⁷ "that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.' " So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

Children are always watching and learning. When they saw their parents keeping the Passover and the feast of the unleavened bread, they would want to know why, which would give them the opportunity to teach them about God. Again, this shows how the Passover and the feast that followed were to be kept throughout their generations.

While we are on this topic, I want to show how the Passover is the type and Jesus is the antitype. Notice the following chart:

The Passover in Egypt was a type of Christ, our Passover

Similarities	Passover	Christ
An unblemished lamb	Ex. 12:5	Jn. 1:29; Heb. 4:14-15
Lamb selected in advance	Ex. 12:3	Christ foreknown 1 Pet. 1:19-20
Lamb slain	Ex. 12:6, 21	Rev. 5:6; 13:8
Not a bone broken	Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12	Jn. 19:33, 36
Blood applied to doors caused death to pass by.	Ex. 12:7, 22	Jesus washes us with His blood to cause spiritual death to pass by. Rev. 1:5
Leaven must be removed	Ex. 12:15; 19-20	Sin must be removed 1 Cor. 5:7-8
Only those that were circumcised could partake of the Passover.	Ex. 12:43-48	Only those that have been spiritual circumcised should partake of The Lord's Supper. Col. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 10:16-17

Now that we have a better understanding of the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread, let's get back to our text.

In verse 1, Jesus knew His death was getting closer, and John expressed how Jesus loved His disciples until the end. Verse 2 teaches us that the devil had already put the temptation to betray Jesus in Judas' heart while they were eating. This does not mean Judas had no choice in the matter because he did. He simply chose to indulge in this temptation because he had a free will. It is important to remember that a temptation does not become a sin until we yield to the temptation (Jas. 1:13-15). The KJV and NKJV gives us the idea that the supper had

already ended in verse 2, but when we look at other versions and the original Greek, we find out the meal was still being served.

John 13:3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, ⁴ rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵ After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.

Jesus was fully aware of His Deity and what was going to happen to Him, and He was about to teach His disciples about humility and servitude. Before people ate during the first century, a servant would clean the feet of the guest, which was necessary because the people wore open sandals and their feet were always getting dirty. Foot washing was an act of kindness, and it made the guests more comfortable as they ate.

However, this act of kindness had been neglected, so Jesus got up from the supper and removed His outer garment, which would allow Him to perform the foot washing. He then girded Himself with the towel taking the position of a hired servant. He put water in a basin and started washing His disciples' feet and wiping them with the towel He girded Himself with.

John 13:6 Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." ⁸ Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹ For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

Peter could not understand why Jesus wanted to wash his feet because it was unheard of for the master to wash his servants' feet. Peter or one of the other apostles should have done this service, but they had not. They may of have thought they were too important to serve each other this way because Luke's account notes that they were disputing among themselves that night who should be the greatest (Lk. 22:24). Sometimes Jesus' disciples were more concerned about their position in Jesus' kingdom than seeing the truth. Without saying a single word, Jesus humbled His disciples by washing their feet. He wanted them to understand that it was more important to serve others than to be served.

Peter was so shocked by what Jesus was doing that he told Him that He was never going to wash his feet. But Jesus told him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Jesus was teaching more than just about washing feet. He was teaching them a spiritual message because only Jesus can wash us and make us clean with His blood. When Peter realized that He must be washed by Jesus, he goes to the extreme and wanted Jesus to wash his hands and his head.

Jesus' response in verse 10 refers to the physical and the spiritual. He is saying if a person took a bath then all he needs to be physical clean is to have his feet washed. If a person is spiritual clean and his feet are dirty, he is still spiritual clean. However, not all His disciples were spiritually clean, namely Judas. Even though Jesus knew Judas would betray Him, He washed his feet as well.

John 13:12 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?"¹³ "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am."¹⁴ "If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."¹⁵ "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."¹⁶ "Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him."¹⁷ "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

When Jesus finished washing their feet, He took His outer garments and sat down. While His disciples thought about what Jesus did for them, He wants to know if they understood what He had done to them. He continued to expound on what He wanted them to understand. They knew He was their Teacher and Lord, and if He was humble enough to serve His disciples by washing their feet, then they should be willing to do the same.

Some teach that verse 15 is commanding us to practice foot washing, but they have missed Jesus' point. He was not telling them or us that we should practice foot washing, but that we should be willing to serve one another in humility because we are not better than each other; we are equal in the site of God. To prove that Jesus was not specifically talking about foot washing, one cannot find foot washing being commanded anywhere in the New Testament as being part of our worship to God. The only other place foot washing is mentioned after Jesus' death is found in:

1 Timothy 5:9 Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, *and not unless* she has been the wife of one man,¹⁰ well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

This passage is talking about the qualification of a righteous widow. One of the good works that she could possess was being hospitable and washing the saints' feet. Again, this was done in her home and it was the custom for the host to wash the guests' feet.

As Lipscomb noted:

There is nothing in this that could indicate a special ordinance or formal observance to be perpetuated in the church. The foot washing of both the Old Testament and the New Testament was an act of helpful kindness when needed" (David Lipscomb, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Nashville: The Gospel Advocate Company, 1960), p. 210).

Jesus wanted His disciples to follow His example in serving others. If they are willing to humble themselves as Jesus did, they will be blessed. We must learn from this example and realize we are not better than our brother or sister in Christ, and we should be willing to serve one another. As Paul said to the Galatians: "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13).

John 13:18 "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.'¹⁹ "Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am *He*.²⁰ "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

The one person He was excluding was Judas because Judas was not clean, and he would not learn to serve others. Instead, his actions would fulfill the prophecy of Psalm 41:9 as we will see momentarily. Jesus foretold His disciples about this betrayal, so when it happened it would prove once again that He is the Son of God.

Verse 20 is teaching that whoever receives those whom Jesus has sent by His authority is the same as receiving Him. When someone receives Jesus, he receives the Father as well. When someone goes out to preach the gospel, he is doing so by the authority of Jesus. When someone receives that person into their home, it is just like he has received Jesus into their home because that evangelist is representing Jesus. In fact, all Christians need to remind themselves that they are supposed to be an example of Christ in everything they do. When we live our life for Christ, whatever is done to us is just like it is done to Christ.

John 13:21 When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

The end of Jesus' life was growing closer, and as He thought about it, it bothered Him deeply. Throughout this event, He taught that someone would betray Him, but now He states it with clarity.

John 13:²² Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.²³ Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.²⁴ Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.²⁵ Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped *it*." And having dipped the bread, He gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon.²⁷ Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."²⁸ But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him.²⁹ For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy *those things* we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.³⁰ Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

When Jesus made His statement it caused the disciples to become anxious and perplexed because they could not believe that one of them would betray Him. Even though he is not named in our text, most believe it was John that was leaning on Jesus' bosom. Peter wanted John to ask Jesus who was going to betray Him. The other accounts have all the disciples asking Jesus, "Is it I?" Once again, Jesus refers to the prophecy of Psalm 41:9 and He fulfills it by dipping the bread and giving it to Judas. After that, Satan entered Judas. Satan had already been working on Judas, but now he had won Judas to his side, so Jesus told him to go and do what he was going to do quickly.

This is how the devil works on people. He persistently tempts them by heightening what they are tempted by. For example, after the devil had tempted Jesus in the desert, Luke writes: "Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time" (Lk. 4:13-14). So, we should never think our battle with the devil is ever over. When we start thinking that way, he will come into our life and take us down like he did Judas.

As interested as everyone was in finding out who the betrayer was, one would think the disciples would have figured out it was Judas, but they did not. When Judas got up and left, they thought he left to buy more supplies for the feast or to give some money to the poor. Of course, we know he was going to betray Jesus. From the other accounts, we can know this happened around the time Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, and our text tells us it was dark outside.

John 13:31 So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. ³² "If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. ³³ "Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. ³⁴ "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Judas betrayal would bring about Jesus' death, which would bring about Jesus' glorification. God's plan to save man would come to pass, and it would happen on God's terms not man's terms. We can prove this because the Jews did not want to kill Jesus during the Passover feast, but Jesus said this is when it would happen (Mt. 26:1-5), which proves that Jesus was in control of when He would die.

In verse 33, Jesus is repeating what He had taught before, but this time His death was closer than ever before. His disciples would not be able to follow Him or find Him because He would be in heaven.

In verse 34, Jesus gives a new commandment that is similar to the one Moses gave, which was to love your neighbor as yourself. However, Jesus commandant is different because He is commanding us to love one another like He loves us, which is a stronger form of love we are to follow.

Notice what Reynolds said about this:

So a new type of love is given, as the Greek expositors generally have urged. There is a deeper intensity in this love than can be found in Moses' "Love thy neighbor as thyself." In that commandment which embraces the whole law, self-love is assumed and made the standard for the love of neighbor. The new commandment, on the other hand, is based on a new principle, measured by a higher standard than love of self. This is based on Christ's love, which was self-abandoning and self-sacrificing love (H. R. Reynolds, *The Pulpit Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962), II, p. 196).

When we show this higher level of love for one another, Jesus said this will cause everyone to know that we are His disciples. As Christians, we must do our best to love one another as Jesus loves us.

John 13:36 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward." ³⁷ Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake." ³⁸ Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.

Peter did not understand what Jesus meant, so he wants to know where Jesus was going. Jesus assures him that he cannot follow Him to where He was going, but later He could. Before this could happen, Jesus had to die to make it possible for others like Peter to be able to follow Him into heaven at the general resurrection.

We have no reason to doubt the sincerity of Peter. He felt like he was ready to follow Jesus all the way even if it meant his death. But Jesus let him know that he would stumble and deny Him three times before the rooster crowed. We also learn in Matthew 26:35 that all the disciples made this claim as well, but sadly all of them would deny Jesus before the night was over.

John 14

Chapters 14-17 record what Jesus taught His disciples after Judas left the room.

John 14:1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² "In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ "And 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. ⁴ "And where I go you know, and the way you know."

After Jesus taught His disciples that He was going to die and Peter would deny Him before the night was over; He tried to comfort them starting in this chapter. He did not want them to be troubled by what He said because He knew all these events must happen so God's plan would come to pass. When Jesus said, "You believe in God, believe also in me," He was teaching them to believe in Him just as they believe in God because Jesus is the Son of God.

Heaven is the Father's house, and there are many mansions or dwelling places there, which means there is plenty of room for all His disciples. If that was not true, Jesus would have told them. We will not know what those dwelling places look like until we get to see them with our own eyes, but one thing is for sure, they will be far greater than anything on the face of this earth. Even though these dwelling places are already there, Jesus is going to make these mansions ready for the faithful Christians. Jesus may have been drawing a parallel with how some of His disciples had prepared the room for the Passover before His arrival. Whether He was drawing a parallel or not, it is encouraging to know that He is making these preparations for us.

In verse 3, Jesus' words are comforting because He is teaching us that He will come back again, which refers to His second coming (Acts 1:11; 1 Thes. 4:13-17). When He comes back, we will meet Him in the air, and He will take us to heaven to live with Him and the Father forever. Every faithful Christian should look forward to the day of His coming because that will be the day we get to be in the presence of God for eternity.

In verse 4, Jesus tells His disciples that they know where He is going, and they should have known by now because He has told them several times. He also tells them they know the way to where He is going, which is by living a faithful life. However, we are about to learn that His disciples did not understand what He was talking about.

John 14:5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷ " If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

Many times Thomas is portrayed as being doubtful and slow to accept the truth, but he was just being honest. He was speaking for all the disciples because they were still thinking of a physical kingdom, and they thought Jesus would rein over it.

In verse 6, Jesus makes His sixth "I am" statement. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Jesus is the only way a person can have the forgiveness of their sins, and He is the only way we can make it into heaven. He is the truth because everything about Him represents the truth, and everything He said and did came from the Father. Jesus is the life because only He can offer us eternal life, and He proved this by being raised from the dead.

Some teach there are several roads that lead to heaven, but Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through Me," which means there is only one road that leads to heaven, and that road is through Jesus. Jesus describes that road as being narrow and difficult (Mt. 7:14). So, if we want to find ourselves in heaven one day, we better go through Jesus and stay on the difficult road that leads to eternal life.

In verse 7, Jesus is teaching them that He and the Father are one, which is the same message He has taught them in the past. Jesus was God in the flesh, and He was the perfect manifestation of the Father. To see Jesus and to know Him is the same as seeing the Father and knowing Him.

John 14:8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

Philip joins the discussion, and he wants Jesus to literally show Him the Father. He wanted to be able to see the Father with his own eyes, but man cannot see God in His true form and live (Ex. 33:20).

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹ "Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

Even though they could not see the Father in His true state, they could see the Father through Jesus. Jesus disciples had been with Him for over three years. They saw the works He did, and they heard the words He spoke, which should have been enough for them to know this truth. Once again, Jesus is confirming how He and the Father are one in thought and purpose, and everything He said and did so far proves this.

John 14:12 " Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³ "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ "If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.

Verse 12 is limited to the time of miracles. When Jesus went back to Father, He sent the Holy Spirit in His place, and the Holy Spirit allowed the apostles and other Christians to work miracles. When Jesus said their works would be greater, I do not believe He was talking about greater miracles. Instead, He was talking about them being more numerous and

reaching out into the world. While Jesus was on the earth, His work was limited to a small area, but His disciples would have the opportunity to reach out to all nations.

Verses 13 and 14 teach that we should pray by the authority of Jesus. Our prayers should be directed to the Father, but we should ask them in the name of Jesus. We also learn that Jesus is actively involved with our prayer request because, if we ask in His name, He said He will do it. Jesus is our mediator, and all our prayers go through Him.

John 14:15 " If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever -- ¹⁷ "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

One of the basic principles taught throughout the Bible is that love must be the primary motivation behind every Christian. When we love God with our whole being, we will want to keep His commandments. Paul went so far as to say that if we went through all the motions of keeping God's commands but we did not do it out of love, then all our command keeping would be meaningless (1 Cor. 13:1ff).

It is possible for someone to follow commands and not have love for the one giving the commands. For instance, a prisoner or a slave may obey all the rules that are given to them, but they follow those rules because they were forced on them. They did not obey those rules out of love; they obeyed them because of fear.

Another example comes from how some people hate their jobs, but they work hard at them because they want to provide for their families. While they are motivated by love for their family, they have no love for their boss. If we find ourselves obeying God's commands out of fear instead of love, we need to recognize that our command keeping is empty, and God will not be pleased with it.

In verse 16, Jesus says He will pray to Father so another Helper will be sent if they keep His commandments. This helper or comforter is talking about the Holy Spirit. Both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are considered as helpers or comforters, but the Holy Spirit will be with them forever. While Jesus was talking directly to His apostles and was referring to how the Holy Spirit would indwell them and give them miraculous abilities. This principle also applies to us today as well because the Holy Spirit guides us through the inspired Word of God, and the Holy Spirit indwells us when we obey the Word of God (Acts 5:32; 2:38-39). Unlike the days of the apostles and first century Christians, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit have ceased. Even though the Holy Spirit indwells us today, we do not possess any miraculous gifts.

Verse 17 calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth because He would reveal the Word of God through the apostles and other inspired Christians in the first century (1 Cor. 2:6-14). Jesus will talk more about the work of the Holy Spirit later in this chapter. The reason the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit is because they do not see Him or know Him because they are not willing to hear the truth.

When Jesus told His apostles they knew the Holy Spirit, He was with them, and will be in them, I believe He was referring to how the Holy Spirit was dwelling in Him. When John the Baptist baptized Jesus, the Holy Spirit remained in Him, which was the sign that proved the Jesus was the Messiah (Jn. 1:32-33). Just as the apostles should have known the Father through Jesus, they should have known the Holy Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit was working in Jesus, He would be working in the Apostles.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, He did not leave His apostles as orphans. As promised, the Holy Spirit was sent on the Day of Pentecost and the 12 apostles received Him. When Jesus said, "I will come to you," He meant that He would come through the Holy Spirit in that the Holy Spirit would be there to remind them of everything Jesus taught them, and He would serve as their new helper.

John 14:19 " A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ "At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

In less than 24 hours Jesus would be crucified, and the world would not see Him again until He comes again at His second coming. After Jesus was resurrected, 500 of His disciples saw Him alive, but He did not show Himself to the world. Since Jesus was raised from the dead, it proves that all faithful Christians will also be raised from the dead and live with Jesus in heaven after the final Judgment Day.

When Jesus' disciples saw He was raised from the dead, they would understand that the Father was in Jesus and Jesus was in them. This knowledge would be fully realized on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit entered the Apostles and gave them further conformation of this.

When we become Christians, we become part of God's family, and God saves us by allowing us to enter into Christ where all the spiritual blessings are found (Eph. 1:3). The Word of God states that baptism is the point we enter into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3), and we cannot be saved any other way.

John 14:21 "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." ²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" ²³ Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

Once again, Jesus stresses the need for us to love Him and to show our love by keeping His commandments. We can say we love Jesus all-day long, but our actions prove that love. Jesus said if they love Him, He would manifest Himself to them, which is exactly what He did after He was raised from the dead (Acts 10:40).

Even though Judas Iscariot had left the room, John wants to make it clear that this was another Judas asking this question in verse 22. Most believe this Judas was Thaddeus. The reason I believe Judas asked this question was because he was still thinking of an earthly kingdom that Jesus would rein over, and he could not understand how Jesus would just be seen by them, but not by the world.

For a third time, Jesus stresses the importance of loving Him and obeying His commands. If we follow Jesus' commands the Father will love us, and He and Jesus will come to us and make us part of them. This fact shows that not only do Christians have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Father and Jesus is with us as well. It should be encouraging to know that we belong to the family of God. Once again, Jesus wants His disciples to understand that everything He has said came from the Father and not Him.

John 14:25 " These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷ "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. ²⁸ "You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming *back* to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

Jesus taught His disciples many things while He was living on the earth, but now the Holy Spirit, whom the Father would send, would teach the apostles all things and remind them of what Jesus taught them. This promise was only made to the apostles, and it was through them, and those they laid their hands on, that we have the fully revealed Word of God in our Bibles.

The peace the world offers fails in comparison to the peace Jesus offers because the peace Jesus offers surpasses all understanding (Phil. 4:7). Since Jesus offers us eternal peace, we should not let our heart be troubled. We should not be afraid because God is with us, and if we remain faithful, we will spend eternity in heaven.

In verse 28, Jesus wants His disciples to understand how wonderful it will be for Him to be able to return to His Father. When we love someone, we want the best for them, and when it happens, we should rejoice, which is what Jesus wants His disciples to do.

When Jesus said, "My Father is greater than I" the Jehovah witnesses think this proves He is not Deity and that He was a created being. However, Jesus is not saying that He is not Deity or that He is not equal with the Father because notice what Paul wrote:

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

While Jesus was 100% God and man on the earth, He chose to make Himself a humble servant as He gave up the riches of heaven (2 Cor. 8:9). Even the writer of Hebrews says He was made a little lower than the angels while He was on the earth (Heb. 2:7-9). As Paul said, Jesus did not consider it robbery to be equal with God. So, when Jesus said that God was greater than Him, He was showing His humility as a servant of God, and He was not saying that He was not Deity or implying that He was a created being.

John 14:29 "And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. ³⁰ "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. ³¹ "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

When the disciples saw Jesus prophecy come to pass, it would cause them to believe what Jesus said was true. This same idea is the reason we should believe in Jesus as well. When we examine the prophecies of the Bible and the fulfillment of those prophecies along with the accuracy of the Bible, it should be enough evidence to make us believe.

In verse 30, Jesus is talking about the devil. He had been working through the opposing Jews to put Jesus to death, and now he was working through Judas. Notice, the devil had nothing in Jesus. In other words, he had no power over Him, and he was not in control. He tried his best to make Jesus sin, and he failed. He tried his best to get him put to death, and he failed. The only reason Jesus is about to be put to death is because He chose to allow it to happen, and it will not be end of His life because He will conquer death.

In verse 31, Jesus gives us the example to follow, which is to love God and obey His commands. Even though Jesus knew the horrible death He faced, He was willing to be obedient to the Father's commands (Phil. 2:8). Jesus only gives salvation to those who are willing follow His example (Heb. 5:8-9).

When Jesus said, "Arise, let us go from here," it does not mean that they left right away. It is possible they rose to their feet and He continued telling them what is recorded in chapters 15-17. It is also possible that they left the upper room and He told them these things in chapters 15-17 as they walked. However, I think the first possibility is the most probably. Of course, what He said is more important than where He said the words.

John 15

John 15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Jesus makes His 7th "I am" statement, "I am the true vine." While this is a simple allegory, its message is powerful. A vine grown in a vineyard is pruned by the vinedresser. When a branch of that vine stops producing fruit, it becomes useless and it robs nutrients from the other producing branches. So the vinedresser will cut off the fruitless branches so the good branches can produce more fruit. Also, the branches that are attached to the main vine can only exist as long as they are fed and supported by the vine. If they get cut off, they will wither up and die.

In our text, Jesus is the true vine and the Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Jesus refers to each individual Christian and not each denomination as some teach. It is strange some would claim the branch to be a denomination considering no denominations existed in the first century. There is only one church (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4), and Paul condemned the idea of denominations in 1 Corinthians 1:10ff. Just as a fruitless vine is cut off, if we are not being fruitful for the Lord, He will cut us off. So we should strive to produce fruit such as the fruit of the Spirit:

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Every Christian should be producing these fruits, and we learn how to produce these fruits by studying the Word of God. A person could learn to have similar fruits in their life and not be a Christian, but these fruits will not be pleasing to God if he is not in Christ. For example, there are weeds that produce similar fruit to that of regular plants. Even though the fruit of the weed is similar, it is not the same as the regular plant. The only way the fruit of the Spirit will have any meaning for us is if we are in the true vine of Jesus Christ. Any fruit produced outside Him, no matter how similar it may be, will not be the same, and it will not be pleasing to God.

If we want to produce the fruit of the Spirit, we must be in Christ, which can only be achieved by obeying God's plan of salvation. We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God (Jn. 3:16), repent (Lk. 13:3), confess Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9), and be baptized for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38). While all these steps are necessary, it is at the point of

baptism that we enter into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3) and are grafted into the true vine (Rom. 11:17ff).

Since there is only one vine, the only thing it can produce is a Christian. When we plant a watermelon seed, we expect it to produce watermelons and not pumpkins. In a similar way, the Word of God is described as a seed (Lk. 8:11), and the book of Genesis teaches that everything produces after its own kind (Gen. 1:11), which means the Word of God cannot produce a Baptist, Methodist, or other manmade denomination. Instead, it can only produce a Christian. As Jesus said, if we abide in Him, His word abides in us.

Even though we cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit without Jesus, we still have our part in producing the fruit. If the fruit produced was entirely up to Jesus, then no branch would ever need to be cut off. So, we must learn to be fruitful by living our lives based on God's Word, and we must continue to reach out to the lost so they might obey the gospel and be grafted into the true vine as well.

Sometimes bearing fruit can be discouraging and difficult, but we must press on. Paul said: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). Paul is teaching us that no matter how hard we labor for the Lord it is never in vain. We need to take verse 8 in our text to heart because when we abide in Christ by producing fruit, it will glorify our Father in heaven.

Jesus' allegory also teaches against the false doctrine "one saved always saved." Jesus clearly teaches that if we are not bearing fruit while attached to the true vine, the Father will cut us off. This same idea is given by Paul with the use of olive branches (Rom. 11:17ff). Not only will the unfruitful be cut off, Jesus said: "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned." In other words, once we get cut off from the true vine and we die in that state, our destination will be hell. As Peter said:

2 Peter 2:20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. ²¹ For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²² But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

As Paul said:

2 Thessalonians 1:7 ... when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, ⁸ in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

The Bible clearly teaches that a person can fall from God's grace (Gal. 5:4), and we must continue to abide in Christ by producing fruit, otherwise we will be cut off.

Verse 7 offers some encouraging news, because Jesus said if we abide in Him, He will be in us, and whatever we ask for it will be done. We know this is a general statement because what we ask for must be in accordance with God's will, but it is comforting to know that while we abide in the true vine, we have full access to God through prayer. When we pray, we can know that God will hear our prayers and answer them.

John 15:9 " As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹ "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full.

The same love the Father has for Jesus is the same love Jesus has for His disciples, and He tells them to abide in His love. Since He is telling them to abide in His love, it means they could choose not to abide in it. If we choose not to abide in His love, we will be pruned from the vine.

How do we abide in His love? According to Jesus, we must keep His commandments just like He kept the commandments of the Father. As Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn. 14:15). No one can rightly separate abiding in Christ's love and keeping His commandments. This is a truth that many in the religious world need to understand because they think they can worship God their way and it will be acceptable to Him. They do not stress the necessity of keeping all of God's Word because they think it makes us like the Pharisees. The Pharisees were strict law keepers, but they were not keeping the law of God. They were keeping their own law, and that is what Jesus rebuked them for. He never rebuked them for keeping the law of God. So, if we want to abide in the love of God, we must keep all of God's commandments.

In verse 11, Jesus wants His disciples to experience the same joy He experienced in obeying God's commands. The writer of Hebrews writes:

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus endured many hardships while He was on the earth especially when He had to endure the cross and be temporarily separated from the Father. He did this because He loves us, and it brought Him great joy to keep the Father's commandments, which showed His love for the Father. Because of Jesus' obedient love, He was exalted and is now sitting at the right hand of God.

If Jesus had to endure and keep God's commandments, how can people possibly think they do not have to keep His commandments? Are we better than the Son? Absolutely not! So, if

we want to abide in the love of God and experience the joy that Jesus had in keeping God's commandments, we must follow Jesus' example and keep the commandments of God. One thing that will help encourage us to endure as Jesus did is by reminding ourselves of the reward that we will receive in heaven (1 Cor. 9:24-27; Rev. 2:10).

John 15:12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴ "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵ "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷ "These things I command you, that you love one another.

This commandment was called the new commandment in John 13:34, which is a deep love because we are told to love one other as Jesus loves us. Jesus proved how much He loved us by enduring the painful cross. Sometimes Christians say they love their brothers and sisters in Christ, but they are not willing to lift a hand to help them with their burdens much less lay their life on the line for them. It takes more than mere words to show our love because our actions prove our love, and Jesus is teaching that we must strive to have this same active love for one another.

Jesus clearly states in verse 14 that if we want to be His friend, we must obey His commands. In verse 15, Jesus is not saying that His apostles are no longer servants; He is saying they are much more because they are His friends. Many times a servant has no idea what their master's overall plan is, and they would simply follow his instructions without knowing. However, the apostles' relationship was different with Jesus because He treated them as His friends, and He told them what His overall plan was and what He expected from them.

This friendship applies to all Christians because God has given us His entire plan in His Word. So, when we choose to obey God's commands, it should encourage us to know that we are more than servants, we are Jesus' friends.

In verse 16, Jesus points out how He chose His 12 apostles, but this does not mean they did not have a choice in the matter. They were appointed to be Jesus' eyewitnesses, and they were to go out into the world and bear fruit, which points back to Jesus' allegory He made about the vine. We learn in The Great Commission that the fruit they were to produce was disciples of Christ. They were to produce these disciples by teaching them the Word of God and by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19-20). To help them with their work, Jesus told them that whatever they pray for, the Father will provide for them.

In a similar way, God has called us to be Christians through the gospel (2 Thes. 2:13-14). However, we cannot be a witness for Christ like the apostles because they were eyewitnesses, but we can share with others what Christ has done for us by showing them from the Word of God. We can produce the same fruit the apostles did by teaching others about the Word

of God and baptizing them. When we pray to God for help, we must pray without doubting (Jas. 5:1-8; 1 Tim. 2:8) and realize He will answer our prayers in accordance to His will.

In verse 17, Jesus repeats the command to love one another.

**John 15:18 " If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹
"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰
"Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹ "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.**

Whenever we become a Christian and follow the ways of Jesus, we have to separate ourselves from the way of the world. When we do this, the world will hate us because we are different, and we oppose the many sinful things the world has in it. Just as the world hated Jesus by rejecting Him, the world will reject us because we are not greater than Jesus.

Sometimes the world's hatred can cause us to be persecuted because they do not like what we stand for, but other times our stand for God can cause some in the world to embrace Christianity. A good example of this comes from when Paul spoke at Antioch where the Gentiles wanted to hear God's Word and embrace it while the Jews wanted to oppose it (Acts 13:32-45).

Verse 21 teaches us not to think that people are rejecting us when we stand up for God, they are rejecting us for what we stand for. So, ultimately they are rejecting God's message when they are rejecting and persecuting us.

John 15:22 "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ "He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. ²⁵ "But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.'

Is Jesus saying that if He had not to come to the earth and worked His miracles that we would have no sin whatsoever? If so, Jesus did us a great disservice by coming. I do not believe this is what Jesus is saying because we have all sinned and fell short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). So, Jesus is not saying these people would be free from sin, He is saying they would not be guilty of rejecting the Son of God, but since they heard Him speak and saw Him work miracles and signs that no other man had ever worked, they were guilty of this sin. His words and miracles proved that He was the Son of God. To reject the Son is to hate Him and Father, which proves that Jesus and the Father are one, and it proves Jesus' Deity.

Verse 25 teaches that this rejection and hatred of Jesus was prophesied. Jesus calls it their law because they believed in what the Law of Moses said, yet they refused to accept what it

said about Jesus. It is also worthy to note that this prophecy came from Psalm 35:19, which shows that the book of Psalm is part of the old covenant.

John 15:26 " But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. ²⁷ "And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

Once again, Jesus tells His apostles how the Holy Spirit will be sent to them. He will work miracles through them, which will prove their testimony about Jesus is true. One of the qualifications of an apostle was they had to be with Jesus from the beginning. Only those that were with Him and saw His works with their own eyes could witness to people about Jesus. So, those who say they are witnessing to people today are just using modern day terminology, but Biblically they cannot witness to people about Jesus because they are not eyewitnesses of Jesus. However, as I stated earlier, we can teach people about Jesus and what He did for us from the Word of God.

The promise of sending the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth was only given to the apostles. Today, the Holy Spirit does not guide us directly or give us new revelations. Instead, the Holy Spirit operates on us through the fully revealed Word of God because it is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17), and it tells us everything we need to know to be saved and to live a faithful lives that are pleasing to God (1 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3).

John 16

John 16:1 "These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. ² "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. ³ "And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. ⁴ "But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

Jesus was preparing His disciples for what would take place. When they witnessed these things unfold, they would know that Jesus was telling the truth, and it would prove that He was Deity. Knowing Jesus was the Son of God and His promises were true would give them the strength they needed to keep from stumbling into sin.

In verse 2, Jesus gives them two warnings of what they may have to endure for following Him.

First, they will be put out of the synagogues, which means they will excommunicated by all faithful Jews. For a Jew, this was devastating, but the disciples would have to live with this if they wanted to follow Christ.

Second, some of them would be put to death for being a Christian, and when their fellow Jews killed them, they would think they were doing it for the cause of God. Paul is great example of this because he thought he was doing God a great service by imprisoning and casting his vote against those called Christians (Acts 26:9-11).

Following Jesus would take a serious commitment because there would be many hardships they would have to face, but God would be with them. Just as Jesus predicted, many of the apostles were subjected to persecutions and some were killed for the cause of Christ, Since Jesus warned them beforehand of these hardships, they were able to keep their faith and press on even in the face of death.

The apostles are great examples of what a faithful Christian is all about. If we want to make sure we do not stumble into sin, then we need to prepare ourselves for the trials we will have in our lives. Now we may never face death for our belief, but there are many other forms of persecutions we will have to endure in our lifetime. When those trials come, we must remind ourselves that God is with us and He is going to help us.

The reason some Christians fall back into a life of sin is because they did not prepare themselves for the trials they would face. They were naive and they did not count the cost of following Jesus (Lk. 14:28-33).

We learn in verse 3 the reason Jesus' disciples will be persecuted this way is because their oppressors do not know the Father or the Son. If they had known the Father and His will, they would have accepted Jesus instead of rejecting Him.

In verse 4, Jesus assures them their faith will be strengthened when these things come to pass and they recall that He said they would happen. If Jesus had been wrong, then their

faith would have wavered, but Jesus is never wrong, which is why we can have a strong conviction in serving God. We have a great advantage over the people during the Old Testament and New Testament times because we have the fully revealed Word of God. We can study our Bibles and see how God has worked throughout the history of mankind, and how He has always kept His promises. Every time God made a prediction, it always came to pass. Knowing this should give every Christian the same kind of faith the apostles had when they witnessed Jesus' words coming to pass.

From the first time Jesus called His apostles to Him, He began to train them and prepare them. However, He was only able to teach them certain things as they were ready to learn them. He already taught them that it would not be easy being His disciple, but now He is giving them more details of what they will have to face when He is gone from the earth.

John 16:5 " But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' ⁶ "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

Jesus is not saying they had never asked where He was going because Peter and Thomas had asked this earlier (Jn. 13:36; 14:5). Instead, He was saying that they were no longer asking where He was going because their hearts were filled with sorrow. The apostles would have had a hard time accepting what Jesus was saying because they still had a vision of an earthly kingdom with Jesus being its head, but Jesus said He must go away. Many are just as confused as the apostles were before their eyes were opened to the truth because many are looking for an earthly kingdom in the future where Jesus will reign for a 1,000 years.

We need to understand that Jesus is reigning over His spiritual kingdom right now (1 Cor. 15:25). The church and the kingdom are one in the same (Mt. 16:18-19). Those who obey the gospel are said to be conveyed or transferred into the kingdom of the Son (Col. 1:13), which happens at the point of baptism (Jn. 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:13). So, Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15), and He has been reigning over His kingdom since He was raised from dead and was seated at the right hand of God (Acts 2:33-36).

Jesus understood that His words made them sorrowful, but He lets them know that He must go so the Holy Spirit can be sent to them. Every member of the Godhead has His function in the scheme of redemption for mankind. The Father made the plan, Jesus carried out the plan, and the Holy Spirit revealed and proved the plan with signs and miracles. If Jesus had remained on the earth, the plan would have been broken, and the Holy Spirit would not be sent. Thankfully, Jesus finished the work that was given to Him.

John 16:8 "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ "of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹ "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Notice how the Holy Spirit is called “He.” Jesus is saying that the Holy Spirit is a person. Some claim the Holy Spirit is just an influence like the wind, but this Gospel teaches otherwise because it talks about how He teaches, hears and guides (Jn. 14:26; 16:13).

When the Holy Spirit is sent, He will convict the world of three things: sin, righteousness, and judgment. He will not do this directly because the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:17). Instead, the Holy Spirit would work through the apostles to convict the world of these three things.

First, their sin would be exposed by the truth being taught. When people heard that they were lost without Christ, they would be convicted of their sin. If they choose not to believe in Jesus, they would remain in their sins.

Second, they would be taught about Jesus’ righteousness and how He is the Son of God. To prove His righteousness, the Holy Spirit was poured on the Day of Pentecost just as Jesus promised (Acts 2).

Third, since Jesus overcame the power of death, He proved that He had power over the devil, and everyone including the devil will be judged by Jesus (2 Cor. 5:10).

A great example of this conviction through the apostles can be read in Acts 2. In that chapter, the Holy Spirit caused the apostles to speak in different languages as they proclaimed Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, which caused around 3000 souls to be convicted and converted to Christ.

John 16:12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³ "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴ "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. ¹⁵ "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

Jesus had more for His disciples to learn, but they were not ready. Even when the Holy Spirit was poured out on them, they still received their revelations in part. Paul pointed this out when He wrote: “For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away” (1 Cor. 13:9-10). Paul is talking about how they received their revelations in part, but once they received all the parts, then the revelations would stop. Once God’s Word was fully revealed, which we have in the New Testament, there would no longer be a need for further revelations. So, no one can claim the Holy Spirit is giving them new revelations today because we already have the completed Word of God, and we are warned not to listen to those claiming to have a different message (Gal. 1:8).

While the Holy Spirit guided the apostles directly, and those they laid their hands on, He guides us indirectly through the Word of God. One thing I like to point out is that the apostles did not always fully understand everything the Holy Spirit spoke through them. For instance, on the Day of Pentecost Peter said that salvation was for the Jews and for all those

who are afar off (Acts 2:39), which is talking about the Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-16). We find out that Peter did not understand this until He was sent to Cornelius' household in Acts 10. This fact offers more proof that the apostles were not speaking from their own understanding, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13).

When the Holy Spirit came in the first century, He did not speak by His own authority just as Jesus did not speak by His own authority. Instead, He would say those things that He heard, and these words would glorify Jesus. Verse 16 shows the triune nature of the Godhead because Jesus mentions how the things of the Father are His and that Holy Spirit will be declaring these things, which shows how the three members of the Godhead are in perfect unity, and how each of them are unique individuals.

John 16:16 " A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father." ¹⁷ Then *some* of His disciples said among themselves, "What is this that He says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?" ¹⁸ They said therefore, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is saying." ¹⁹ Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'? ²⁰ "Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. ²¹ "A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. ²² "Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

Jesus is trying to teach them that He will die and be taken away from them, but they will see Him again. Since the disciples were still having a hard time understanding this idea, they wondered what He was talking about. Even though they did not ask this question out loud, Jesus read their minds and explains it to them again.

In verse 20, He wants them to understand that when He dies, they will weep at His passing, but when He is raised from the dead, they will see Him again and their sorrow will turn into rejoicing because He is alive and will be alive for eternity. Once they see this, their joy can never be taken from them because His resurrection proves that we will be resurrected as well.

Jesus gives a perfect example of how they will feel at Jesus death and resurrection by comparing their emotions to a mother giving birth. When a mother goes into labor, it comes on suddenly. Since they did not have epidurals back then, the pain would be intense. So, the labor process was a time of dread and anguish. After the child is born and the mother is able to see her baby and hold it, her pain and anguish turns into joy.

John 16:23 "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. ²⁴ "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

In that day when Jesus is resurrected and is with the Father, He said “you will ask Me nothing.” Instead, they will ask the Father in His name. Jesus is teaching us that we do not pray to Him directly because we are to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus. Jesus is our mediator and our prayers go through Him.”

Verse 24 reemphasizes this by saying that His disciples had not asked the Father anything in His name, but now He wants them to start asking the Father for the things they need in His name.

John 16:25 " These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. ²⁶ "In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; ²⁷ "for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. ²⁸ "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father."

Jesus spoke a lot in parables and illustrations, but when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles, Jesus’ teachings about the Father would be clear. We have a great advantage over those in the first century because we can read the whole counsel of God and understand things the apostles did not understand in the beginning.

In verse 26, Jesus stresses that we are to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus, and that Jesus does not pray to Father for us. Now think about that. If we are not to pray to Jesus so He can in turn pray to the Father for us, then why do some think we should pray to Mary or some other supposed saint so they might pray to the Father for us? It does not make sense to do that when we have direct access to the Father thanks to Jesus. Besides, there is nothing in the Scriptures that teach us to pray through others that have passed on.

In verse 28 we learn that Jesus came from the Father, which means that He existed before He became flesh. While He was on the earth, He was both man and God, and He was about to die and be raised from the dead. Afterwards, He would return to the Father and sit at His right hand.

John 16:29 His disciples said to Him, "See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! ³⁰ "Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God."

Jesus’ disciples claim to understand what He is talking about, but they only state they believe that Jesus came forth from God. While they may have understood that, they still did not understand about Jesus’ death, resurrection, or the things concerning His spiritual kingdom (Jn. 20:9; Acts 1:6).

John 16:31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? ³² "Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. ³³ "These

things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Jesus questioned their faith because He knew that everyone of them would scatter and leave Him alone. As Jesus said, He was not alone because the Father was with Him. In a similar way, we always have the Father with us even if we are all alone. Knowing what Jesus did for us and knowing the Father is always with us should bring peace and comfort to us no matter how much chaos is going on our lives.

Jesus wants them to be of good cheer because He has overcome the world. When we become Christians, we can overcome the sinfulness of the world through Jesus (1 Jn. 5:4; Rev. 3:21). Let us never forget that God is in our corner, and He will never forsake us (Heb. 13:5-6).

John 17

John 17:1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, ² "as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. ³ "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴ "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. ⁵ "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

After Jesus finished talking to His apostles, He began to pray. Prayer was an important part of Jesus' life, and sometimes He prayed all nightlong (Lk. 6:12). Many people call the model prayer in Matthew 6:9ff the Lord's Prayer, but it was just designed to teach His disciples how to pray. Jesus' prayer in John 17 is what I would call the Lord's Prayer. It is Jesus' longest recorded prayer, and it can be divided into three sections:

1. Jesus prays for Himself (1-5).
2. Jesus prays for His disciples (6-19).
3. Jesus prays for future believers (20-23).

Since Jesus looked up to heaven as He prayed, some believe this suggests He was outside, but all this really means is that He looked up when He prayed. Jesus' life and work on the earth would be ending because this would be the night He would be betrayed by Judas.

When Jesus said, "Glorify Your Son, that the Son also may glorify you," He was talking about the Father's part in raising Him from the dead and exalting Him to His right side. Jesus would glorify the Father by carrying out the Father's plan, and Jesus' resurrection and ascension to heaven would prove that He is the Son of God.

When Jesus was raised from the dead, He was given all authority over heaven and earth, and He gives eternal life to all who choose to come to Him by having an obedient faith (Heb. 5:8-9). The only way we can have eternal life is through Jesus (Jn. 14:6).

Verse 3 teaches that eternal life comes to those who know the Father and the Son. Two ways that we can know the Father are found in the following verses:

1 John 4:8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 2:4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (Also see Tit. 1:16).

If we do not have love in our heart for others or for God, we cannot have eternal life because God is love. Without love, we are not going to keep God's commandments. So, to know God and have eternal life requires love and an obedient faith to God's commands. Jesus is the greatest example of this love and faithful obedience to the Father, which is why Jesus could say: "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do."

Jesus taught throughout His ministry that He was here to do the will of the Father, and now He had done all that was asked of Him as we see in verse 4. The only things left for Jesus to do were those things involving His death on the cross.

Those who teach the rapture doctrine say that Jesus failed to set up His kingdom in the first century because of the Jews rejection, and this is why He must come back again and set up an earthly kingdom for 1000 years. However, we know this doctrine is not true because Jesus said that He finished His work on the earth. He did not fail to do anything, and He fulfilled all the prophecies about Him (Lk 18:31; 24:44; Jn. 19:28; Acts 13:27-29). The kingdom of God, which is also called the church, began on the day of Pentecost, and Jesus is reigning over that kingdom right now.

If we accept the rapture doctrine that Jesus failed the first time, then how can we say with certainty that Jesus will not fail again when He comes back? We cannot, but fortunately this is not the case because God has never failed to accomplish His plan. Since Jesus finished doing the will of the Father on the earth, He was glorified by Him, and He is back with the Father like He was before the world was made. Once again, Jesus is teaching us that He has always existed with the Father, and He was not created as the Jehovah Witnesses teach (Jn. 1:1; 8:58). Next, Jesus prays for His apostles.

John 17:6 " I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷ "Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. ⁸ "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

Throughout Jesus' ministry, He always gave God the glory for everything He did, and His apostles witnessed this over and over. Jesus said the Father had given Him these men who were out of the world. To be out of the world does not mean that a person is no loner in the world; it means that a person has separated himself from worldly ways. The apostles had done this because they followed Jesus all the way except for Judas.

Everything that Jesus taught came from the Father. His apostles had heard His message and they had kept it by obeying it and teaching it. Early on, Jesus told them: "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops" (Mt. 10:27). While Jesus prepared His apostles with the Word of God and trained them to teach it, it would not be long until they proclaimed this truth to the world.

While there was some things His apostles did not understand, they did believe that Jesus had come forth from the Father (Jn. 16:30).

John 17:9 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. ¹⁰ "And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*. ¹² "While I was with them in the

world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ "But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

Jesus is teaching how specific our prayers can be. Now there is nothing wrong with praying for the non-Christian leaders of our country because Paul tells us that we should pray for all men and those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-2). However, Jesus is specifically praying for His apostles and not for those in the world.

According to Jesus, when we belong to Him, we belong to the Father as well because everything Jesus has is the Father's and everything the Father has belongs to Jesus. Once again, this shows the unity they have, which proves that we cannot have access to the Father without Jesus (Jn. 14:6).

It will not be much longer until Jesus leaves the earth and goes back to Father. Jesus wants His apostles to have the same unity that He and His Father has in word and in thought. While He was specifically talking about His apostles, He repeats this thought when He prays for all believers in verse 22.

Being unified in mind and thought is taught throughout the Scriptures (Rom. 15:5-6; Phil. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 1:10; 12:12-13), which proves that we can have unity in Christ. Since we are not to be divided proves that denominationalism is wrong because there is only one church (Eph. 4:4), and we must worship God in spirit and in truth in accordance to His Word (Jn. 4:23).

While Jesus was on the earth, He was a great leader, and He kept His apostles on the right path except for Judas. Judas chose of his own free will to stop following Jesus' lead and in doing so, he fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 41:9.

Jesus also prayed that His apostles would experience the same joy He had while He was living on the earth. Even when Jesus had to struggle with hunger, hardship, and cruelty it did not take away His joy of being in unity with His Father and the hope He had of being back with Him for eternity. His apostles would be able to experience this same joy because no matter what happened to them, they would have unity with the Father and the hope of abiding with Him for the rest of their lives.

This same joy can be experienced by every faithful Christian because no matter what trials and tribulations we go through, we can still be joyful knowing that we are in unity with the Father and the Son, and we have the same hope of spending eternity with them in heaven.

John 17:14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Since His apostles had received His Word and lived by it, it caused them to be separated from the world, which teaches that obeying God's Word will separate us from the world. To

be separated from the world simply means that we no longer live by the world's standards. Instead, we live by God's standard, which is why the world hated the apostles and why they will hate us because God's Word condemns worldliness.

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

This passage proves that we must obey God's Word if we want to be separate from the world and be saved in the end. Just like the apostles, we must understand that the world will be against us, but no matter what they do to us, it is worth it to remain separated from them by remaining faithful to the Lord (Rom. 8:18).

Jesus did not want His apostles taken out of the world because, if they were, they would not be able to proclaim the gospel. However, Jesus does want the Father to help protect them from the evil one, which is talking about the devil. While the apostles lived out their lives on the earth, they would remain out of the world spiritually just as Jesus did. Every Christian must live this way as well. We must continue to keep our minds on things above (Col. 3:2) and remind ourselves that our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

John 17:17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Sanctify means to set apart and purify. Jesus says the truth does this, which is the Word of God. This statement teaches against the view that God converts people by influencing them directly by the Holy Spirit because Jesus just said that sanctification comes through the Word of God. This truth is taught throughout the New Testament (Rom. 1:16; Jas. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:22-23).

When Paul was writing to the Thessalonians, he told them: "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth" (2 Thes. 2:13). The Holy Spirit revealed the Word of God through the apostles and other first century Christians. By that Word, we learned how to be sanctified and saved. Again, this shows how the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to save us. Even if the Holy Spirit worked directly on the sinner today, which He does not, He would not teach or guide someone with a different message found within the completed Word of God because the faith that is pleasing to God comes from hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17).

When Jesus said He would sanctify Himself, He was referring to how He would set Himself apart to become a sacrifice for all mankind. If Jesus had not made that sacrifice, then sanctification would not be available for us because the apostles would have never received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and we would not have the lifesaving message that we have in our Bibles. Thankfully, Jesus loved us enough to die for us and make Christianity a reality. Next, Jesus prays for all future believers.

John 17:20 " I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ "that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³ "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Jesus now prays that all future believers will share in this same unity. Notice, the future believers would believe through the inspired Word taught by the apostles. As Peter wrote: "Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior" (2 Pet. 3:1-2; Also see 1 Thes. 2:13). Again, this reemphasizes that we are converted to Christ through the Word of God and not by a direct influence or teaching from the Holy Spirit. Anyone who is taught the truth and chooses to accept it can be saved.

Jesus stresses the idea of unity for all believers, because when we are unified in the thought and in word, it makes it possible for the world to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. This prayer goes against the manmade idea of denominationalism because denominationalism is the opposite of being unified. When man decided to start dividing the church up, it severely hurt the growth of the church because it caused uncertainty, and the world does not know who or what to believe. This confusion has been increased by such messages as "attend the church of your choice" or "one church is as good as another."

Jesus makes it clear that the only way that we can have unity that will cause the world to believe in Him is by being unified based on God's Word and not mans. When we have that unity, we will experience the same love and peace that Jesus has with His Father.

John 17:24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ "O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. ²⁶ "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

It should be comforting to know that Jesus desires His disciples to be where He is and to be able to see His glory. Jesus taught us back in John 14 that He was going to prepare a place for the faithful, and when He comes back as His second coming, He will take the faithful with Him, and they will behold His glory.

Jesus is also declaring His Deity because He states how the Father loved Him before the foundation of the World. Now, the world has not known the Father because they did not accept Jesus as the Son of God, but all believes have because to know Jesus is to know the Father (Jn. 8:19).

Jesus declared the name of God by revealing His authority to them and teaching them what they must do. In doing this, it taught them and it teaches us that the love God has for His Son is the same love that He has for us, and when we have His love, Jesus is in us as well. When we become Christians, we receive every spiritual blessing that is found in Christ (Eph. 1:3), and we should continue to look forward to the day when we get to go to that beautiful place called heaven.

John 18

John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. ² And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples.

When Jesus finished speaking these words in John 13-17, they went out, which indicates His entire discourse and prayer happened in the upper room. It makes sense that Jesus would have said all these things in the quietness of the upper room instead of outside in the noisy city.

The Brook Kidron, which is translated *flowing in winter*, was a valley located on the eastern slope of Jerusalem. The brook only had water in it during the rainy season and was usually dry during the summertime. The brook begins north of Jerusalem and winds its way down into the Dead Sea. There are several Old Testament events associated with this valley. For example:

- David crossed this brook when he was fleeing from his son Absalom (2 Sam. 15:23).
- King Asa, Josiah, and Hezekiah had pagan idols and objects destroyed in the valley (1 Kgs. 15:13; 23:4; 2 Chr. 29:16; 30; 14).
- Nehemiah inspected the walls of Jerusalem by night from this valley (Neh. 2:15).
- This valley was also known as the graves of the common people (2 Kgs. 23:6; Jer. 26:23; 31:40).

After they crossed this valley, they went to the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36; Mk. 14:32). Luke's account adds that Jesus taught in the temple in the daylight during this week, but He went out to the mountain of Olives by night, which is close to the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk. 21:37; 22:39). Judas had been part of that gathering until that night, so He knew where to find Jesus to betray Him. John's account only briefly mentions the garden and does not record how Jesus went into the garden and prayed three times or the agony He was going through, which caused Him to sweat drops like blood. It does not cover how Jesus was strengthened by an angel or how His disciples kept falling asleep (Mt. 26:36ff; Mk. 14:32ff; Lk. 22:39ff).

John 18:3 Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

Judas was leading a detachment of troops, which consisted of about 600 Roman soldiers. Most likely, not all 600 men were there. There was also a group of temple guards that went with them. They were obviously expecting to have to search them out and fight them since they had lanterns, torches, and weapons.

John 18:4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" ⁵ They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. ⁶ Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell

to the ground. ⁷ Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." ⁸ Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am *He*. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," ⁹ that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."

John's account does not record the betrayal kiss of Judas, but it does give us additional information the other accounts do not. We learned back in John 13 that Jesus already knew Judas was going to portray Him, and He was not surprised by this group of men that came to arrest Him. While these men came to seek Jesus out and possibly fight His men, Jesus approached them and took control of the situation.

Jesus knew what these men wanted, but He asked them, "Whom are you seeking?" They said they were looking for Jesus. Now if Jesus had wanted to live another day, He could have run and hid, or He could have lied about whom He was. Instead, He boldly proclaimed "I am *He*." The Word "He" is not in the original Greek, so Jesus is saying that He is the "I am" just as He claimed in John 8:58, which expresses His Deity.

We do not know how many soldiers were there, but Jesus' boldness caused them to move backwards and fall to the ground. Some have suggested that a miracle caused this to happen. If it was a miracle, the Bible does not give us that detail. Again, Jesus asked them who they were looking for, and their answer was the same. For a second time, Jesus tell them that He is the "I am."

He tells them He is willing to go with them voluntarily, but He wants them to let His apostles go so His saying would be fulfilled that He mentioned in His prayer (Jn. 17:12). Jesus example teaches us a great lesson. Jesus prayer in John 17 included several things including protecting His apostles. Jesus did pray to God and expect Him to do it all with no action on His part because He understood that action is required on our part, which why Jesus was asking for His apostles to be let go. By the providence of God, this prayer was answered.

We need to realize that sometimes our prayers to God require action on our part. For instance, if we pray for a job so we can make more money, we cannot just sit at home and expect a job to come to us. No, we must actively seek a job and trust that God will help us find the best job for us.

John 18:10 Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. ¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

Peter claimed earlier that He was willing to go to His death for Jesus, and Peter is proving his commitment. He pulled out his sword and cut off the high priest's servant's right ear. John is the only one that records both Peter's name and the name of the servant. Although Peter's actions were genuine, he did not understand what was going on because he was thinking of physical things. Peter's actions remind me of what Jesus had told Him earlier:

“Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men” (Mt. 16:23).

Jesus’ kingdom would not be won this way because His kingdom was not of this world (Jn. 18:36). As Paul wrote: “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). If Jesus had wanted to reign as a King on the earth, He could have called an army of almost 82,000 angels and all His disciples to fight for Him (Mt. 26:53). Jesus’ kingdom was a spiritual one, and it would be won by Him drinking the cup of agony that His Father had given Him. Those who claim there is still a future earthly kingdom have misunderstood these plain passages that teach the kingdom is not physical but spiritual.

John 18:12 Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. ¹³ And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. ¹⁴ Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Even though Jesus gave Himself up voluntarily, these Gentile men bound Him, which fulfilled Jesus’ prophecy (Mt. 20:19). Again, we do not know how many troops were there, but apparently this was an important arrest because the Captain was there. While Jesus was being bound, His disciples forsook Him and fled (Mk. 14:50).

Only John’s account mentions that Jesus was taken to Annas. Annas had been the high priest before, but he had been removed from that position by the Roman government. However, he still had great influence and many considered him as a high priest, which is why we find both Caiaphas and Annas being called high priest (Jn. 18:13, 19; Lk. 3:2).

Lanely explains it this way:

According to the Mosaic law, the High Priest was the most important member of the believing community because he was the only one authorized by God to offer sacrifices for the sins of the community on the Day of Atonement (Exo. 30:10; Lev 16). This office was held by a descendant of Aaron and was passed on from father to son (cf. Exo. 28:1; Num. 18:1; 20:25-28). During King Herod’s rule, however, the traditional pattern was often ignored as Herod arbitrarily dismissed and replaced the High Priest (Josephus Antiquities 15.51). From then on, and continuing during Roman rule, the office ceased to be lifelong and hereditary. The office of High Priest became wholly dependent on political authority. But because the office of High Priest was lifelong, the High Priest retained a good measure of power and prestige among the Jewish population even after removal from office. This provides some background for the situation reflected in John 18:13 where two men are regarded as having the authority of the High Priest. Annas was appointed as High Priest in A.D. 6 by Quirinius, governor of Syria, and was deposed nine years later by Valerius Gratus, prefect of Judea (Josephus Antiquities 18.26, 34, 95). Annas was succeeded by Ishmael ben Phiabia I (about A.D. 15-16) and then by Annas’ son Eleazar (about A.D. 16-

17). Following the term of Simon, son of Kamithos (A.D. 17-18), Joseph Caiaphas, who had married the daughter of Annas, was appointed to the office in A.D. 18 by Valerius Gratus. Caiaphas held the office until A.D. 36, when both Pilate and Caiaphas were removed from their respective offices by Lucius Vitellius, governor of Syria (Josephus Antiquities 18.89, 95) (J. Carl Laney, *Moody Gospel of John Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), p. 318).

When John wrote that Caiaphas was high priest that year, he is pointing out that he was the high priest during the year our Lord was put to death. This is the same Caiaphas who spoke prophetically about Jesus' death earlier (Jn. 11:49-51).

John 18:15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so *did* another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. ¹⁶ But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also *one* of this Man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." ¹⁸ Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

Jesus' disciples scattered at His arrest, but Matthew tells us that Peter followed Jesus from afar (Mt. 26:58). Who is this other unnamed disciple that rejoined Jesus who was known by the high priest? Most believe that it was John. Since he was known by the high priest, he was allowed to enter where Jesus was taken, but Peter remained outside the door.

Then John, presumably, who was known to be a disciple of Jesus spoke to the girl guarding the door so Peter could come in. We are not told what caused this servant girl to assume that Peter was also a disciple of Jesus, but I see at least two possibilities. First, just being a friend of John's who wanted to see what was happening with Jesus would have caused her to think he was a disciple. Second, it is possible his Galilean accent caused her to assume he was a disciple (Mk. 14:70). While her assumption was correct, Peter quickly denied it.

It was in the middle of the night and it had started getting cold, so a fire was made and Peter warmed himself by the fire with the servants and officers.

John 18:19 The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. ²⁰ Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. ²¹ "Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said." ²² And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Do You answer the high priest like that?" ²³ Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?" ²⁴ Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

The place Jesus was taken to is believed to be the home of Annas and Caiaphas. John is the only one that records that Jesus was brought before Annas first and what took place during this event. Before we go any further, we need to understand a few things about Jewish trials.

Mr. Walker writes:

First, the individual was to be considered innocent until proven guilty. Second, the individual was not even to face trial until the evidence of witnesses could be stated and confirmed. Third, an individual could not be called on to incriminate himself. The case had to be established by witnesses. This understanding will help us when we see the response that Jesus' answer brings (Denton Lectures Electronic Version, Gospel of John).

This background information will bring more clarity to our text. First, Annas wants to know about Jesus' and His disciples' doctrine. Since Jesus was the one on trial, He only answered for Himself. His answer was simple because He had not kept His doctrine secret. He had taught it openly around the Jews and any of them could tell Annas what His doctrine was. Jesus appeals to the fact that there should be witnesses if he is going to be accused of something.

One of the officers did not like Jesus' response, so he struck Him with the palm of his hand across His face. This was the usually response if someone was speaking against the high priest (Acts 23:1-5). However, Jesus did not deserve this form of rebuke because all He was doing was defending Himself and demanding what the Law of Moses called for. So, Jesus demanded for witnesses to be brought forth to prove that He had spoken evil for being struck in the face. If there was a response to Jesus' demands, we are not told. We only know that Jesus was sent to Caiaphas next. Now, this does not mean that He had to go a long way, but most likely He was just taken to another part of the palace.

John's account does not record what happened when Jesus went before Caiaphas, but the Synoptic Gospels do (Mt. 26:57-68; Mk. 14:53-65; Lk. 22:66-71). They record how false witnesses were brought forth. This whole trial was illegal, but these opposing Jews were desperate to kill Jesus, and this was also prophesied in Psalms 2:1-3.

John 18:25 Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, "You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?" He denied *it* and said, "I am not!"²⁶ One of the servants of the high priest, a relative *of him* whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?"²⁷ Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed.

Peter has already denied Jesus once, and Mark's account tells us that Peter would deny Jesus three times before the rooster crowed twice (Mk. 14:72). When Peter, heard the rooster crow the first time, it seems that Peter would realize that he was doing exactly what Jesus said he would do, but it did not stop him. When we examine all four accounts, we learn that there were multiple people asking Peter if he was a disciple of Jesus, which caused him to deny Jesus two more times. The last person that asked him was an eyewitness that had seen Peter in the garden, yet Peter still denied it, and Matthew's account says that he cursed and swore

that he was not a disciple (Mt. 26:74). Cursing and swearing here does not carry the same meaning as what we think of today. Instead, it means to swear an oath. It would be similar to someone saying, "I promise you I am telling you the truth, and if I lying let God strike me with lightening right now."

When Peter denied Jesus for a third time the rooster crowed a second time. Luke's account gives us some additional information:

Luke 22:61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." ⁶² So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

If it was not bad enough that Peter denied Jesus three times and then heard the rooster crow this second time; He also did it while Jesus was near. I can only imagine how guilty Peter felt as Jesus turned and looked at him. We can only imagine what expression Jesus had on His face. Peter realized at that moment what Jesus had said to him earlier, and it caused him to leave and weep bitterly.

These events teach us a couple of lessons:

1. We cannot follow Jesus from afar and hang around the fire with the world and think that we will stand firm in the faith.
2. Even faithful Christians like Peter can fall from God's grace if we do not stay close to Jesus.

John 18:28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.

The Jews decided that Jesus must die, but they could not legally kill anyone without Roman consent, which is why they were bringing him to Pilate at the Praetorium.

What is a Praetorium? Thayer explains:

- 1) "head-quarters" in a Roman camp, the tent of the commander-in-chief 2) the palace in which the governor or procurator of a province resided, to which use the Romans were accustomed to appropriate the palaces already existing, and formerly dwelt in by kings or princes; at Jerusalem it was a magnificent palace which Herod the Great had built for himself, and which the Roman procurators seemed to have occupied whenever they came from Caesarea to Jerusalem to transact public business.

The Jews had no problem violating multiple laws of God in convicting Jesus to death, yet they were still concerned about defiling themselves by entering a Gentile area.

One thing challenging about the verse is that the Jews did not want to defile themselves so they could eat the Passover. On the surface, this would suggest that Passover had not occurred yet. However, we know that Jesus and His disciples partook of the Passover meal the day before (Mt. 26:18; Mk. 14:14). So, how do we make sense of the Jews indicating the

Passover had not taken place? Well, there have been several explanations given. Note the following explanations I have adapted from Wayne Jackson's article, "Did Jesus eat the Passover Supper?"

1. Some claim the meal Jesus and His disciples ate was not the Passover, but this contradicts what the Bible teaches.
2. Some have suggested that they ate the Passover a day early and that it was acceptable because Jesus had the authority to do so. This explanation does not work because Jesus made sure that He kept the Law of Moses, and He did not change it; He fulfilled it.
3. Some claim that these opposing Jews were so busy trying to find Jesus that they did not eat the Passover on the right day, so they were going to eat it the next day.
4. Some claim that Jesus and these other Jews were using different calendars to determine when the Passover occurred.

While number 3 and 4 may be plausible, I believe the best explanation is that the word "Passover" can be used to describe the Pascal lamb itself (Mk. 14:12; Lk. 22:7; 1 Cor. 5:7), a meal that was eaten on the 14th of Nisan (Mt. 26:18-19; Lk. 22:8, 13; Heb. 11:28), and it is also used to refer to the eight day period that included eating the Passover meal and the feast of unleavened bread (Ezek: 45:21; Lk. 22:1, 7; Acts 12:3-4). This explanation has the most evidence and many respectable scholars hold this view.

So these Jews were not referring to the Passover meal that prepared the day before, but to the feast of the unleavened bread. If they allowed themselves to be defiled, they would not be able to participate in it.

John 18:29 Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?" ³⁰ They answered and said to him, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you." ³¹ Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death," ³² that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.

Pilate wants to know what the accusation is against Jesus, and the Jews tell him He is an evildoer. When Pilate realized they were accusing Him of things to do with their law, he told them take care of the matter themselves, but they wanted Jesus dead, which only Pilate could grant under Roman law. Since Roman law would not allow the Jews to put Jesus to death, He would have to die by crucifixion, which is exactly how Jesus said He would be put to death (Jn. 12:32; Mt. 30:18-19).

Luke's account records more accusations the Jews made such as Jesus was perverting the nation, not paying His taxes, and that He claiming to be a king (Lk. 23:1-2). Luke's account also records how Pilate sent Jesus to Herod first, but Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate (Lk. 23:6-12).

John 18:33 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" ³⁵ Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" ³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." ³⁷ Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

Since the Jews claimed Jesus was calling Himself a king, Pilate wanted to know if this was true. At first, Jesus wanted to know if this was Pilate's question or the Jews. Pilate confirmed that it was a question from the Jews, so Jesus affirmed that He is a king. However, His kingdom was not a physical one, it was a spiritual one. He explains that if He was interested in establishing a physical kingdom, His servants would fight and He would have been delivered from the Jews.

Jesus was not scared to proclaim the truth no matter what the consequences may be, and we should learn to follow His example. Just as Jesus said, He came to bear witness to the truth. Those who are willing to believe that truth will take heed to what Jesus said.

John 18:38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all. ³⁹ " But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" ⁴⁰ Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

Pilate asked a great question, but our text does not indicate that he wanted to know the answer. It would be great if every person asked this question and then listened to the answer found in the Word of God (Jn. 8:32-33; 14:6; 17:17).

Pilate could not find a valid reason to kill Jesus and even his wife had sent word to him not to have anything to do with this man because she had suffered many things in dream because of Him (Mt. 27:19). So, Pilate did his best to let Jesus go. For instance, he hoped the Jews might let Jesus go if he gave them a choice of releasing Barabbas, a known criminal, or Jesus. Once again, we see the term Passover used to describe the feast of the unleavened bread. Proof for this comes from the other Gospel accounts, which state that this custom of releasing a prisoner occurs on the feast (Mt. 27:15; Mk: 15:6; Lk. 23:17). To Pilate's surprise, the Jews choose Barabbas to be released who was a robber and a murderer (Mk. 15:7).

I can imagine how relieved Barabbas was that Jesus was going to take his place and had given him another chance at life. The same thing can be said for all us because Jesus died on the cross and He bore the weight of our sin so we can have chance at eternal life. We only have one life to live, so we need to make the best of it and live it for God.

John 19

John 19:1 So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged *Him*.

Pilate found himself in a difficult political situation. Even though he knew Jesus was innocent, he allowed the Jewish people to influence him, which is why he ordered Jesus to be scourged. Scourging was normally done before a person was crucified, but Pilate was hoping the Jews would be satisfied with the scourging alone (Lk. 23:22). Scourging is one the most brutal punishments that has ever been invented.

Mr. Hester writes:

The scourge was a whip with several thongs, each loaded with acorn-shaped balls of lead, with sharp pieces of bone or spikes. Stripped of His clothes, His hands tied by a lictor, who plied these instruments of torture with severity almost to the point of the death of the prisoner. Each stroke cut into the quivering flesh, until the veins and sometimes the entrails were laid bare. Often the scourge struck the face and knocked out the eyes and teeth. Scourging almost always ended in fainting and sometimes even in death (H. I. Hester, *The Heart of the New Testament* (Liberty, Missouri: The William Jewell Press, 1962), p. 213.).

Mr. Lipscomb writes:

The scourge was made of rods or throngs with pieces of bone or lead fastened to one end. The condemned person received the blows while fastened to a post so as to have the back bent and the skin stretched. With the blows the back became raw and the blood spurted out. The punishment was so cruel that the condemned person very often succumbed to it immediately. (David Lipscomb, *A Commentary on the Gospel by John* (Nashville, Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Company, 1966).

It was not uncommon for people to die from being scourged, which explains why Jesus could not carry His own cross. Thinking about Jesus having to endure such a brutal beating makes me cringe and breaks my heart especially knowing He was innocent and endured it for us. Isaiah prophesied about this moment when he wrote, "But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5).

John 19:2 And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put *it* on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. ³ Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands.

We are given more details about this event in Matthew 27:27-31 and Mark 15:16-20. All of this was done to mock Jesus and to humiliate Him. We do not know for sure what kind of thorns was used because there were many varieties available. It could have been a prickly plant, or one with bigger thorns. The main purpose for all of this was to give Him a crown, a

robe, and a reed for His right hand so they could mock Him for being a king. They bowed down and worshipped Him and gave Him praises as a king, and they spat on Him, hit Him with their hands, and beat Him on the head with the reed. All this happened after He endured His scourging.

John 19:4 Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him." ⁵ Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And *Pilate* said to them, "Behold the Man!"

Once again, Pilate faces these blood thirsty Jews who wanted Jesus dead. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, and he was hoping if he presented Him before them scourged and dressed in this ridiculous attire that it would suffice. Pilate wanted them to see that Jesus has no power and that He had suffered enough.

John 19:6 Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify *Him*, crucify *Him!*" Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify *Him*, for I find no fault in Him." ⁷ The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

Pilate's plan did not work. These Jews had no compassion, and they would not be satisfied until Jesus was dead. They shouted "Crucify *Him*, crucify *Him!*" Even though Jesus knew He would have to endure all this, it had to be difficult hearing these Jews hatred toward Him. While He was suffering from is scourging, beatings, and the hatred of these Jews, He still loved them and was willing to die for them.

These Jews made several accusations about Jesus and why He should die, but the real reason came out. They wanted Him dead because "He made Himself the Son of God" (Mk. 14:62; Jn. 5:18; 10:30-33). If Jesus' claim was false, the Law of Moses states that He should be put to death:

Leviticus 24:16 'And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of *the Lord*, he shall be put to death.

Notice, the death was to be done by the Jews with stones, but Jesus was not guilty of this because He is the Son of God, and He had proven it over and over again.

John 19:8 Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, ⁹ and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?" ¹¹ Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

Pilate was supposed to be in control, but He was starting to feel powerless, and he was afraid. If a riot broke out, he would have some explaining to do to Caesar, and if he went against the Jews, his new friendship with Herod would be in jeopardy. He also had the warning from his wife about Jesus to think about as well (Mt. 27:19).

Once more, he goes into the Praetorium to question Jesus, but this time Jesus is silent as Isaiah prophesied He would be at times (Isa. 53:7). Jesus already told Pilate everything he needed to know, and it would be pointless for Him to say anything else. But Pilate is surprised by Jesus' silence. Apparently Pilate thought Jesus would do whatever He could to talk him out of putting Him to death. It is possible he was hoping Jesus might give him a valid reason not to succumb to this angry mob.

Pilate pronounces his authority over Jesus' life or death. Jesus tells Pilate the only reason he has any authority is because God had allowed him to have it. This same principle is taught throughout the Bible (Job 12:23; Dan. 5:17-28; Rom. 13:1).

Who delivered Jesus to Pilate? Was it Judas, Caiaphas, or the Jewish nation? Judas certainly had his part in handing Jesus over to Pilate, and so did Annas because he sent Jesus to Caiaphas who was the high priest that represented the Sanhedrin council. Caiaphas' decision made him guilty of this sin as well, but the chief priests and elders were also responsible for handing Him over (Mt. 27:1). So, I believe all of these people involved were guilty of a greater sin especially Caiaphas because he knew the Law of Moses and should have known that Jesus was the Messiah.

While sin in general will separate us from God and should be avoided, Jesus implies there are different levels of sin. We are not given many details about this, but Jesus also implies various degrees of punishment in hell:

- It will be more tolerable for Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom (Mt. 11:20-24; 10:15).
- The one who knows the master's will will be beaten with many stripes (Lk. 12:42-48).
- Those who trample on the Son of God deserve a worse punishment (Heb. 10:26-31).
- Those who know the truth and turn from it, their sinful state will be worse (2 Pet. 2:20-22).
- Those who teach will be judged with a stricter judgment (Jas. 3:1).

The greater the sin, the greater the punishment will be. While we do not know the specifics, one thing we do know is that sin separates us from God whether it is small or big.

John 19:12 From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar." ¹³ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The Pavement*, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

No one every found Jesus guilty of deserving death, and Pilate tried to find a way to release Him. Earlier, Pilate proclaimed Jesus' innocence before them all.

Matthew 27:24 When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather *that* a tumult was rising, he took water and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see *to it*."

These opposing Jews knew exactly how to back Pilate into a corner because they knew it was against Roman law for anyone to proclaim themselves a king. If someone did this, it was punishable by death. If Caesar found out that Pilate let a self-proclaimed king go, it would be the end of his career. So, Pilate sat in his official judgment seat and pronounced Jesus' death by crucifixion. Even though Pilate proclaimed His innocence and the Jews said let Jesus' blood be on us and our children (Mt. 27:25), Pilate was still guilty of allowing this innocent man to be murdered.

John 19:14 Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" ¹⁵ But they cried out, "Away with *Him*, away with *Him*! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" ¹⁶ Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led *Him* away.

Once again, we have a reference of the Passover being on that Friday and being the Preparation Day. Some might think this refers to preparing for the Passover meal, but as we examined John 18, the Passover can refer to lamb, the meal, or the feast of unleavened bread.

The Passover meal preparation took place the day before on Thursday, and at twilight (between the two evenings) the Pascal lamb would have been killed. That night, which would be the next day according to Jewish time, is when the Passover meal was eaten (Ex. 12). So, Friday was not the preparation for the Passover meal, it was the preparation for the feast of the unleavened bread in which all leaven had to be removed from their homes (Ex. 12).

Guy N. Woods explains:

The 'preparation day' was the day preceding the beginning of the seven days' feast of unleavened bread Friday. 'Passover' signifies the entire period of the feast, the first day of which was the sabbath (John 19:31,42; Mark 15:42; Matt. 27:62; Luke 23:54). The 'sixth hour' was 6 a.m., according to Roman reckoning which John followed, and is in complete harmony with Mark's statement (Mark 15:25), that Jesus was crucified at the third hour, by Jewish computation (which Mark followed), was 9 a.m. Under Roman law, sentence could not be pronounced earlier than 6 a.m.; it is probable that an hour or so elapsed before the court proceedings were completed and Jesus was delivered up to be crucified. The painful trip to Calvary was to occur before the crucifixion would begin (Guy N. Woods, A Commentary on the Gospel according to John (Nashville, Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Company, 1981), p. 397-398).

In verses 14 and 15 Pilate seems to be taunting these Jews by saying Jesus is their king and asking them if they are sure they want him to crucify their king. They did not like these

comments at all, so they said crucify Him. They even called Caesar their king. It is amazing how people will change their loyalties to bring about their own desires.

John 19:17 And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called *the Place of a Skull*, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, ¹⁸ where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.

John focuses on what Jesus did during this time, but the other accounts give us more information of what happened as Jesus made His way to Golgotha. Jesus started out carrying His cross, but at some point during His journey He could no longer bear it. So, a man named Simon was forced to carry the cross for Him by the Roman soldiers (Mk. 15:21; Lk. 23:26). While we do not know for sure, it is believed that Jesus was not carrying the entire cross, but the cross bar. It is estimated that the crossbar weighed around 75 lbs and was put across the shoulders of the victim with their arms stretched out and their hands tied. Next, Luke records:

Luke 23:27 And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. ²⁸ But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ "For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' ³⁰ "Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" ' ³¹ "For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

A great number of people were following Jesus as He made His way outside the city. The women that followed were beating their chest in grief and wailing for Jesus. Even though He was not strong enough to carry His cross, He managed to speak to these women and tell them not weep for Him. Instead, He wants them to weep for themselves and their children and even states that those who are barren and have no children will be blessed. The reason He is saying this is because Jerusalem would be destroyed and many Jews would lose their lives as He predicted in Matthew 24.

Of course His prediction came true because starting around A.D. 66, the Romans began to attack the Jews, and in A.D. 70, they surrounded the city of Jerusalem for about five months. According to Josephus, starvation became so bad in the city that a woman killed and ate her own baby (The War of the Jews 6.3.4).

Verse 31 is a proverbial saying, and I believe Mr. Coffman explains it best:

This proverbial expression has been variously interpreted; but it would appear that Farrar's explanation is correct: "If they act thus to me, the Innocent and the Holy, what shall be the fate of these, the guilty and the false?" There is here a dramatic prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, in which women especially would be deprived and suffer tribulations. The green tree represents the innocent and holy Saviour in the spirituality and vigor of his life; the dry tree represents the morally dead and sapless people, typified by the fig tree, blasted by his word, four days earlier.

Thus, by this prophecy, as Jesus left the city for the last time, he prophesied its doom no less than he did upon entering it (Luke 19:41f). Not even the prospect of immediate death took the Saviour's mind away from the awful penalties that would fall upon Jerusalem for his rejection. The fires of suffering consuming Jesus (the green tree) would be nothing to compare with the fires of destruction that would burn up the dead tree (Jerusalem, judicially and morally dead) (Coffman's commentary on Luke 23).

Jesus is taken to Golgotha, which is called the place of the Skull. No one knows with certainty where this place of execution took place, but many favor a hill located outside city that looks like a skull.

Before He was crucified, He was offered sour wine mingled with gall (Mt. 27:34). Gall is "a bitter substance made from wormwood, a plant yielding a bitter-tasting dark-green oil that is alcoholic in its effect" (Friberg Lexicon). Mark's account says it was mingled with myrrh (Mk. 15:23), which was "a transparent, brown, brittle, odorous substance, with bitter taste" (Fausset's Bible dictionary). Some believe that both of these accounts are talking about the same substance while others believe both gall and myrrh were mixed with the sour wine. One thing we know for sure is this drink was designed to help sedate a person so he would have some relief from the pain, but when Jesus tasted it, He refused to drink it. He would endure all the pain of His crucifixion with a clear mind.

Jesus was not alone that day because two unnamed thieves called evildoers by Luke (Lk. 23:32) were being crucified as well. These two thieves deserved the punishment they received, but Jesus was innocent. Isaiah prophesied that He would be "numbered with the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12). At 9 A.M., they crucified Him (Mk. 15:25).

The Romans were experts at crucifixion, and they executed in different ways using different crosses. According to Nelson's Bible Dictionary there were four different types of crosses used:

1. The Latin cross (shaped like a lower case "t").
 2. The St. Anthony's cross (shaped like a capital "T").
 3. The St. Andrew's cross (shaped like a capital "X").
 4. The so-called Greek cross (shaped like a plus sign).
- (Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary p. 315)

It is believed that Jesus was crucified with either the Latin cross or St. Anthony's cross. Since Matthew's account says that a written accusation was placed above Jesus' head (Mt. 27:37), this suggests the Latin cross was used because there had to be enough space for this sign to be attached that was written in three different languages (Jn. 19:20). Sometimes they would also have a crude seat about halfway down the cross, which was not designed for comfort, but to prolong the agony of the victim. Depending on the severity of the scourging the victim would live anywhere from three hours to three or four days. Notice what Mr. Hester says about this:

When the Romans conquered Palestine they continued the use of this form of punishment, but only in the case of slaves and the most vicious criminals.

Thus crucifixion carried with it a stigma. It was a part of the humiliation of Jesus that he should be made to suffer this particular form of death. It identified him with the lowest class of criminals. Crucifixion was an unspeakably horrible means of death. Cicero in condemning it said, "Let it never come near the body of a Roman citizen; nay, not even near his thoughts, or eyes, or ears." Victims of crucifixion were suspended on a cross placed well above the ground.... It consisted of two rough beams or logs nailed together near the top of the upright beam which was placed in the ground. The victim was usually stripped of all clothing, these garments falling to the lot of the executioners. The upright was placed securely in the earth standing some ten feet above the ground. The horizontal beam was placed on the ground, the victim was laid down with arms extended on this crossbar to which they were fastened with cords and afterward by nails driven through the palms. The bar was then raised to its appointed place near the top of the upright where it was securely fastened. The body of the victim was left suspended by the arms. The feet were then fastened to the upright by the use of long spikes driven through the balls of the feet. Thus suspended the victim was left to hang in physical agony until death mercifully released him from suffering ... Since no vital organs were affected the poor victim lingered in the throes of the most excruciating pain. Death came slowly; the victim often lived as long as two or three full days. Throbbing with pain, burned with fever and tortured by thirst, these unfortunate men often prayed for the relief which only death could furnish (H. I. Hester, *The Heart of the New Testament* p. 214-215 – *The Annual Denton Lectures – Studies in John Electronic Version*).

The first thing they would do to Jesus was throw Him down on His back and stretch His arms out on the cross beam. While this was happening dirt would be getting into open wounds on His back making his back hurt even more. Based on a crucified body dating around the first century that was found in an ossuary near Jerusalem, the nails that were used were about 5 to 7 inches long, and they were tapered iron spikes with a square shaft about 3/8 inch across (*On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ – William D. Edwards, MD*).

They would drive these tapered spikes through hands of Jesus. While we do not know if they ran the spike through His palm or His wrist, both were considered part of the hand. Based on the evidence we have today, the spike was probably driven through the wrist because the ligaments are strong enough to hold the weight of a person, but a spike through the palm would almost always tear through the hand.

A spike driven through the wrist would cause even more intense pain to the victim. According to a physician:

Furthermore, the driven nail would crush or sever the rather large sensorimotor median nerve. The stimulated nerve would produce excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms. Although the severed median nerve would result in paralysis of a portion of the hand, ischemic contractures and impalement of various ligaments by the iron spike might

produce a claw like grasp (On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ – William D. Edwards, MD).

Next, Jesus would have been hoisted up on the cross and His feet would be nailed to the cross. There are different opinions on how His feet were nailed. Some believe His feet were nailed to the sides of the cross, while others believe they were nailed together on the front of the cross with one nail. There are also two possibilities of how they could have nailed the two feet together. The legs could have been together with the knees bent to one side, or the legs could have been in an open position with the legs spread out with the knees bent.

The only archeological evidence we have of a first century man being crucified was discovered by Vassilios Tzaferis in 1968. Kyle Butt writes:

In 1968, Vassilios Tzaferis found the first indisputable remains of a crucifixion victim. The victim's skeleton had been placed in an ossuary that "was typical of those used by Jews in the Holy Land between the end of the second century B.C. and the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70" (McRay, 1991, p. 204). From an analysis of the skeletal remains of the victim, osteologists and other medical professionals from the Hadassah Medical School in Jerusalem were able to determine that the victim was a male between the approximate ages of 24 and 28 who was about 5 feet 6 inches tall. Based on the inscription of the ossuary, his name seems to have been "Yehohanan, the son of Hagakol," although the last word of the description is still disputed (p. 204). The most significant piece of the victim's skeleton is his right heel bone. A large spike-like nail had been hammered through the right heel. Between the head of the nail and the heel bone, several fragments of olive wood were found lodged. Randall Price, in his book, *The Stones Cry Out*, suggested that the nail apparently hit a knot in the olive stake upon which this man was crucified, causing the nail and heel to be removed together, due to the difficulty of removing the nail by itself (1997, p. 309) (Apologetic Press Archaeology and the New Testament).

There should be no doubt that people were crucified with nails during the first century. Once He was crucified, He would experience excruciating pain no matter what position He was in.

Dr. C. Truman Davis notes:

As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists excruciating pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain -- the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As He pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet.

At this point, as the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these

cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by his arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, he is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen. It was undoubtedly during these periods that He uttered the seven short sentences recorded (A Physician Testifies About the Crucifixion - The Review of the NEWS, April 14, 1976).

If the blood loss from the scourging did not ultimately kill the victim, he would either die from suffocation, exhaustion or even heart failure. I also want to point out that Psalm 22 prophecies around 20 different things that happened to Jesus during this time. Now that we know more about the physical details of our Lord's death, let's continue examining our text.

¹⁹ Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁰ Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. ²¹ Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews." ' "
²² Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

Pilate had this inscription written as the crime Jesus was being punished for. When we examine all four Gospels, we discover the title read, "THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." This is another instance where we have to look at all four Gospels to get the complete story because they each tell it from a different perspective. Most likely, Pilate came up with this title to chide these Jews, but these words were true.

According to verse 20, Golgotha was near the city, so everyone that passed by could see Jesus and the two thieves. The Romans did this on purpose so everyone would know that crimes will be punished. Jesus' crime was written in three different languages. According to F.F. Bruce:

Hebrew (or Aramaic) was the vernacular of the Palestinian Jews; Latin was the official language of the Roman army; Greek was the common medium of culture and conversation in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire (F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel & Epistles of John*, p. 368).

The chief priests were not happy with this title, and they wanted Pilate to change it to Jesus claiming to be the king of the Jews, but Pilate would not change it.

John 19:23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. ²⁴ They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: "They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldiers did these things.

When a person was crucified, his clothes became the soldiers property, so they took Jesus outer and inner garment. The outer garment was divided among them, but His inner garment was seamless, which indicates that it was an expensive garment. If they had torn it would lose it value, so they cast lots for it. Unaware to the soldiers, they were fulfilling prophecy (Ps. 22:18).

Before we examine our next verses, which records one of Jesus' saying from the cross, I want to summarize the events that take place on the cross up to Jesus' last saying:

- Jesus is crucified at 9 A.M.
- Jesus says, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Lk. 23:34).
- The soldiers take Jesus' garments and cast lots for His inner garment (Jn. 19:23-24).
- As people walked by they were wagging their heads and mocking Jesus with the chief priest, scribes, and elders (Mt. 27:39-43).
- The soldiers and thieves mocked Him as well (Mt. 27:44; Lk. 23:36-39).
- One of the thieves rebukes the other one's mocking and asks Jesus to remember him in His kingdom (Lk. 23:39-42).
- Jesus says, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Lk. 23:43).
- Jesus says to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother" (Jn. 19:26-27)!
- At 12 P.M. there was darkness over the whole land, and it remained that way until 3 P.M. (Mk. 15:33).
- About 3 P.M. Jesus says, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mt. 27:46).
- Jesus says, "I thirst" (Jn. 19:28).
- Jesus is offered sour wine, and He receives it and says, "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30).
- Finally, Jesus says, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit'" (Lk. 23:46), and Jesus breathed His last breath.

John 19:25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.

Only John mentions Jesus' mother being at the cross. Jesus' acquaintances and the women who followed Him from Galilee were at the cross as well (Lk. 23:49), but four specific women are indentified. Trying to identify two of these women is challenging because the information we have is vague. While I cannot be dogmatic about it, I will show the most logical approach to identifying these women.

Jn. 19:25	Sister of Jesus' mother	Mary the wife of Clopas	Mary Magdalene
Mk. 15:40	Salome	Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses	Mary Magdalene
Mt. 27:56	Mother of Zebedee's sons	Mary the mother of James and Joses	Mary Magdalene
Mk. 16:1	Salome	Mary the mother of James	Mary Magdalene

Based on our chart it easy to see that Mary Magdalene, whom Jesus cast out seven demons (Mk. 16:9), was one of the women there, and we know that Jesus' mother was there.

In the middle of our chart John talks about Mary the wife of Clopas. "According to tradition, Clopas was the same person as Alphaeus, the father of James the Less and of Joses (Matt. 10:3; Mark 15:40)" (Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary, p. 284). So, I believe a strong case can be made that John is talking about Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses.

Now we are left with the sister of Jesus' mother. When we compare Mk. 15:40 to Mt. 27:56, we can make a strong case that Salome is the mother of Zebedee's sons James and John. If John is staying consistent with these other accounts, then Salome is the sister of Jesus' mother, which means James and John are Jesus' first cousins. Since we have no hard evidence that John's account is only mentioning the same women as the other accounts I cannot be dogmatic about this. More women were there than these four, so it is possible the sister of Mary was some other woman than Salome, but it is also possible that she is her sister.

Next, Jesus says His 3rd saying from the cross, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" When Jesus called His mother woman it was not done in a disrespectful way, it was simply how He addressed her (Jn. 2:4). Please notice that Jesus did not call her mother of God or make her the mother of all Christians as the Catholic Church has done.

Jesus committed the care of His mother to John when He said, "Behold your mother!" If Salome was Mary's sister, then Jesus has asked His cousin to take care of her. What about Jesus' brothers? How come they were not asked to take care of their mother? We can only speculate because the Bible does not tell us. Since His brothers did not believe in Him, perhaps Jesus wanted to leave His mother in the care of someone that did. Whatever the reason, John accepted this responsibility.

John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!"²⁹ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth.

Jesus is getting closer to having relief from the severe pain He was enduring. Since death was close, He knew He had accomplished God's will. At this point in the crucifixion, He would

have been suffering from high fever and would be extremely thirsty, so He says, "I thirst!" Once again, Jesus was fulfilling Scripture (Ps. 22:15; Ps. 69:21).

This vessel of sour wine, which was a common drink among the Roman soldiers, was probably there for the soldiers to drink as they watched these men suffer. Based on the original Greek language this was either sour wine or vinegar and water mixed together. Someone ran up to the vessel and filled a sponge and put it on the end of a hyssop.

Hyssop is a species of marjoram and a member of the mint family. Hyssop was an aromatic shrub under one meter (three feet) tall with clusters of yellow flowers. It grew in rocky crevices and was cultivated on terraced walls. ... (1 Kin.4:33). Bunches of hyssop were used to sprinkle blood on the doorposts in Egypt (Ex. 12:22), and in purification ceremonies (Lev. 14:4, 6, 51-52). David mentioned it as an instrument of inner cleansing (Ps. 51:7) (Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary p. 1005).

Since the Hyssop grows less than three feet high it gives us an idea of how high Jesus was on the cross. His mouth could not be reached without the aid of a stick. Both Matthew and Mark call it a reed (Mt. 27:48; Mk. 15:36), but John tells us what kind of reed it was.

John 19:30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Jesus receives the sour wine and says, "It is finished!" From the time Jesus was born in Bethlehem to this time on the cross, He fulfilled hundreds of prophecies. He did everything He could at this point to bring about our salvation and to fulfill the prophecies about Him. Jesus had finished His work on the earth. After He was raised from the dead He told His disciples:

Luke 24:44 "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ "And you are witnesses of these things.

Jesus' perfect obedience to God's will caused Him to accomplish everything He was supposed to do, and we benefit from His perfection because His sacrifice made it possible for us to receive the forgiveness of sin. Before Jesus died, He also said with a loud voice, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit. Having said this, He breathed His last" (Lk. 23:46).

In this final saying, we can see that Jesus was in control of His life. As He said in:

John 10:17 "Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. ¹⁸ "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power

to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

Jesus did not have to have to die. If He wanted to, He could have called on all the angels of heaven to come and rescue Him, but He did not because He wanted to die for us. He even knew when He would die because as soon as He made this last statement, His spirit left His body, and He put His faith in the Father to take care of His spirit. When our spirit leaves our body and returns back to the Lord, we become physically dead (Ecc. 12:7). When Jesus breathed His last breath, He bowed His Head.

Matthew's account gives us more details of what happened next:

Matthew 27:51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.⁵⁴ So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Try to imagine what these people saw that day. It had been dark outside since 12 P.M., and now an earthquake happens and the rocks are split open. In the temple, the veil that separates the holy place from holy of holies, which is where the Ark of the Covenant used to be, was torn from top to bottom (Ex. 26:31-33). If man had torn it, it would have been torn from the bottom to the top. The tearing of this veil symbolized that God had made Himself available to all, and that the old covenant was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14; Eph 2:14-15). All of these events proved that Jesus death on the cross was not an ordinary one, and it even caused the centurion and his soldiers to agree that He truly was the Son of God. In Luke's account the centurion also said, "Certainly this was a righteous man!" (Lk. 23:47).

Matthew also mentions how the graves of the saints were opened by the earthquake that day and how they were raised from the dead. However, they did not come out of their graves until after Jesus' resurrection, and they went into the city and appeared to many.

John 19:31 Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day*, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.³² Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him.³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.³⁵ And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.³⁶ For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not *one* of His bones shall be broken."³⁷ And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

As I have already shown in this study, the Preparation Day was not the Preparation Day for the Passover, but for the feast of the unleavened bread. Since the feast of unleavened bread would begin on the Sabbath and it included a holy convocation (sacred gathering) (Ex. 12:16), it was considered a high or an important day. While the Jews had no problem breaking the Law of Moses to put Jesus to death, they still wanted to keep part of it because it was against the Law of Moses to keep a person on the cross overnight (Deut. 21:23).

When a person's legs were broken, they could no longer push themselves up to get air, so it would not take long for them to die by suffocation. Pilate sent some soldiers to break their legs. They broke the two thieves' legs first, but when they got to Jesus, He was already dead, so they did not break His legs. Just as the Passover lamb's bones were not to be broken (Num. 9:12), neither was Jesus' bones broken because He is our Passover (1 Cor. 5:7). Once again, this fulfilled a prophecy about Jesus (Ps. 34:20).

One of the soldiers wanted to make sure that Jesus was dead, so he pierced Him in the side and out came water and blood. This event is only recorded by John, and it also fulfills a prophecy about Jesus (Zech. 12:10). Now we cannot say dogmatically what internal organs the soldier pierced or which side he pierced Him in. However, there are two possibilities that could produce what looked like water and blood.

1. It is possible they pierced His bladder, which would cause urine and blood to flow out. While this would produce the effect of water and blood it seems unlikely he pierced His bladder since he would have to pierce Him with a downward motion, which would have been difficult with Jesus being elevated on the cross.
2. Others believe he pierced Him through the ribs and broke the lining around the wall of the heart.

Mr. Halley notes:

Some medical authorities have said that in the case of heart rupture, and in that case only, the blood collects in the pericardium, the lining around the wall of the heart, and divides into a sort of bloody clot and a watery serum. If this is a fact, then the actual immediate physical cause of Jesus' death was heart rupture. Under intense pain, and the pressure of his wildly raging blood, his heart burst open (Halley's Bible Handbook, p.549).

This watery fluid that would have come out of the wound first could have been a combination of serous pleural which is found in the membrane around the lungs, and pericardial fluid, which is secreted by the serous membrane on the pericardious sac on the outside of the heart (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pericardial_fluid).

This second possibility is the more logical to me because it seems natural that the soldier would thrust upwards into Jesus side. These two possibilities give us a medical explanation of how the flow of blood and water from Jesus' wound could happen. No matter where the soldier pierced Jesus' side it proves the Jesus was dead. When Pilate found out that Jesus was already dead is surprised him (Mk. 15:44). John served as an eyewitness for all of this.

John 19:38 After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus.

We can learn more details about this event by examining the four Gospels (Mt. 27:57ff; Mk. 15:42ff; Lk. 23:50ff; Jn. 19:38ff). They teach that Joseph was a rich man, a prominent member of Sanhedrin council, and was considered a good and just man. He secretly became a disciple of Jesus, and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. He did not agree with the council's decision to put Jesus to death. He was from Arimathea, which was a city of the Jews.

Joseph was scared, but he found the courage to go before Pilate to request Jesus' body. At first, Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead, so he asked a centurion if it was true. Once it was confirmed that Jesus was dead, Pilate gave Joseph permission to take the body. The Synoptic Gospels only mention Joseph taking the body from the cross and wrapping the body in a clean fine linen cloth, which was an expensive cloth, but John's account gives more detail.

³⁹ And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰ Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews who had went to Jesus during the night wanting to know more about Him (Jn. 3). We find him defending Jesus in John 7:50-51, and now he is helping to bury Him. Since he bought almost a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, it indicates that he was a wealthy man as well. Jesus burial with all these spices was similar to that of a king (2 Chr. 16:14). Let's take a closer look at Myrrh:

Myrrh – An extract from a stiff-branched tree with white flowers and plum-like fruit. After myrrh was extracted from the wood, it soon hardened and was valued as an article of trade. It was used ... in anointing oil (Ex. 30:23), and was used as perfume (Ps. 45:8; Prov. 7:17; Song 3:6), in purification rites for women (Esth. 2:12), as a gift for the infant Jesus (Matt. 2:11), and in embalming (John 19:39). According to the Gospel of Mark (15:23), the drink offered to Jesus before His crucifixion was “wine mingled with myrrh.” (Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary, p. 2006).

The other accounts say that Jesus was wrapped in fine linen *sidon* (Mt. 27:59; Mk. 15:46; Lk. 23:53), but John says His body was bound in strips of linen *othonion* with the spices. Some might view this as a contradiction, but it is not because both things happened. The Synoptic Gospels tell us that Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in a clean fine linen cloth when He was taken down from the cross. John's account tells us that they took the body, which means they left that place. We know that they took Jesus to the tomb, but how they took Him we do not know. Most likely they carried His body on a bier. When or where they prepared His body per the custom of the Jews is unknown, but as some point they started wrapping His body with strips of linen. We do not know if they already had some premade strips of linen or if they made these strips out of the linen cloth they initial wrapped Him in. In either case,

they would wrap His body from His toes to His neck with His arms secured to the side of his body. As they wrapped Him, they would pour the mixture of spices in the fold of the bandages, which would become hard and cause the bandages to stick together.

Mr. Gower states:

Exceptionally, a body was covered in spices and in paste, and these were tied to the body by layers of white “roller bandage.” The paste hardened and impregnated the bandages until a hard preservative mound or cocoon was formed about the body (The New Manners & Customs of Bible Times, p.73).

After the body was wrapped up, they would cover the face with a cloth handkerchief. Lazarus was buried in a similar way (Jn. 11:44). If the original linen cloth that wrapped Jesus’ body was not torn into strips, then it was probably discarded, but what happened to it is unknown. If it was used as an additional covering over the strips of linen, the Bible does not mention it. It only mentions the strips of linen *othonion* and the cloth handkerchief being His grave clothes (Lk. 24:12; Jn. 20:5-7).

⁴¹ Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴² So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

They did not have much time to prepare and bury Jesus because the Sabbath was about to start around 6 P.M. So, they took Jesus to a garden that was close by where Joseph had a new tomb (Mt. 27:59). This event fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, “And they made His grave with the wicked -- But with the rich at His death” (Isa. 53:9).

If Joseph had not requested the body of Jesus, He would have been buried with the two thieves, which is what is meant by “they made His grave with the wicked.” It was unusual that Pilate let someone other than a family member take Jesus’ body, but he did, and in doing so, the second part of Isaiah’s prophecy came to pass “But with the rich at His death.”

Since they were rushed with the preparation of Jesus’ body, we learn that the women who followed Him from Galilee planned to come back the next day to add more spices and fragrant oils (Lk. 23:55). Matthew gives us some additional information:

Matthew 27:59 When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. ⁶¹ And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

While there were other women there (Lk. 23:55), including a woman named Joanna (Lk. 24:10), Matthew only mentions two women named Mary. Not only did they see where the tomb was, they saw how Jesus’ body was laid (Mk. 15:47; Lk. 23:55). Our verse says that Joseph rolled the stone over the entrance of the tomb. Since Nicodemus was with him, it is possible that he helped him with the stone because these stones were heavy and hard to

move. The stone itself was usually round and it would be pushed into a dug out slot in front of the tomb. Once it was in place it would be even more difficult to move, which is why the women wondered who would roll the very large stone out of the way for them on Sunday morning (Mk. 16:1-4).

Matthew 27:62 On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, ⁶³ saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴ "Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him *away*, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make *it* as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

We are not told when on the next day they made their request to Pilate, but it was probably early because they would not want Jesus' disciples to have a chance to steal His body and fool the people, so Pilate granted them a guard. A guard was a group of Roman soldiers, and they secured the tomb and sealed it.

Mr. Leeper writes:

The sealing would have been accomplished by placing a large piece of clay at the joint of the stone and the wall. An official insignia of some type would have been pressed into the soft clay leaving an imprint which could not be duplicated. The clay would then have hardened, providing a seal that would be broken if the stone were moved.

Sealing the tomb would serve a three fold purpose. First, there would be evidence if anyone moved the stone. This would prevent someone from removing the body and then claiming he had been raised. Second, it would provide a guard of Roman soldiers to ensure no one could tamper with the tomb. Third, because it was a criminal offense to break a Roman seal, it would serve as an effective deterrent to anyone inclined to steal the body. Getting caught in the attempt would mean time in prison if not worse (Wayne D. Leeper, *Prelude to Glory*, p. 171).

Even though these were trained Roman soldiers that knew they would be severely punished or put to death if they failed their post, but they would not be able to stop Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

John 20

John 20:1 Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

The first day of the week is Sunday. After the Sabbath was over, the women including Mary Magdalene went back to the tomb to add more spices and fragrant oils to Jesus' body (Lk. 23:56). They had no idea He was resurrected. John's account focuses on Mary Magdalene and does not mention the other women, but in verse 2, Mary says "we do not know," which includes the other women mentioned by the other Gospels.

Those who oppose the Bible claim there are many contradictions between the Gospels, but none exist. When we put together the events recorded by the four Gospels, we gain a greater understanding of what happened. While one account may only mention one woman, another account may mention multiple women. Each account gives us additional information without causing a contradiction.

While I cannot be dogmatic about every detail of that day, we will examine the most logical timeline of that day and the appearances of Jesus during the 40 days before His ascension to heaven (Acts 1:3) from all four Gospels. In addition to the four Gospels, I will also use the information found in Acts 1 and 1 Corinthians 15:5-9.

All four accounts agree that it was the first day of the week. While John only mentions Mary Magdalene, the other accounts mention the other women that were there including Mary the mother of James, Salome and Joanna (Mt. 28:1; Mk 16:1; Lk. 24:1, 10; Jn. 20:1).

John's account says that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb while it was still dark (Jn. 20:1). Luke says it was early in the morning (Lk. 24:1). Matthew says the day was beginning to dawn as they made their way to the tomb (Mt. 28:1). Mark tells us it was early in the morning, but when they arrived at the tomb the sun had risen (Mk. 16:2). Some says this is contradiction, but it is not. These four accounts teach us that they started out early in the morning while it was still dark and as they made their way to the tomb the day begin to dawn. When they made it to the tomb the sun had risen.

Before the women arrived at the tomb Matthew writes:

Matthew 28:2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. ³ His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴ And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

These Roman soldiers were scared to death by this event and rightly so. They shook and became lifeless. We do not know how long these men remained there, but we do know that some of them left quickly and made their way into the city and told the chief priest what

happened (Mt. 28:11). When they heard this news, they assembled the elders and decided to pay the soldiers to lie about what happened (Mt. 28:12). The soldiers agreed to say they fell asleep and that Jesus' disciples stole the body during the night (Mt. 28:13).

The angel did not roll the stone back for Jesus to escape; it was done so the women and others could see that He was raised from the dead. If the angel had not rolled back the stone and the soldiers were left in place, the women would not have been allowed into the tomb by them because it was sealed (Mt. 27:66).

The women wondered who would roll the stone away for them, but when they arrived at the tomb they found the very large stone already rolled away, which proves the soldiers' experience happened before they arrived (Mk. 16:3-4; Lk. 24:2; Jn 20:1).

What happens next cannot be put into a specific order, but we know what happened. These women went into the open tomb, but they did not find the body of Jesus. Matthew and Mark tells us there was an angel, described as a young man with a long white robe, sitting on the right side (Mt. 28:5; Mk. 16:5), but Luke's account tells us there were two angels that stood by them in shining garments (Lk 24:4). Again, some view this as a contradiction but it is not. Neither Matthew nor Mark says that there was only one angel, so Luke is giving us the complete picture by telling us there were two angels. Matthew and Mark says the angel was sitting, but that does not mean he remained sitting. He could have stood up with the other angel and stood by the women when he said the things recorded in Luke's account. So, there is no contradiction.

Notice what the angel said from Luke's account:

Luke 24:5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ "He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷ "saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' " ⁸ And they remembered His words.

Matthew's and Mark's accounts are almost identical, but Mark's account has a few more details:

Mark 16:6 But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. ⁷ "But go, tell His disciples -- and Peter -- that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you." (See Mt. 28:5-7).

These women were the first eyewitnesses that Jesus' body was gone, and the first to start realizing that Jesus was raised from the dead. When the angels instructed them they listened, and they fled from the tomb and were amazed, full of joy, and fear (Mt. 28:8; Mk. 16:8). Mark's account says the women said nothing to anyone, which some say is a contradiction since the other accounts say they told the disciples what happened. All Mark is saying is that they did not tell anyone on their way to the disciples, and after Jesus encouraged them not to be afraid (Mt. 28:10), they found the disciples and told them about their experience.

One thing that is hard to determine is if Mary Magdalene heard the angel's instructions or not. Luke's account implies that she did (Lk. 24:9-11). If she did hear the angel's words, John's account indicates that she did not understand what he was talking about because she still believed that someone moved Jesus' body to another location. Whether she heard the words of the angels or she left as soon as she saw the body was gone I do not know for sure, but John's account indicates that Mary Magdalene ran off by herself and found Peter and presumably John.

John 20:2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

We must also consider Luke's account:

Luke 24:10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary *the mother* of James, and the other *women* with them, who told these things to the apostles. ¹¹ And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.

Since Luke's account is vague, we cannot determine if all the apostles were together when Mary spoke to them or if it was just Peter and John because this verse does not necessarily mean that all these women stayed together or that they told all the apostles this information while they were in one place. However, we do learn that they did not believe what they were told, but Peter and John were curious enough to investigate the matter themselves.

John 20:3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. ⁴ So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵ And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*, ⁷ and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. ⁹ For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

Luke also records an abbreviated account of this, but he does not mention the other disciple or that Peter went into the tomb (Lk. 24:12). It is believed the other disciple is John. John outran Peter to the tomb, but he stopped and did not go in. He stooped down and saw where Jesus was laid and saw the linen cloths lying there. When Peter finally made it to the tomb, he also stooped down and saw the linen clothes, but he went into the tomb and took a closer look. Not only did he see the undisturbed linen cloths, he saw the handkerchief or facecloth folded in a place by itself. Since the grave clothes were left in an orderly fashion it offers strong proof that Jesus' body was not stolen.

If the disciples had taken the body, they would not have taken the time to remove Jesus' grave clothes or take the time to fold the facecloth in its own place. Remember these strips of linen would have been stuck together by the spices and aloes they used, so it would have

taken some time get them off, and they would not have taken the time to reposition the grave clothes to look undisturbed.

If grave robbers came to the tomb, they would not have stolen the body and left behind the linen cloths or folded the handkerchief because the linen clothes were the only valuables in the tomb. Also, whoever came to the tomb would have to deal with the Roman soldiers.

Some even claim that Jesus was just passed out and woke up in the tomb and walked away. There are many problems with this view because it would have been difficult if not impossible for Him to get out of His grave clothes by Himself. Even if Jesus managed to get out of His grave clothes in His weakened state, He would not have taken the time to put His grave clothes back into place to make them look undisturbed.

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, Lazarus managed to make his way out of his tomb with his grave clothes on, but he still had to have assistance in getting them off (Jn. 11:44). He also did not open the sealed tomb himself because it would be difficult if not impossible for one man to be able to move the stone from inside the tomb.

After everything Jesus went through, He would not have enough strength to push this very large stone (Mk. 16:4) out the way from the inside. Even the saints that were raised from the dead after His resurrection had their tombs opened for them by the earthquake that happened at Jesus' crucifixion (Mt. 27:51-53). If Jesus managed to open the tomb, He would still have to contend with the Romans guards. The only logical explanation is that Jesus' body was raised up through the grave clothes.

There are two main thoughts on what is meant by the handkerchief or facecloth being folded together in a place by itself.

First, it could mean that Jesus took the handkerchief and folded it Himself putting it in its own place to show that He was finished with it.

Second, it could also mean the handkerchief remained wrapped up like it was around Jesus' face. Since the handkerchief and the linen cloths were not attached to each other, the handkerchief could be considered as being in a place by itself not with the linen cloths.

The Interpreter's Bible notes:

The meaning of the Greek word applied to the napkin seems here to be "wound around." As the evangelist regards the sight as a faith-creating phenomenon for the other disciple, the interpretation that thinks of the linen cloths as merely having been "rolled up" is too jejune for the context. The explanation that best fits the Johannine view of the mode of the Resurrection is that the body had been swiftly dematerialized, leaving the swathing cloths as they were, with the cloth that had been wrapped around the head still lying on the slightly raised ledge where the head had been laid, and keeping its annular shape (The Interpreter's Bible, Abingdon Press, p. 790).

After Peter went in the tomb, John followed. When John saw the linen cloths and the handkerchief up close it caused him to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. Since

these graves clothes were able to make Peter and John believe it tells us that the linen cloths and possibly the handkerchief were exactly in the same place undisturbed. If the linen cloths had been unwrapped or cut, it could have meant that someone came and took Jesus' body, which would have left doubt in Peter and John's mind. So, Peter and John's belief offers more proof that Jesus' grave clothes were undisturbed. One thing we know for sure is that Jesus' body was gone.

Verse 9 teaches us that they did not know the Scripture that Jesus would be raised from the dead (Ps. 16:10) even though He told them many times that He would be (Lk. 9:22; 18:33; 24:7). This miracle was enough to convince Peter and John that He had been raised from the dead, but how strong this belief was I do not know. After they finished examining the grave clothes, they left the tomb and went back to their homes. Luke tells us that Peter was "marveling to himself at what happened" (Lk. 24:12). Peter was amazed at what he saw and he wanted to know more about it.

John 20:11 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³ Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

By the time Mary makes it back to the tomb, apparently Peter and John have already left. She was still distressed about Jesus' body being gone, which is why she was weeping. She stooped down to look in the tomb and she saw two angels dressed in white. One was sitting where Jesus' head was and the other was sitting where Jesus' feet were. These angels were not there when Peter and John were at the tomb, or at least there not mentioned, but they appear to Mary and ask her why she is weeping.

Mary's response tells us that she did not understand that Jesus had been raised from the dead. She was still convinced that someone came and took Jesus' body to another location.

John 20:14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.' " ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

Mark's account confirms that Mary Magdalene was the first to see Jesus alive from the dead (Mk. 16:9). When she turned around from looking in the tomb, Jesus was standing before her. He also asked her why she was weeping, and He asked her whom she was seeking. She thought this man was the gardener, so she asked him if He had taken the body of Jesus.

Some have wondered why she did not recognize Jesus. While we cannot know for sure, there are several legitimate reasons she did not recognize Him at first. First, she thought He was dead and would not have expected to see Him alive, so it did not register in her mind that it was Him. Second, she was crying and grieving and would not have paid much attention to the details of His face, and the tears in her eyes would also impede her vision. Third, verse 16 indicates that she had turned away from Jesus because when Jesus said, "Mary!" John says that Mary "turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher)."

Whatever it was that kept her from recognizing Jesus, when He said her name, she knew it was Him. Verse 17 indicates that Mary grabbed Jesus with a tight grip, but Jesus told her not to cling to Him because had not ascended to the Father yet. There are several opinions about Jesus' statement, but I believe all Jesus is saying is that He wants Mary to let Him go because He is not ascending to the Father yet, and He wants her to go tell His disciples that He will ascend to the Father, which is referring to His ascension recorded in Acts 1:9.

Mary obeys the Lord and tells the disciples that she saw the Lord, and she told them the things He spoke to her, but Mark's account says they did not believe her (Mk. 16:10-11). Both Mark and John show that Mary was by herself when she saw Jesus, but earlier she was at the tomb with other women who also left to tell the disciples what happened. All these events with Mary Magdalene happened while these other women were seeking out the disciples to tell them what the angel had told them. Sometime after Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, He appeared to these women as recorded by Matthew:

Matthew 28:9 And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go *and* tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

Jesus tells them to rejoice. This was an occasion to rejoice since Jesus was alive from the dead. These women held Him by the feet and worshipped Him, and He did not rebuke them because Jesus is God. At this point, they had not told anyone about their experience, but Jesus encourages them not to be afraid and to go and tell the brethren to go to Galilee because they would see Him there. Both Luke and Mark tell us that the apostles did not believe these women or Mary Magdalene when they told them about their experience (Lk. 24:9-11; Mk. 16:10-11).

Matthew nor John's account records what happens next, and Mark's account only gives a brief account of it (Mk. 16:12-13). However, Luke's account gives us a lot of detail:

Luke 24:13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they talked together of all these things which had happened. ¹⁵ So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, "What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

Later that day, two men were traveling to Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. To pass the time as they walked, they talked about everything that happened over the last few days. Although not mentioned anywhere in Scripture, I am sure some were talking about those dead saints that were raised from the dead that day who appeared to many in Jerusalem (Mt. 27:53).

While these two men discussed the events of the day, Jesus starts walking with them. Luke says their eyes were restrained and Mark says Jesus appeared to them in another form (Mk. 16:12), which indicates their eyes were made to see Jesus in a different form. In this instance, Jesus is hiding His identity, but He will make His identity known shortly. Even though Jesus knew what they were talking about, He asked them about their conversation.

Luke 24:18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"¹⁹ And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,²⁰ "and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.²¹ "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.²² "Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.²³ "When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.²⁴ "And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

Cleopas is the only man identified. The other disciple's identity is a mystery. Some have speculated that Luke or Peter was the other disciple, but this cannot be because Luke was Gentile and would never claim the Jewish leaders as being his ruler (20), and verse 33 says that these two men went to find the eleven, which means this other man could not be Peter.

Cleopas is shocked that anyone would not know about the events of the last days, but Jesus asked them, "What things?" They start telling Him about Jesus and how the chief priests and their rulers condemned Him to death and crucified Him. They had no problem indentifying who caused Jesus to be crucified.

In verse 21, we learn that these men thought that Jesus was going to restore Israel like it was under King David and liberate them from the Romans. Like Jesus' apostles, they did not understand that He came to establish a spiritual kingdom not a physical one.

In verses 22-23, they tell Him how the women went to the tomb and told the disciples about their encounter with the angels. They tell Him how some of them went to the tomb and confirmed what the women said, but they did not see Jesus.

Luke 24:25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!²⁶ "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.²⁸ Then they

drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹ But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³² And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

These men thought they were speaking to someone who was oblivious to what happened to Jesus, but He tells them they are foolish and slow of heart in believing what the prophets have said about Jesus. For example, Isaiah 53 talks about the suffering that Christ would go through and how God would prolong His days. There are over 300 prophecies about Jesus throughout the Old Testament, but these men had not believed everything the prophets had said. As they walked together, Jesus started with Moses and He used the other prophets from the Scriptures to teach them what they said about Christ. The same prophets and Scriptures were used during the growth of the church as well (Acts 2:14ff; 3:11ff; 7; 13:16ff), which proves that the Old Testament is important to the Christian today.

As Paul said:

Galatians 3:24 Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Romans 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

When they got close to the village, Jesus finished expounding on the Scriptures, and He was going to continue His journey, but these two men constrained or compelled Him to stay with them because the day was almost over, so He did.

According to verse 30 some time has passed and Jesus was sitting at table with them. He prays over the food, breaks the bread, and gives it to them. We do not know if Jesus ate anything Himself at this time. When He did this, their eyes were no longer constrained, and they could see that Jesus was before them, but He vanished from their sight.

In verse 32, they discussed how their hearts were burning when Jesus expounded the Scriptures to them earlier, which indicates they were surprised they did not know that Jesus was the one talking to them. We do not have to see Jesus with our eyes to believe because God's Word will reveal Him to us, and it tells us everything we need to know about Him and what we need to do to be saved (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:3).

Luke 24:33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

The day was almost over when they made it to their village, and some time passed before they ate and saw Jesus. At that moment, they got up from the table and returned to Jerusalem. If they walked as fast they could without jogging or running it would have taken them at least two hours to make the seven mile journey.

The apostles were gathered with other disciples behind closed doors because they feared the Jews (Jn. 20:19). These two men found them and told them how Jesus walked with them on the road to Emmaus and how they knew it was Him after the breaking of the bread. They also claim that Simon had seen Him. Most believe this is talking about Peter because Paul says, "He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve" (1 Cor. 15:5). While this could be some other Simon, it is probably Peter since it fits Paul's timeline. If this Simon is not Peter, according to Paul, Peter still saw Jesus some time that day before this gathering. According to Mark, the disciples did not believe these two men (Mk. 16:13).

What happens next is recorded by Luke and John (Lk. 24:36ff; Jn. 20:19ff). While there are some similarities, each account gives us additional information, so we will take a look at both accounts. I will put these events in the most logical order to me.

John 20:19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace *be* with you."

Luke 24:36 is an abbreviated version of this verse, but it does add that these two men from Emmaus were still talking when Jesus made His miraculous appearance in the closed room. Many believe that John is using Roman time and the term evening is referring to 6 to 9 P.M., which would make sense based on the timeline of the two men from Emmaus since the day was almost over when they made their way back into Jerusalem. Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you."

Luke 24:37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. ³⁸ And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

This sudden appearance of Jesus terrified and frightened them, and they thought He might be a spirit. Jesus could read their hearts like an open book, which is why He asked them these questions in verse 38. They still doubted even though they saw Jesus standing before them.

John 20:20 When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

Luke 24:39 "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." ⁴⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

Jesus wants them to understand that He is not a spirit, but flesh and bone, so He shows them His hands, feet, and His side. He wants them to touch Him, so they can know for sure

that He is flesh and bone. Even though this made them glad, they still doubted what they saw as Luke states:

Luke 24:41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?"⁴² So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.⁴³ And He took *it* and ate in their presence.

Jesus was doing everything He could to prove to them that He was not a spirit including eating some fish and honeycomb. From this point it becomes difficult to know what Jesus did or said next because Luke's account from verse 44 to the end of the chapter includes events that happened up to the 40th day after Jesus' resurrection. Before we look at Luke's account, notice what John's account says.

John 20:21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."²² And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Once again, Jesus tells them "Peace to you!" He tells them, He is sending them out just as the Father sent Him out, which is John's version of The Great Commission. Each Gospel account teaches The Great Commission, and it was repeated by Jesus at different times as we will see.

When Jesus breathed on them and told them to receive the Holy Spirit, what does that mean? Some believe this was symbolic or done in anticipation of them receiving the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, or it could refer to how Jesus used the Holy Spirit to open their understanding to the Scriptures as Luke says:

Luke 24:44 Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me."⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,⁴⁷ "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.⁴⁸ "And you are witnesses of these things.

Most likely Luke's account is still talking about the same event as John, I do not know for sure. The reason I say this is because verses 49-53 talk about what happened on the 40th day after Jesus' resurrection and beyond. In these verses, the apostles are told to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the promise from the Father of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and they record the ascension of Jesus to heaven (Acts 1:4ff).

Whatever is meant by receiving the Holy Spirit, we know that it not referring to the promise of the Holy Spirit because that happened on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and Jesus had to be in heaven (Jn. 16:7). Even though Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures in Luke's account, their understanding seems to be limited to the reason Jesus had to suffer, die, and how He would be raised from the dead on the third day. The reason I say this is

because they did not understand about the spiritual kingdom after this happened (Acts 1:6). We also learn from verse 44 that Jesus considered the Law of Moses, the books about the prophets, and the Psalms as being inspired by God.

When we look at Mark's account it has the same difficulty as Luke's account because it briefly talks about what happened before Jesus ascension and the ascension itself (Mk. 16:19-20). After Mark tells us about the two men from Emmaus telling the disciples what they saw, Mark writes:

Mark 16:14 Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. ¹⁵ And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

While I cannot be certain, these events seem to happen during this first meeting as well. However, some say that verse 14 happened during this first meeting, but verses 15 -18 happened at a later time. It also possible this happened during the next Sunday when Thomas was present.

John 20:23 "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

This passage has been abused by the Roman Catholic Church. They teach that Jesus was giving His apostles the ability to forgive sins, and they in turn passed this ability down to the Roman Catholic priesthood, which is why they say they can pardon your sins. While this works well for their false doctrine, this passage is not teaching that the apostles could forgive or retain sins because only God could do that. Instead, it means that they would proclaim what was necessary for the forgiveness of sins by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit just like they did at the birth of the church (Acts 2:38). So, the forgiveness they offered for sins would be in agreement with God's Word. We can also see this truth from the grammar of this passage.

Wayne Jackson notes:

The Greek tenses of John 20:23 make it clear that the apostles were authorized only to *announce* the terms of forgiveness, and that upon the basis of God's previous appointment. Literally, the text suggests: "Those whose sins you forgive, *have already been forgiven*; those whose sins you do not forgive, *have not already been forgiven*." The first verbs in the two clauses are aorist tense forms, while the second verbs are in the perfect tense. The perfect tense verbs imply an abiding state which commenced before the action of the aorists. In other words, the apostles (and others since that time) were only

authorized to *declare* forgiveness consistent with what the Lord *had already determined* (Wayne Jackson, Can Man Forgive Sins?, christiancourier.com).

John 20:24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Only John reveals that not all 11 apostles were there when Jesus appeared to them because Thomas was not there. At some point, the disciples try to convince Thomas that they had seen Jesus, but their words were not good enough for Thomas. He said he would only be convinced if He could see and touch Jesus where the nails pierced His hands, and if he could put his hand into the wound on Jesus' side.

John 20:26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" ²⁷ Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸ And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed."

Most believe the eight days mentioned here are Sunday to Sunday. This gathering behind closed doors is similar to the first gathering except Thomas is there. Jesus appears miraculously again and makes the same statement, "Peace to you!" Thomas was getting his wish. Jesus was standing before Him and was willing to let Thomas touch Him. Jesus tells him to stop being an unbeliever.

We are not told if Thomas touched Jesus or not, but if He followed Jesus' instructions, he did. Whether he just looked or touched, this experience caused Thomas to believe, and he affirmed that Jesus is God when he said, "My Lord and my God!" When Thomas said this, Jesus did not correct him because He was right, Jesus is God.

While it is great that Thomas believed, he had to see Jesus to bring about his belief, but Jesus pronounces a blessing on all those who will believe in Him without physically seeing Him. The Word of God provides us with all the proof we need to know that Jesus is the Son of God, and when we believe, we will be blessed.

John 20:30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Again, everything we need to know to have faith in God is found in His Word. Sometime between the 8th and 40th day after Jesus resurrection, the disciples went to Galilee to meet Jesus at an appointed time on a mountain (Mt. 28:16). Before that meeting took place, seven of the disciples decided to go fishing in the Sea of Tiberias, and Jesus appeared to them (Jn. 21). After that appearance, they met with Jesus on the mountain.

Matthew 28:16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. ¹⁷ When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

When they saw Jesus, they worshipped Him, and He did not rebuke them for their worship because He is God. Even though His disciples had seen many proofs of His resurrection, some still doubted. The Great Commission is given again, but this time it was done on top of a mountain.

Paul gives us some additional information not found in the Gospels:

1 Cor. 15:6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

Some speculate that He was seen by 500 brethren at once at Galilee since it was the place the angels told the women He would be, and because He had appointed a certain place and time He would appear. He was also seen by James, who some believe was His brother. Finally, He was seen by all the apostles, which may refer to the last meeting Jesus had with all the apostles at His ascension (Acts 1:9).

Even after Jesus' ascension, He appeared to a few more people: Stephen (Acts 7:54-60), Paul (1 Cor. 15:8), and John (Rev. 1:9-20).

It was challenging, but we have examined a logical timeline of the 40 days Jesus was on the earth after His resurrection (Acts 1:3) and beyond.

Summary of Jesus' appearances:

1. Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20:14-18).
2. Other women on their way to tell the disciples (Mt. 28:9-10).
3. Simon (Lk. 24:33-35; 1 Cor. 15:5).
4. Two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Mk.16:12-13; Lk. 24:13-32).
5. Ten apostles, Thomas was not there (*Mk. 16:14*; Lk.24:36-43; Jn. 20:19-25).
6. Eleven apostles, Thomas is there (*Mk.16:14*; Jn. 20:26-29).
7. Seven apostles at the Sea of Tiberias (Jn. 21:1-24).
8. Eleven apostles on a mountain in Galilee (Mt. 28:16-20).
9. Over five hundred brethren at once (1 Cor. 15:6).
10. James (1 Cor. 15:7).
11. All the apostles at the ascension (Mk.16:19-20; Lk. 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-11).

After His ascension:

1. Stephen (Acts 7:54-60).
2. Paul (1 Cor. 15:8).
3. John (Rev. 1:9-20).

John 21

John 21:1 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed *Himself*:² Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the *sons* of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.³ Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.

The first appearances of Jesus occurred around Jerusalem, but His appearances recorded in this chapter happened sometime after the 8th day of His resurrection. The apostles had made their way to Galilee because that is where the disciples were told to meet Jesus on a mountain at appointed time (Mt. 28:16ff). Before that appointed time came, seven of the apostles with two being unnamed decided to go fishing when Peter said, "I am going fishing".

Many speculations have been made about this incident. Some think the apostles were trying to go back to their old jobs of fishing, while others think they were just trying to catch some fish to eat or sell. Whatever their reason for fishing that night it turned out to be a big disappointment because they did not catch anything.

John 21:4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."⁶ And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find *some*." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.⁷ Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on *his* outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.⁸ But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish.

The sun was just coming up when Jesus was standing on the shore, but the disciples could not see that it was Him. There are several reasons they could not have recognized him.

1. The sun was just coming up so it would be difficult to recognize someone under that condition.
2. They were not expecting Jesus to be there.
3. They were about 100 yards from the shore.

Jesus affectionately calls His disciples children and them if they had any food, and they answered "no". I have no doubt that Jesus already knew the answer to His question. He then instructs them to throw their net on the right side of the boat so they can catch some fish. Some like to discount this event by saying that Jesus was able to see the group of fish from where He was standing as any person could do. However, this is not true because just like His disciples were too far away to recognize Him it would be difficult if not impossible for any person to see a group of fish under the water from 100 yards away. At best a person might see some fish jump out of the water from that distance.

While John is known for its seven miracles of Jesus, as I have pointed out before there are other events recorded that could certainly qualify for being a miracle and this one of them. These men knew how to fish yet they caught nothing all-night, but Jesus causes them to catch 153 fish in one throwing. These fish made the net so heavy they could not haul it into their boat. Instead, they had to drag it behind their boat to the shore.

In verse 7, this miraculous catch caused John to realize that it was the Lord on the shore and he told Peter this. I do not know what made John come to this realization, but I speculate that he was reminded of when Jesus did this before back when He first asked them to give up their fishing job to follow Him. We read about this in:

Luke 5:4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." ⁶ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. ⁷ So they signaled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" ⁹ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; ¹⁰ and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." ¹¹ So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

When John told Peter that it was the Lord, Peter grabbed his outer garment and put it back on, and He jumped in the water and swam to shore. Peter could not wait to be next to Jesus. The other disciples made their way back to the shore in their small boat pulling all those fish with them.

John 21:9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught." ¹¹ Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.

We have no idea what was going through their heads, but it is possible that when Peter saw the fire of coals it reminded him of how he was warming himself around the fire as Jesus was being tried by the Jews and how he later denied Jesus three times. Seeing the fish and bread may have reminded the disciples of how Jesus fed thousands of people on two different occasions with a little bread and fish.

Jesus asks them to bring some of the fish they just caught, and Peter dragged the net of large fish onto the shore, which indicates that Peter was strong man. We know these fish were heavy because John was surprised the net had not broken. While some numbers in the Bible have a special meaning, I do not believe there is a special meaning to the number 153.

Instead, I believe the details of this event are there to show that this event was recorded by an eyewitness.

John 21:12 Jesus said to them, "Come *and* eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?" -- knowing that it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. ¹⁴ This *is* now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Not only did Jesus provide the fish for them to eat, He also cooked it and served it. Even though these men knew this was the Lord, it seems they still had some doubt since John said that none of them "dared ask Him, "Who are You?""

Some say there is contradiction in verse 14 because John said, "This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples." It is true that Jesus had appeared more than three times before this appearance. However, John does not say this was Jesus third appearance, but his third appearance to his disciples. Apparently, John was referring to Jesus appearing to His apostles as a group for a third time. The first time would have been that night on the first day of the week when Thomas was missing. The second would have been the next Sunday when Thomas was present, and His appearance on the shore would be the third, so there is no contradiction.

John 21:15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." ¹⁶ He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.

After they ate their breakfast, Jesus asks Peter three questions and makes three statements. In these three questions, we have two different types of love being mentioned from the Greek.

1. Agapao - to have a warm regard for and interest in another, cherish, have affection for, love (BDAG Lexicon).
2. Fileo - to have a special interest in someone or someth., freq. with focus on close association, have affection for, like, consider someone a friend (BDAG Lexicon).

In the first two questions, Jesus uses the Greek word *agapao*, but in the last question He uses *fileo*. Peter answers all three questions using the Greek word *fileo*. Since we have two different forms of love being used here some have said this means something significant. However, we also find two different Greek words being used by Peter for the word "know" when he answered "You know that I love You." Two different Greek words are used for "feed" and "sheep" when Jesus said, "Feed My lambs" and "Feed My sheep." So, if we are going to make the different types of love in these three verses significant, then we need to make these other differing Greek words significant as well. I like the explanation given by Gene Burgett:

F. F. Bruce maintains that the change in the word for love is merely a stylistic variation, and questions whether "we are intended to see such distinct significance." Bruce offers several reasons for his position. First, though John wrote in Greek, it is highly probable that Jesus and Peter spoke in Aramaic where there is no "comparable variation of vocabulary" like the [agapao] and [fileo] variation we are examining. Second, in the Septuagint the Greek words [agapao] and [fileo] are used interchangeably to translate the same Hebrew word. Third, Bruce cites examples where John himself seemed to use the two Greek words for love interchangeably. One notable example he offers is the phrase "the disciple whom Jesus loved." [Agapao] is used in John 13:23; 19:26; 21:7,20; but [fileo] is used in John 20:2. Bruce concludes : "It is precarious, then, to press a distinction between the two synonyms here" (Denton Lectureship on John 21).

I think Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him three times because Peter denied Jesus three times even though he claimed he would not. Whatever the reason for asking this question three times, we learn that it caused Peter to be full of sorrow.

When Jesus asked Peter "do you love Me more than these?" there are two different thoughts on what Jesus is talking about. "These" could be referring to the fish they caught, and some have suggested that Jesus wanted to know if he loved Him more than his previous job of fishing. Others believe Jesus is referring to the disciples and wants to know if Peter loves Him more than them. Whatever Jesus is referring to, one thing we know for sure, He wants to know if Peter loves Him first over everything and everyone else, which we must all do if we want to be pleasing to God (Mt. 10:37).

Jesus also tells Peter to feed or tend the sheep or lambs, which means He wants Peter to teach the disciples about God's Word and take care of them like a shepherd. Some have suggested that the lambs refer to the young disciples and the sheep to the older, but this is just speculation. This responsibility would fall on all the apostles and future spiritual leaders within the Lord's body. Paul emphasized this idea to the Elders from Ephesus:

Acts 20:28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

The elders in every congregation must oversee the flock and make sure they are being fed spiritually with God's truth.

John 21:18 "Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." ¹⁹ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

After Peter confesses three times that he loves Jesus, Jesus prophecies about Peter's death. He tells him that when he was young he girded himself, which means he took his outer garment and drew up around his waist so he could move freely, and he could walk anywhere he wanted to because no one hindered him, but when he gets old, this will not be the case. When Jesus said, "You will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish," most believe He was signifying that Peter would be bound and led to his crucifixion.

Mr. Coffman notes:

Concerning Peter's death, tradition places it at Rome in the reign of Nero, with the detail that he was crucified head downward after his protest that he was unworthy to be crucified in an upright position like Jesus. As Lanctantius wrote of Nero:

He it was who first persecuted the servants of God. He crucified Peter and slew Paul. St. Peter, as a Jew, could thus be dealt with; St. Paul, as a Roman citizen, was beheaded. Nor did he (Nero) escape with impunity; for God looked on the affliction of his people; and therefore the tyrant, bereaved of his authority, and precipitated from the height of empire, suddenly disappeared, and even the burial place of that noxious wild beast was nowhere to be seen (Coffman's Commentary, John 21).

Even though Peter would die a cruel death in his old age, he could take comfort from what Jesus said because his death would glorify God, which means that Peter would die for the cause of Christ.

When Jesus said, "Follow Me," some say He meant spiritually unto his death, or it could simply mean Jesus wanted him to follow Him, which seems to be the case based on the next verses:

John 21:20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" ²¹ Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what *about* this man?" ²² Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me." ²³ Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?"

Verse 20 indicates that Jesus and Peter were walking together and the disciple whom Jesus loved was following behind them, which most believe is the apostle John. Since Jesus predicted Peter's death, he wants to know about John's death, but Jesus did not answer his question. Instead, He teaches Peter that it does not matter what John's fate will be because his fate will not affect how Peter will live his life, and He tells Peter, "You follow Me." In other words, He is telling Peter not to worry about the fate of others, live your life by faith and continue to follow me. This is great advice for every Christian.

Some had distorted what Jesus said about John, and they thought John would not die until Jesus came back again, but John dispels this rumor by saying that Jesus did not say that he would not die, “but, If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?”

John 21:24 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. ²⁵ And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

Verse 24 clearly shows that the Gospel of John was written by one of the apostles who witnessed these events. As I have said throughout this study, most believe that John is the author.

In the final verse of the great Gospel, John is letting his readers know that he has only recorded part of what Jesus did while He was on the earth, but the things John wrote are sufficient to prove that Jesus is the Son of God. Now it is up to those who study the evidence presented in His Gospel to either believe or not to believe. What a great ending to the Gospel of John. Amen.