

# The Gospel According to John



Georgia School of Preaching  
& Biblical Studies

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The Gospel According to John  
Georgia School of Preaching

Georgia School of Preaching Class Syllabus

**Purpose of this class:**

The Gospel according to John provides an amazingly brief account of the life of Jesus Christ. This class is designed to help students understand the background and teaching of this book, so that they may believe and have eternal life.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Students will learn the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ as He is presented in the book of John and in the fulfillment of prophecy.
2. Students will learn how important a role the words of Jesus and truth play in the Christian life.
3. Students will understand the role of the Spirit as a person in the Godhead, as a Helper, and as the One who imparts the words of the Father to the apostles.

**Course Requirements:**

Students are required to attend class. Students who miss classes are responsible for reading the distributed material.

A term paper of five to eight pages is due on any of the topics suggested below. Papers should conform to MLA or Turabian standards. Students must cite at least eight sources in addition to the Bible.

Grades are determined by class attendance, exams, and the term paper.

Classes

1. Introduction
2. Chapters 1-2
3. Chapters 3-4
4. Chapters 5-6
5. Chapters 7-8
6. Chapters 9-10
7. Chapters 11-12
8. Chapters 13-14
9. Chapters 15-16
10. Chapters 17-18
11. Chapters 19-20
12. Chapter 21 and Appendix

Recommended Reading:

F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Eerdmans, 1983).

D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Eerdmans, 1991).

Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* in *The New Century Bible Commentary* (Eerdmans, 1972).

J. W. McGarvey, *The Fourfold Gospel* (Standard, n.d.).  
Bruce McLarty, *Journey of Faith* (Resource Publications, 1997).  
J. Ramsey Michaels, *John* in New International Biblical Commentary (Hendrickson, 1989).  
Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* in New International Commentary on the New Testament (Eerdmans, 1971, reprint 1992).  
R. V. G. Tasker, *John* in Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (IVP and Eerdmans, 1960).  
ESV Study Bible, Crossway.  
NASB Study Bible, Zondervan.

#### Suggested topics for term papers for the Gospel According to John

- The authorship of the Gospel of John
- The Deity of Jesus in the Gospel of John
- The Nature of Truth in John
- The New Birth in John 3
- How Jesus Describes Himself in the Gospel of John
- Burial Customs in the Gospel of John
- The *Pericope Adulterae* in the Gospel of John (7:53-8:11)
- Jesus and Peter in the Gospel of John
- What Day of the Week was Jesus Crucified?

## Introduction to the Gospel According to John

As with the other three gospel accounts, every ancient manuscript that bears a title attributes this book to John with the title, “According to John.” The book itself claims the author is the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20,24). While the apostle John was prominent in the early church, his name fails to appear anywhere in this book.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, John’s name appears twenty times in the synoptic gospels. This absence would be natural if he wrote it but hard to explain otherwise.

Early writers such as Irenaeus, Theophilus of Antioch, and Tertullian say John wrote this gospel, and there is no reason to consider any other author. It is obvious that the author is a Palestinian Jew due to his extensive knowledge of the Old Testament and his precision with geographical details. Furthermore, the author was an eyewitness due to the specifics he uses to describe persons, places and times.

John is never explicitly named in the Gospel of John. He is indirectly mentioned in John 21:2, which says that “the sons of Zebedee” were together with Peter and some of the other disciples at the lake of Tiberias (i.e. the Sea of Galilee). However, one unnamed disciple is presented as closest to Jesus:

- He leans on Jesus’ chest at the Last Supper (John 13:23)
- He acts as an intermediary between Peter and Jesus (John 13:24–25)
- He is entrusted with the care of Jesus’ mother (John 19:26–27)
- He reaches the empty tomb before any other disciple (John 20:4)
- He is the first to believe in the resurrection (John 20:8)
- He recognizes the risen Lord and identifies him for Peter (John 21:7)

He is called “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (e.g., in John 21:20). This beloved disciple is Peter’s companion. He is sometimes called “the other disciple” (John 18:15; 20:2).<sup>2</sup>

John, the son of Zebedee, was among the first of the apostles chosen by Jesus (Matt. 4:18-22). John was close to Jesus in that he accompanied him to the Mount of Transfiguration and to Gethsemane. John leaned on Jesus’ breast at the Last Supper (13:25), took Mary into his home at the Cross (19:26), ran to the tomb after the resurrection (20:10), and saw the resurrected Lord (21:1-25). Only John could have met all these qualifications as the disciple “whom Jesus loved.”

Reinforcing early church tradition are significant internal characteristics of the gospel. While the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) identify the apostle John by name approximately twenty times (including parallels), he is not directly mentioned by name in the gospel of John. Instead, the author prefers to identify himself as the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). The absence of any mention of John’s name directly is remarkable when one considers the important part played by

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Licona said, “It was not unusual for ancient authors to leave their names out of their works. Plutarch was a Greek author who penned more than 50 known biographies during the late first to early second centuries. Plutarch’s name is absent from all of them. It is the tradition that has been passed down through the centuries that gives us information pertaining to who wrote these biographies. And no one questions that Plutarch is the author.” Licona, “Bart Ehrman’s Red Herrings and the Resurrection of Jesus,” in *Come Let Us Reason: New Essays in Christian Apologetics*, edited by Craig, William Lane; Copan, Paul (2012-03-01). (Kindle Locations 3182-3185). B&H Publishing. Kindle Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Nässelqvist, D. (2012, 2013, 2014). John the Apostle. In J. D. Barry, L. Wentz, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair-Wolcott, R. Klippenstein, D. Bomar, ... D. R. Brown (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

other named disciples in this gospel. Yet, the recurring designation of himself as the disciple “whom Jesus loved,” a deliberate avoidance by John of his personal name, reflects his humility and celebrates his relation to his Lord Jesus. No mention of his name was necessary since his original readers clearly understood that he was the gospel’s author. Also, through a process of elimination based primarily on analyzing the material in chaps. 20, 21, this disciple “whom Jesus loved” narrows down to the apostle John (e.g., 21:24; cf. 21:2). Since the gospel’s author is exacting in mentioning the names of other characters in the book, if the author had been someone other than John the apostle, he would not have omitted John’s name.<sup>3</sup>

John wrote four books of the New Testament in addition to the Gospel: 1, 2, 3 John and Revelation. John lived in Ephesus after the fall of Jerusalem and was exiled to the Isle of Patmos during the reign of Domitian (81-96 A.D.). He was allowed to return from the exile by the next emperor Nerva and died in the days of Trajan.

John’s gospel account is remarkably unique. More than 90% of its contents have no parallel in the other gospel accounts. Clement of Alexandria called it the “spiritual gospel” in 170 A.D. John is written in very simple but profound language and contains several lengthy discourses of Jesus. Interestingly, John has no parables.

John states his purpose for writing explicitly in 20:30-31, “truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 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. This passage contains three dominant themes that run throughout the book: signs, belief, and life. Other key themes are love, kingdom and truth.

John tells of seven signs Jesus performed that demonstrate he was indeed the Son of God. Each sign shows his power over this world.

1. Changing water to wine at the wedding in Cana (2:1-11). Power over substance.
2. Healing the royal official’s son (4:43-54). Power over distance.
3. Healing a lame man at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-15). Power over time.
4. Feeding of the five thousand (6:1-15). Power over quantity.
5. Walking on the water (6:16-24). Power over natural law.
6. Healing of a blind man (9:13-16). Power over disease.
7. Raising Lazarus from the dead (10:40-11:44). Power over death.

Two other significant signs appear in the book. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead (20:14-20) and another great catch of fish (21:6). The text also tells of many other miracles (cf. 2:23; 6:2).

John conveys the identity and nature of Jesus in seven discourses beginning with the words “I am” (6:35; 8:12; [9:5]; 10:7; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:11).

1. I am the bread of life (6:35)
2. I am the light of the world (8:12)
3. I am the gate (door) for the sheep (10:7)
4. I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14)
5. I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life (14:6)
7. I am the true vine (15:1, 5)
8. I am a king (18:37)

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<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, J. (2003). *The MacArthur Bible handbook* (pp. 338–339). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

The credibility of Jesus is supported by seven witnesses: John the Baptist, 1:28-30; the works of Jesus, 5:36; the Father, 5:37-38; the Scriptures, 5:39-47; Jesus Himself, 8:13-14; the Holy Spirit, 15:26; and the apostles, 15:27; 19:35; 21:24.

There are two views regarding the dating of John's book. The traditional view argues that John wrote this book toward the end of the first century (85 AD or later). This view finds support from Clement of Alexandria (170 AD), who said that John wrote his gospel to supplement the accounts found in the first three (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 6.14.7). This means that John must have written later than Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Some scholars have recently suggested that John wrote as early as the 50s and no later than 70 AD, because of his statement in 5:2. John says there "is" a pool by the sheep gate rather than "was" such a gate, demanding a date earlier than 70 AD when Jerusalem was destroyed. Since John elsewhere has used the present tense when speaking of the past, this argument is not altogether convincing.

According to Epiphanius, John wrote the Gospel at the age of ninety years; according to pseudographic traditions [Pseudo-Hippolytus *De XII. App.*], he wrote it on Patmos, and afterwards published it at Ephesus.

John's gospel account "shows a close connection with Aramaic sources. The writer often uses Aramaic words—for example, *Cephas* (1:42), *Gabbatha* (19:13), or *Rabboni* (20:16), and then explains them for the benefit of Greek readers. Even the meaning of the word Messiah is given a careful explanation in 1:41.<sup>4</sup>

John wrote to evangelize, to strengthen new converts, and to combat the growing heretical teaching. He wrote to supplement the other gospel accounts, realizing that at his advanced age he would not long be able to encourage the brethren personally.

There are extensive references to the concerns and interests of second-generation Christians who were not eyewitnesses of the events described (20:26–31), with specific mentions of persecution (15:18–25; 16:1–4), mission (14:12–14; 15:26–27; 17:15–19), the need for continued faithfulness (15:1–11; 17:11–12), unity and love within the community (15:12–17; 17:20–23), as well as extensive teaching throughout chapters 14–16 on the role of the Holy Spirit in the ongoing life of the church.<sup>5</sup>

The earliest fragment of any New Testament passage is P<sup>52</sup>, a papyrus containing John 18:31-33 and 37-38. It is dated (100-125 AD). The Papyrus Egerton 2, which is dated about the same time, also contains passages from John and the synoptic gospels. From the number of quotations in the early church writings, it is clear that John was used widely soon after its composition.

The Deity of Jesus is emphasized in a number of passages: "the Word was God," 1:1; cf. 5:17-18; "before Abraham was born, I am," 8:58; "I and the Father are one," 10:30,33; "he who has seen Me has seen the Father," 14:9; and "my Lord and my God," 20:28.

**Unquestionably, the gospel of John** stands as a proclamation of the divinity of Jesus Christ. John reveals the nature of Jesus in his first sentence: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1:1). Whereas the gospel of Mark focuses on Jesus as the Son of Man, the message of John is that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (20:31). Notably, Jesus asserts Himself as God in seven explicit

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<sup>4</sup> Drane, J. W. (2000). *Introducing the New Testament* (Completely rev. and updated., p. 213). Oxford: Lion Publishing plc.

<sup>5</sup> Drane, J. W. (2000). *Introducing the New Testament* (Completely rev. and updated., p. 215). Oxford: Lion Publishing plc.

statements designating Himself as “I am” (6:35; 8:12; 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5).<sup>6</sup>

At the same time the humanity of Jesus is also emphasized: “and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,” 1:14; attended a wedding, 2:1-11; “knew what was in man,” 2:25; was weary and thirsty, 4:6-7; 19:28; was sympathetic, 11:35; was troubled, 12:27; was loving, 13:1; died and was buried, 19:30, 40-42.

In the book Jesus is called

- Word, 1:1,14; God, 1:1;
- only begotten (unique, only or beloved), 3:16;
- Jesus Christ, 1:17; Christ, 1:20;
- prophet, 1:21, 25;
- Lord, 1:23;
- Lamb of God, 1:29;
- Son of God, 1:34, 49;
- Messiah, 1:41;
- “Him of whom Moses and the Prophets wrote,” 1:45;
- King of Israel, 1:49;
- Son of Man, 1:51;
- Jesus, 2:1;
- Son, 3:35;
- Savior of the world, 4:42;
- Holy One of God, 6:69;
- shepherd, 10:16;
- He who comes into the world, 11:27;
- Jesus the Nazarene, 18:5;
- man, 18:29-30;
- the King of the Jews, 18:34;
- “my Lord and my God,” 20:28.

It is interesting to note things important in the life of Jesus but not mentioned in John. The list includes his birth stories, exorcism of demons, publicans, the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord’s Supper, prayer at Gethsemane, his trial before Caiphas, and his ascension from Mt. Olivet. Jesus never speaks the words “Gentile” or “grace” in this book.

There are three crisis events in John’s Gospel (see outline):

- (1) 6:66-71, when the multitudes leave Him after wanting to make Him King;
- (2) 12:12-50, when the people refuse to believe on Him; and
- (3) 19:13-22, when they crucify Him.

In the first crisis, they want to make Him King, yet they leave Him; in the second, they hail Him as King, yet reject Him; and in the third, they cry out, “We have no King but Caesar” (19:15). He is the way, but they will not walk with Him; the truth, but they will not believe Him; the life, but they kill Him.

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<sup>6</sup> MacArthur, J. (2003). *The MacArthur Bible handbook* (p. 341). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

## THEOLOGICAL THEMES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

**Jesus' deity.** *John wants us to realize that Jesus Christ truly is one with the Father (1:1, 14), who in His own Person reveals the Father (1:18), and is Himself the only avenue through whom God can be approached (14:6). Jesus' claim of deity is clearly seen in John 5:18, 9:35–37, 17:5, and other passages.*

**Atonement.** *John understands Jesus' death as a sacrifice made to pay for mankind's sins. As the Lamb of God, He takes away the sins of the world (1:29), is lifted up on the Cross that those who believe might have eternal life (3:14–15), and gives His life for the world (6:51; 10:10).*

**Eternal life.** *John sees life as more than mere earthly existence, but as a fulfillment of human destiny that extends on through eternity. As Creator Jesus is the source of all life (1:4). As Savior Jesus gives the gift of eternal life to all believers (3:15–16; 10:10; 20:31). “And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (17:3).*

**Belief/Faith.** *Faith is our response to Jesus, a response marked by trust in Him and by trusting ourselves to Him.<sup>7</sup> John speaks of believing, commonly using the verb “believe” rather than the noun “faith.”*

The teaching in John tends to present abstract themes such as light, life, love, truth, abiding, which recur at intervals throughout the book.<sup>8</sup>

Miracles Unique to John's Gospel		
Water to Wine, 2:1–11	Official's Son Healed, 4:46–52	Paralytic Healed, 5:1–13
Blind Man Healed, 9:1–12	Lazarus Raised, 11:38–44	Great Catch of Fish, 21:1–14 <sup>9</sup>

### Outline of John

- I. Prologue 1:1-18**
- II. Beginning of Ministry of Jesus 1:19-51**
  - 1. Ministry of John the Baptist (1:19-34)
  - 2. Jesus meets some early disciples (1:35-51)
- III. Jesus' Signs and Discourses 2:1-11:57**
  - 1. Water changed to wine (2:1-11)
  - 2. Cleansing the Temple (2:12-25)

<sup>7</sup> Richards, L. O. (1991). *The Bible reader's companion* (electronic ed., p. 675). Wheaton: Victor Books.

<sup>8</sup> Guthrie, D. (1996). *New Testament Introduction* (4th rev. ed., p. 250). Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

<sup>9</sup> Barry, J. D., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Mangum, D., & Whitehead, M. M. (2012). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Jn 21:3). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



3. Discourse with Nicodemus (3:1-21)
4. John's Testimony of the Son (3:22-4:3)
5. The Woman at the Well (4:4-42)
6. Healing of the Official's son (4:43-54)
7. The Healing at Bethesda (5:1-17)
8. Jesus' Equality with God (5:18-24)
9. The Resurrection (5:25-29)
10. Witnesses of Jesus (5:30-47)
11. Feeding of the Five Thousand (6:1-14)
12. Jesus Walks on Water (6:15-25)
13. Discourse on the Bread of Life (6:26-71)
14. Jesus' Teaching at the Feast of Booths (7:1-53)
15. The Adulterous Woman (8:1-11)
16. Discourse on Light of the World (8:12-30)
17. Discourse to Believing Jews (8:31-59)
18. Healing of Man Born Blind (9:1-41)
19. Discourse on the Good Shepherd (10:1-21)
20. Jesus Asserts His Deity as Feast of Dedication (10:22-42)
21. The Raising of Lazarus (11:1-57)

#### **IV. The Final Week and Crucifixion      12:1-19:42**

1. Mary Anoints Jesus (12:1-11)
2. The Triumphal Entry (12:12-19)
3. Greeks Seek Jesus (12:20-26)
4. The Jews Fail to Believe (12:27-50)
5. Discourse at the Last Supper (13:1-14:31)
6. Discourse on the way to Gethsemane (15:1-16:33)
7. Jesus' Prayer (17:1-26)
8. Judas' Betrayal and the Arrest (18:1-12)
9. The Trials of Jesus (18:13-19:15)
10. The Crucifixion and Burial (19:16-42)

#### **V. The Resurrection      20:1-29**

1. Peter and John visit the empty tomb (20:1-10)
2. Mary Magdalene sees the Risen Jesus (20:11-18)
3. Appearances to the apostles (20:19-29)

#### **VI. John's Purpose for Writing      20:30-31**

#### **VII. Epilogue      21:1-25**

1. The appearance at Galilee (21:1-14)
2. The challenge to Peter (21:15-17)
3. The future of Peter and John (21:18-23)
4. The testimony of John (21:24,25)

## Chapter One

### Prologue (1:1-18)

**The Word:** Greek *ho logos*—1:1, 14; 2:22; 5:24; 8:43; 15:3; 17:14, 17—used to speak of the Creator of the universe, even the creative energy that generated the universe. In the OT, the term *logos* may also be connected with wisdom as a personification or attribute of God (see Prov. 8). In both Jewish and Greek usage, the *Logos* was associated with the idea of beginnings—the world began with the Word (Gen. 1:3). John specifically used this word to identify the Son of God as divine. Jesus is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15), and the very substance of God (Heb. 1:3). In the Godhead, the Son functions as the revelation of God and is God in reality.<sup>10</sup>

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him” (Jn 1:6–7). “Witness” is an important concept found in John. The noun is found 14 times and the verb, “to testify,” is found 33 times, more often than anywhere else in the NT.

The writer’s purpose is to bring people to believe in Jesus Christ (20:31). John uses the Greek verb “*pisteuo*,” to “believe” 98 times. The word “believe” is often a “package” word that refers to the entire response of man toward God. A true believer is not simply one who mentally accepts and agrees with the Lord and His teaching. He is one who welcomes or receives the message of the Lord. We receive the Lord “in the sense of recognizing his authority J 1:12; 5:43a, b; 13:20.”<sup>11</sup> A faith acceptable to the Lord includes willingness to confess (12:42-43), penitence, and an obedient love for the Lord (14:15, 23-24).

The word *kosmos* (world) is found 78 times in this book.

### Beginning of the Ministry of Jesus (1:19-51)

#### Christ’s Names Prove He Is God’s Son

**A. He is the Word ( 1:1-3, 14).** Just as our words reveal our mind and heart, so Christ reveals the mind and heart of God to men. “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). A word is composed of letters; and Christ is the Alpha and Omega (first and last letters of the Gk. alphabet; Rev. 22:13) who spells out God’s love to us. In Genesis 1, God created everything through His Word; and Col. 1:16 and 2 Peter 3:5 indicate that this Word was Christ. While God can be known in part through nature and history, He is known in full through His Son (Heb. 1:1-2). Christ as the Word brings grace and truth (1:14 and 17); but if men will not receive Him, this same Word will come in wrath and judgment (Rev. 19:13). The Bible is the written Word of God, and Christ is the living, incarnate Word of God.

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<sup>10</sup> MacArthur, J. (2003). *The MacArthur Bible handbook* (p. 342). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

<sup>11</sup> Arndt, W., Gingrich, F. W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (1979). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature : a translation and adaption of the fourth revised and augmented edition of Walter Bauer’s Griechisch-deutsches Worterbuch zu den Schrift en des Neuen Testaments und der ubrigen urchristlichen Literatur* (p. 464). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- B. He is the Light ( 1:4-13).** God's first creative act in Gen. 1 was producing light, for life comes from light. Jesus is the true light, that is, the original light from which all light has its source. In John's Gospel, you find a conflict between light (God, eternal life) and darkness (Satan, eternal death). This is indicated in 1:5—"And the light shines [present tense] in the darkness, and the darkness has not been able to put it out or lay hold of it" (literal translation). Note 3:19-21, 8:12, and 12:46. Second Corinthians 4:3-6 pictures salvation as the entrance of light into the dark heart of the sinner (see also Gen. 1:1-3).
- C. He is the Son of God ( 1:15-18, 30-34, 49).** It was this claim that aroused the Jews to persecute Christ (10:30-36). Note the seven persons in John's Gospel who called Christ the Son of God: John the Baptist (1:34); Nathanael (1:49); Peter (6:69); the healed blind man (9:35-38); Martha (11:27); Thomas (20:28); and the Apostle John (20:30-31). The sinner who will not believe that Jesus is God's Son cannot be saved (8:24).
- D. He is the Christ ( 1:19-28, 35-42).** "Christ" means the Messiah, the Anointed One. The Jews were expecting their Messiah to appear, and this is why they questioned John. Even the Samaritans were looking for Him (4:25, 42). Any Jew who said that Jesus was the Christ was thrown out of the synagogue (9:22).
- E. He is the Lamb of God ( 1:29, 35-36).** John's announcement is the answer to Isaac's question, "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" (Gen. 22:7). The passover lamb in Ex. 12 and the sacrificial lamb in Isa. 53 point to Christ. There were many lambs slain in Old Testament history, but Christ is the Lamb of God, the unique one. The blood of lambs slain in the tabernacle or temple merely covered sin (Heb. 10:1-4), but Christ's blood takes away sin. The lambs offered in the Old Testament days were for Israel alone, but Christ died for the sins of the whole world.
- F. He is the King of Israel ( 1:43-49).** Israel's people were tired of Roman rule and wanted a king. Because Christ fed them, they wanted to make Him King (6:15), but He left the crowd. He offered Himself as their King (recorded in 12:12-19) but the chief priests said, "We have no king but Caesar!" (19:15)
- G. He is the Son of Man ( 1:50-51).** This title comes from Dan. 7:13-14, and every Jew knew it described God. (Note the Jews' question in John 12:34.) Christ alludes in 1:51 to "Jacob's ladder" in Gen. 28:10-17. Christ is "God's ladder" between earth and heaven, revealing God to men and taking men to God.

### **Christ's Works Prove He Is God's Son**

- A. He created the world (1:1-4).** He was in the beginning with God and was the divine Agent through whom the world was created.
- B. He gives men salvation (1:9-13).** He came to His own world, and His own people (the Jews) received Him not. Salvation is a free gift that the sinner receives when he trusts Christ. "Believing" and "receiving" are the same thing. A new birth then takes place—not from human blood, or by the flesh, or by the will of men, but from God.
- C. He reveals God (1:15-18).** Christ reveals God's grace and God's truth. Moses gave the Law that reveals sin and condemns; Christ reveals the truth that redeems. The Law prepared the way for Him.
- D. He baptizes with the Spirit (1:33).** We see the persons of the Godhead in this chapter: the Father (1:14, 18); the Son (1:14, 18); and the Spirit (1:32-34). The descent of the Spirit

identified Christ to John; and we cannot truly see Christ today unless the Spirit opens our eyes.

**E. He has intimate knowledge of men (1:42, 47-48).** He knew Peter and Nathanael better than they knew themselves (see 2:23-25). Only God can see the hearts of people.

**F. He forgives sin (1:29).** Nobody on earth can take away a person's sin!

**G. He opens the way to heaven (1:50-51) and is the way to heaven.** Like Jacob in Gen. 28:10-17, sinners are away from home and in the night of sin. But Christ reveals the glory of heaven and opens it for us to enter in. Christ is God's "staircase to glory."

### **Witnesses Prove That Christ Is God's Son**

John uses the word "witness" often in his Gospel (1:7-8, 15; 3:26, 28; 5:31-37; 8:18; 15:27; 18:23). The witnesses of the Bible can be trusted because they had a personal contact with Christ, and they gained nothing from men by witnessing for Christ. (In fact, they suffered for it.) There is no evidence that they lied; their witness would stand in court today. These witnesses are:

**A. John the Baptist (1:7, 15, 29; See Also 5:35).**

**B. John the Apostle (1:14, "We Beheld His Glory...")**

**C. The OT prophets (1:30, 45).** It is likely that Nathanael was reading in the Books of Moses when Philip found him.

**D. The Holy Spirit (1:33-34).**

**E. Andrew (1:41).** He was a soul-winner, and he started at home.

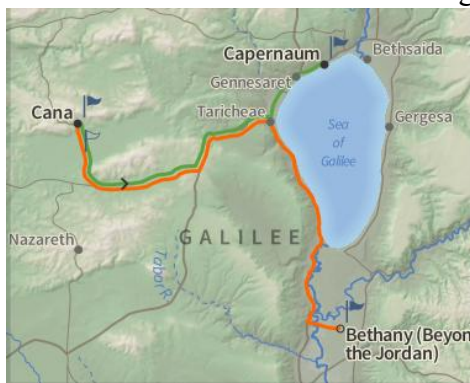
**F. Philip (1:45).** Philip backed up his testimony with the Word of God, a wise policy for all witnesses.

**G. Nathanael (1:49).** John and Andrew were saved through a preacher, John the Baptist. Peter found Christ because of Andrew's personal work. Philip was called by Christ personally; and Nathanael found Christ through the Word and Philip's testimony. God uses different people and circumstances to bring people to His Son. He is a God of infinite variety.

### **III. Jesus' Signs and Discourses 2:1-11:57**

#### **Water changed to wine (2:1-11)**

The gospel of John uses the word *sign* rather than miracle. Signs served as authentication for Jesus' nature and mission. A sign points beyond itself to a major truth about God made known through Jesus Christ.



#### **Did Bible wine contain alcohol? (Denny Petrillo)<sup>12</sup>**

*Why do we use grape juice as one of the elements of the Lord's Supper when we know that Wine was used in the First Century? Give me a yes or no answer, did the "Fruit of the Vine" used at the Passover meal contain alcohol or not? Did the wine Jesus produced at the wedding celebration contain alcohol or not?*

There is really no "yes" or "no" answer to these questions. In some places the "fruit of the vine" was clearly the product of Fermentation, in other passages it is entirely possible that it was simply grape juice. Dr. William Patton in his book, *Bible Wines: The Laws of Fermentation and Wines of the*

<sup>12</sup> Denny Petrillo of Bear Valley. <http://www.scripturessay.com/did-bible-wine-contain-alcohol/>

Ancients argues that the Greek word for "fruit of the vine" can indeed mean both fermented and non-fermented grape juice.

There are two predominant views on this subject:

1) THE WINE WAS NOT INTOXICATING. This position is based primarily on the following arguments:

(a) The wine of the First Century was watered down (i.e. 3 parts water to 1 part wine) and that a considerable amount would have to be consumed before one would be drunk. Rabbinic literature frowned upon drinking undiluted wine (Shabbath 77a; Peshahim 108b and 2 Macc.15:39, which says "It is harmful to drink wine alone, or again, to drink water alone, while wine mixed with water is sweet and delicious and enhances one's enjoyment.")

(b) Those of Biblical times frowned upon the abuse of wine. There are many references that discuss drunkenness or otherwise being tempted by wine:

Gen. 9:21

20 Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. 21 He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.

Prov. 20:1;21:17; 23:20-21

1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.

17 He who loves pleasure will become a poor man; He who loves wine and oil will not become rich. 20 Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat; 21 For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe one with rags.

Is. 5:11-12

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may pursue strong drink, Who stay up late in the evening that wine may inflame them! 12 Their banquets are accompanied by lyre and harp, by tambourine and flute, and by wine; But they do not pay attention to the deeds of the LORD, Nor do they consider the work of His hands.

(c) Those of Jesus' day knew the Old Testament warned of the misuse of wine and therefore did not serve intoxicating drinks:

1 Cor. 5:11; 6:10

11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one. 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Gal. 5:21

21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Eph. 5:18

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit

1 Pet. 4:3

3 For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

(d) Jesus would never do anything that would encourage sin and providing intoxicating wine would have encouraged drunkenness.

(e) There is nothing in the text of John two that would require this to be intoxicating wine. Even verse 10 does not suggest that the guests were drunk. "Drunk freely" could mean

nothing more than "they have consumed all that they could hold" with no reference to intoxication.

2) The second position is that THE WINE WAS INTOXICATING. This position is based primarily on the following arguments:

(a) While it is true that wine of the First century was usually watered down (if it wasn't, it was called "strong drink" – cf. Lev. 10:8f; Deut. 14:26, et.al), that which was consumed was nevertheless intoxicating if one consumed a sufficient amount.

(b) Those of Biblical times frowned upon DRUNKENNESS or otherwise being unduly influenced by wine. Thus, it was acceptable, even by divine standards, to consume wine. It was not acceptable to get drunk.

(c) Those of Jesus day knew the Old Testament warned of the misuse of wine and therefore encouraged CONTROL and MODERATION. This would be similar to Paul's advise to Timothy (1 Tim. 5:21). Paul would never encourage Timothy to get drunk. But drinking a small amount (similar to our "social drinking") would be acceptable. (Note: while this argument about control and moderation might have some merit, the discussion in 1 Timothy has nothing to do with social drinking. A modern application would be "take some medicine for your stomach's sake..."). (Bible Wine, p.3)

(d) God created a number of things that could be misused and abused. For example, God created sex, and intended for it to be a good thing within His designed parameters (marriage). Yet, men have misused this creation of God. Equally, God created the vine. Still, God placed parameters around the use of the vine. Men are then responsible for whether they obey God's instructions concerning wine or not.

(e) The best translation of verse 10 is "when they have become drunk," indicating that the guests were, at this time, already intoxicated.

So, there it is, both sides of the argument. I think you can see that there is merit to both arguments, and therefore one should not become dogmatic with either position.

Little is known of how a wedding was performed in Galilee in the first century. The feast, however, was very important and might last for a week. To fail in proper hospitality was a serious offense. For the wine to run out was a social embarrassment. There was no great variety in beverages in those days; people normally drank water or wine.

The word for wine, οἶνος, is a generic term and can refer either to fermented or unfermented grape juice. Ample evidence is available to demonstrate that wine, though always fermented, was usually mixed with water in the classical and Hellenistic world. The wine was stored in large jugs called *amphorae*, from which the wine was poured through a strainer into a large mixing bowl call a *krater*. In the *krater* the wine was mixed with water. Then the drinking bowls or cups were filled.<sup>13</sup> The intertestamental period serves as a backdrop for the NT period. Rabbinic sources reveal that wine was mixed with water (usually two parts of water to one of wine) in the Mishna, but later Talmudic material gives a three to one mixture.<sup>14</sup> The ratio of water to wine varied anywhere from twenty to one, averaging three to one as noted in ancient

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<sup>13</sup> Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (pp. 2146–2147). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

<sup>14</sup> Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (p. 2148). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

references. Wine mixed with water acted as a purifier and made the water safe to drink (2 Macc 15:39; cf. 1 Tim 5:23).<sup>15</sup>

**2:12** “After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.”

### **Cleansing the Temple (2:13-25)**

**(2:13)** “The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.”

The Passover is first recorded in Ex. 12:11-13. It was one of the annual feasts that all Jewish men were required to celebrate in Jerusalem (Dt. 16:16). John explicitly mentions at least three different Passovers: the first in 2:13, 23; the second on 6:4; and the third several times including 11:55 and 12:1. If three Passovers are accepted, the length of Jesus’ ministry was between two and three years. However, if the feast of 5:1 was a fourth Passover or assumes that a fourth Passover had come and gone, Jesus’ ministry would have lasted between three and four years.

### **Passover**

The Passover was of supreme theological significance for the Israelites, since it marked one of the most momentous acts of divine intervention in their history, the beginning of their deliverance from bondage in Egypt when, in the final plague, God destroyed the firstborn of the Egyptians but spared those Israelites whose homes had blood smeared on the doorposts (Ex 12:11–30). God commanded that the day was to be observed as a memorial feast (v 14), and the next Passover celebration occurred in the Sinai Desert (Nm 9:1–5). In the Hebrew calendar the Passover festival came in the first month, called Abib in Deuteronomy 16:1, but known after the exile as Nisan (cf. Neh 2:1). The Passover rite took place the 14th evening (Lv 23:5), and this was followed by a seven-day period during which nothing leavened was to be eaten. The principle for removing all leaven from bread was similar to that underlying the draining of blood from animal flesh. Both leaven and blood had quickening power and were to be kept separate as an offering to God.

The first and seventh days of this period were marked by a holy assembly, during which the only work permitted was the preparation of food (Ex 12:16). This period when unleavened bread was eaten was described as a festival because it opened the seven-week period of grain harvest (Dt 16:9). During this feast, special burnt sacrifices were offered, followed with a sheaf of newly harvested barley at the Feast of Firstfruits. By NT times the festivals of Passover and Unleavened Bread were well-attended celebrations and were known as the “days of unleavened bread” (Lk 22:1; Acts 12:3). The theme of Israel’s deliverance from the power of Egypt by divine intervention assured the Israelites that God was always ready to act on behalf of a faithful and obedient covenant people. It also reminded them that they had once been slaves (Dt 16:12). In Israelite life the early Passover and Unleavened Bread observances were comparatively simple

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<sup>15</sup> Watson, D. F. (1992). Wine. In J. B. Green & S. McKnight (Eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (p. 871). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

in character, but during the monarchy more elaborate Passover rituals came into use (cf. 2 Kgs 23:21–23; 2 Chr 35:1–19).<sup>16</sup>

**2:14** “In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there.”

Oxen, sheep and doves were required for sacrifice. Jews who came great distances had to be able to buy sacrificial animals near the temple. The merchants, however, were selling them in the outer court of the temple, the one place where Gentiles could come to pray. Only the proper currency was acceptable to temple authorities, which created the need for money changers. These markets should not have been in the temple itself. The high priests likely made these services convenient to worshipers at an exorbitant price (2:16; cf. Mt. 21:13). Worshipers could also purchase birds and animals used for sacrifice. Since the offerings had to be officially certified and unblemished, it was helpful to purchase them at the Temple. Some exchangers profited greatly by loaning their money. Their interest rates ranged from 20 to 300 percent per year. Selling and money changing had become a means of cheating and exploiting the people. In righteous anger at this corruption of the purpose of the Temple, Jesus acted.

**2:18-19** “What sign (miracle) do You show us as your authority for doing these things?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” He was speaking of the temple of His body (2:21). “When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken” (2:22).

**2:23** “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing.”

**2:24–25** “But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.”

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<sup>16</sup> Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In *Tyndale Bible dictionary* (p. 482). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.



## Chapters 3-4

### Discourse with Nicodemus (3:1-21)

**3:1-2** The signs of Jesus show He is a teacher and God is with Him. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews, defended Jesus (7:50-52) and helped in the burial of Jesus (19:39).

### The New Birth (3:3-8)

Being born again or being “born from above” is explained as a birth “of water and the Spirit” (3:5). One cannot enter the kingdom of heaven unless one is born of “water and the Spirit.” Water and the Spirit are united in the work of conversion: “He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5; cf. Acts 2:38). The new birth is a “must” even for a ruler of the Jews.

**Water:** Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21

**Spirit:** 1 Peter 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:13

Baptism was well-known in this context. John’s baptism in water (1:31) and Jesus’ baptism in water (3:22-23; 4:1-2). Every ancient author who ever dealt with John 3:5 and Titus 3:5 said these verses are speaking of baptism. It was not until after the days of Zwinglii and Calvin that anyone believed the new birth was something other than baptism.

Gentile proselytes were required to be immersed in order to become “born again” as a Jew. According to Alfred Edersheim, proselytes of righteousness needed to undergo a baptism in order to be accepted by the Jews.

All writers are agreed that three things were required for the admission of such proselytes [proselytes of righteousness]: *Circumcision (Milah)*, *Baptism (Tebhilah)*, and a *Sacrifice (Qorban)*, in the case of women: baptism and sacrifice—the latter consisting of a burnt-offering of a heifer, or of a pair of turtle doves or of young doves. ... That *baptism* was absolutely necessary to make a proselyte is so frequently stated as not to be disputed.

The person to be baptized, having cut his hair and nails, undressed completely, made fresh profession of his faith before what were designated ‘the fathers of the baptism’ (our Godfathers, Kethub. 11 *a*; Erub. 15 *a*), and then immersed completely, so that every part of the body was touched by the water.

It was indeed a great thing when, in the words of *Maimonides*, a stranger sought shelter under the wings of the Shekhinah, and the change of condition which he underwent was regarded as complete. The waters of baptism were to him in very truth, though in a far different from the Christian sense, the ‘bath of regeneration’ (Titus 3:5). As he stepped out of these waters he was considered as ‘born anew’—in the language of the Rabbis, as if he were ‘a little child just born’ (Yeb. 22 *a*; 48 *b*; 97 *b*), as ‘a child of one day’ (Mass. Ger. 100. 2.). But this new birth was not ‘a birth from above’ in the sense of moral or spiritual renovation, but only as implying a new relationship to God, to Israel, and to his own past, present, and future.

More especially was he to regard himself as a new man in reference to his past. Country, home, habits, friends, and relations were all changed. The past, with all that had belonged to it, was past, and he was a new man—the old, with its defilements, was buried in the waters of baptism. This was carried out with such pitiless logic as not only to determine such questions as those of inheritance, but that it was declared that, except for the sake of not bringing proselytism into contempt, a proselyte might have wedded his own mother or sister (comp. Yeb. 22 a; Sanh. 58 b).<sup>17</sup>

**3:8** Being born of the Spirit is not a physical, visible occurrence.

**3:9-13** Jesus, because He comes from God as the Son of Man is able to speak of heavenly matters. Jesus' favorite self-designation is the phrase "Son of Man." Jesus speaks of himself as the Son of Man 84 times in the four Gospels, but this phrase is never used by anyone but Jesus. In Daniel 7:13-14 the Son of Man is pictured as a heavenly figure who in the end times is entrusted by God with authority, glory and sovereign power. Jesus' use of 'Son of Man' is clearly related to Peter's use of 'Christ' in Mark 5:29, 31.

**3:14-17** "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (Num. 21:9), so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so (in this way, thus) loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

**3:16** This verse presents a concise summary of the gospel message, tying the events of Jesus' death to God's love for the world He created. The statement is remarkable in its depiction of divine care for the entire world—not just His people Israel.<sup>18</sup> Despite ancient Jewish literature's mention of God's love for humanity and its emphasis on God's special love for Israel, nothing compares with this sacrifice, especially not for "the world," which in John normally means those not yet following God's will. The Old Testament also emphasizes God's immeasurable love (e.g., Ex 34:6-7; Deut 7:7-8; Judg 10:16; Is 63:9; Hos 11:1-4, 8-11; cf. Is 16:11; Jer 48:36).<sup>19</sup>

μονογενῆ or μονογενη

"only begotten": KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB

"only": ESV, GWT, NRSV,

"unique": NASB footnote

See 1:14, 18; cf. Gen. 22:2, 16; Rom. 8:32. Although Christians are called "sons of God" (2 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 3:26-27; Rev. 21:7), Jesus is God's Son in a unique sense. This word is used of Isaac as Abraham's "only" son in Hebrews 11:17.

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<sup>17</sup> Edersheim, A. (1896). *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Vol. 2, p. 746). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

<sup>18</sup> Barry, J. D., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Mangum, D., & Whitehead, M. M. (2012). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Jn 3:16). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

<sup>19</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Jn 3:16-18). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

### **John's Testimony of the Son (3:22-36)**

**(3:22–24)** John baptized “in” the Jordan River. Away from the Jordan River, water was not plentiful, so in their itinerant ministry Jesus’ disciples (4:2) probably do not baptize everywhere, although ceremonial immersion pools for ritual baths (mikveh or mikvah) were widespread in Palestine.

**3:27–28.** In Jewish law, one person who represents another acts on his sender’s authority but must adhere to the constraints of his mission; the real authority always stems from the sender.

**3:29–30.** The “friend of the bridegroom” refers to the Jewish custom of the *shoshbin*, who was much like the best man in weddings today. The most significant emphasis of Jewish weddings was joy.

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

Interpretation: John’s ministry must decrease, while Jesus’ must increase.

Application: The will of Jesus must increase in my life, while my will must decrease.

**3:32–33.** Prominent individuals had distinctive marks on their signet rings, which they would press into hot wax seals on the outside of documents to attest that they were witnesses to the execution of the document. Jesus taught from divine experience what He knew!

**3:34.** Because many thought that the Spirit had been quenched in Israel till the future restoration of Israel, and many thought that only a few had merited the Spirit, to say that someone had unlimited access to give the Spirit indicates that he is greater than any person who had ever lived (the *most* anyone else could have would be unlimited access to *receive* the Spirit).

**3:35–36.** Again, the language of the Father authorizing the Son and judging the world by their response to him portrays the Son more highly than any mere human was viewed in Jewish literature; cf. 3:31.

(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.” See Gal. 3:26-27; Heb. 5:8-9. Believing is a package word that includes hearing, loving, repenting, and obeying the Lord.

Eternal life is a present possession. Eternal life is an infinitely high quality of life in living fellowship with God. “And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

“The one who does not obey (ἀπειθεῖν) shall not see life (knowledge of God here and in eternity) but the wrath of God remains [abides] on him.” Wrath is a strong word, indicating God is actively opposed to everything evil and unbelieving (cf. Rom. 1:18). The one who does not obey cannot expect God’s wrath eventually to fade away. God’s opposition to unbelief and evil is total and permanent (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

### **Jesus Goes to Galilee (4:1-3)**

Success often causes opposition. When Jesus noted the Pharisees’ watchful eyes as to His success in baptizing more than John, He left Judea and returned to Galilee.



### **The Woman at the Well (4:4-42)**

**4:4** Jesus “had to pass through Samaria.” Whether it was because the path was shorter or because the Father commanded Him is not clear. The word for “had to” is  $\delta\epsilon\iota$  and means that it was necessary. In other places it is used of a divine necessity (John 3:7, 14, 30; 9:4 et. al.).

**4:4-6** Returning to Galilee, Jesus passed through Samaria. Jews usually avoided Samaria, because the Samaritans were unclean. Jews usually crossed the Jordan River and traveled on the east side. Samaritans were a people of mixed blood that resulted from the intermarrying of Israelites left behind when the people of the northern kingdom were exiled and Gentiles were brought into the land by the Assyrians (2 Kgs. 17:24). Jews and Samaritans usually held bitter hostility between them in the days of Jesus (Jn. 4:9).

Sychar is a small village near Shechem (Gen. 33:18-19) and is usually identified with Askar, which is less than a mile from Jacob’s well and on the slope of Mount Ebal. Jacob bought

some land in the vicinity of Shechem, and it was this land that he gave to Joseph (Gen. 48:21-22).

The sixth hour is noon in Jewish time and 6 p.m. Roman time. Jesus was wearied from his journey, a reference to the humanity of Jesus.

**4:7-12** People normally drew water at the end of the day rather than during the heat of midday (Gen. 24:11). However, according to Josephus, Moses helped the young ladies draw water (Ex. 2:15-17) at noon.

*Drawing water from the town well was an important social event for women in the ancient Middle East. The fact that the Samaritan woman came alone suggests, as does Jesus’ reference to five “husbands,” that she was rejected by the other women of the community. How amazing that God does not reject sinners, but seeks them.*<sup>20</sup> The water jar ( $\psi\delta\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$ ) is the same word as used in 2:6-7, but this likely refers to a container much smaller and capable of being carried by a woman.

Jesus asked the woman for a drink. (The disciples had gone into town to buy food.

Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. The Greek words imply the meaning “do not use dishes Samaritans have used.” A Jew would become ceremonially unclean if he used a drinking vessel handled by a Samaritan, since the Jews believed all Samaritans were “unclean.”

Jesus began building interest in her: “if you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, ... you would have asked Him, and He would give you living water.” In 4:14 “living water is equated with eternal life.

The woman wants to know who Jesus is and where He gets his living water.

<sup>20</sup> Richards, L. O. (1991). *The Bible reader’s companion* (electronic ed., p. 681). Wheaton: Victor Books.

**4:13-15** “Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The life of Jesus leaps up abundantly (10:10).

The woman wants living water and eternal life and water that she does not have to draw and carry.

**4:18 five husbands** Or five “men.” The Greek word *anēr* can mean “man” or “husband.” If the woman had five previous husbands who either died or divorced her, she would have exceeded the traditional limit of three husbands in Jewish law (see *b. Yebamot* 64b; *b. Niddah* 64a). However, the ambiguity of the word *anēr* suggests the possibility that none of the five was a legal husband just as the current man is not her husband. This comment further emphasizes the discernment of Jesus’ choice to speak with her about her place before God.<sup>21</sup>

**4:19-20** The woman perceives Jesus to be a prophet and asks a theological question. The proper place of worship had been long been a source of dispute between Jews and Samaritans. Samaritans held that Mt. Gerizim was especially sacred, since Abraham and Jacob had built altars in that vicinity (Gen. 12:7; 33:20). The people were blessed from this mountain (Dt. 11:29; 27:12). In the Samaritan Scriptures, Mt. Gerizim (rather than Mt. Ebal) was the mountain on which Moses commanded an altar to be built (Dt. 27:4-6). The Samaritans had built a temple on Mt. Gerizim about 400 B.C., which the Jews destroyed ca. 128 B.C. Both actions caused hostility between Jews and Samaritans.

**4:21-24** The Samaritan Bible contained only the Pentateuch. They worshiped the true God, but their failure to accept the rest of the Scriptures meant they knew little about Him. Salvation is from the Jews. The Messiah is a Jew.

God seeks true and genuine worshipers! Jesus says this to this Samaritan woman and gives her hope (2 Chron. 16:9; Lk. 15:1-10). “Those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” The word “spirit” refers to our hearts and attitudes; the word “truth” refers to an authenticity or genuineness that arises from the teaching of Scripture. Authentic worship to God must be defined by God. God does not accept worship that arises from the traditions of men (Mt. 15:1-14), from lives that are filled with sin (Isa. 1:10-17), or from self-made religion (Col. 2:20-23).

**4:25-26** Jesus confesses to being the Messiah, the Christ.

**4:27** The disciples were amazed that Jesus was speaking with a woman. Jewish religious teachers rarely spoke with women in public.

**4:28-30** The woman left her water jar and went into the city and told the men, “Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?” The men went out the well to find out about Jesus! Her enthusiasm was contagious.

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<sup>21</sup> Barry, J. D., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Mangum, D., & Whitehead, M. M. (2012). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Jn 4:18). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

**4:31-38** Did anybody feed Jesus? Jesus had food to eat that you do not know about. Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work” (34).

There is something bigger than eating. The fields were white for harvest, and the work of evangelism whether in sowing or reaping is what matters. Many enjoy the benefit of reaping the harvest of other people’s work in sowing. “You have entered into their labor.”

**4:39-42** The woman opened the door to faith, but Jesus ultimately brought faith to “many” by His teaching. “They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world” (42). Jesus will always prove Himself. We never have to be ashamed of Jesus.

### **Healing of the Official’s son (4:43-54) The Second Sign**

**4:43-45** Jesus leaves Samaria for Galilee, and the Galileans received or welcomed him for his miracles done back in Jerusalem (2:23; 3:1-2) not as a teacher who could save them. See Matthew 13:57-58.

**4:46-48** A royal official from Capernaum met Jesus at Cana of Galilee, begging Jesus to heal his son, who was “at the point of death.” Jesus lamented that the people would not believe unless they saw signs and wonders.

**4:49-54** “Go, your son lives.” “So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.” The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” And he himself believed, and all his household.”

## Chapters 5-6

### **The Healing at Bethesda (5:1-17) Third Sign**

**5:1** “After these things” is an indefinite expression. We do not know what is specific feast this was: Passover, Pentecost, or Booths. Knowing whether this is the Passover helps us to be informed as to how many years the ministry of Jesus lasted. See notes on 2:13. If three Passovers are accepted, Jesus’ ministry lasted two to three years. If this feast was a fourth Passover, Jesus’ ministry lasted between three and four years.

**5:2** This site is generally identified with the twin pools near the present-day St. Anne’s Church. There would have been a colonnade on each of four sides and another between the pools.

**5:3-4** Some Biblical manuscripts omit verses 3b-4. They may have been added by a later copyist to explain why people waited by the pool in large numbers.

**5:5-9** The Lord heals a man who had been ill for 38 years and apparently had some form of lameness. He believed the superstition of the healing of the first to get in the water. Jesus healed him so that he was able to pick up his pallet and walk. Jesus did not require this man to believe in order to be healed. This took place on the Sabbath day.

**5:10-13** The Jews found fault with the man carrying his pallet on the Sabbath day. The man pointed to his healer. Jesus slipped away in the crowd.

The Jews of verse ten were probably Pharisees. They stopped him to charge him with being a lawbreaker, “it is not lawful for you to carry your pallet.” Doubtless they had in mind Ex. 20:10, “You shall not do any work” on the Sabbath. How much work is there in carrying a *krabbatos* (poor man’s pallet) across town? Not much, and it was not the kind of labor prohibited by the Exodus law anyway. But the Pharisees would not even lift saliva from their mouth to rub on their sore eyes on the Sabbath because it meant carrying a burden” (Ray Summers, *Behold the Lamb*, 88).

Legalism is not law-keeping but a dreadful distortion of God’s will for those whom He created to live in fellowship with Him. Legalism is rightly defined as a strict and judgmental adherence to a man-made, legal code that goes beyond the written will of God. The Pharisees found fault with those who did not keep their human traditions, which they made equal or higher than the written Law of God (cf. Mt. 15:1-14). True law-keeping of what actually comes from God is a manifestation of love and obedience (Jn. 14:15, 23-24).

**5:14** Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.”

**5:15-17** The Jews persecuted Jesus for working signs on the Sabbath. “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.” Jesus associates Himself with the Father. The Jews did not regard God as “My Father,” but as “our Father.” God does not stop deeds of compassion on the Sabbath, and neither did Jesus.

### **Jesus’ Equality with God (5:18-24)**

**5:18** For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

**5:19-23** Jesus identifies Himself with the Father as One whose actions are dependent on the Father, as the source of His marvelous deeds, as One who gives life, as the Judge, and as One worthy of honor.

**5:24** “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”

#### **The Resurrection (5:25-29)**

**5:25-27** Those who are dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and will live. The Father gave the Son life in Himself. The Son of Man has authority to execute judgment.

**5:28-29** “Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”

#### **Witnesses of Jesus (5:30-47)**

**5:30-32** Jesus does not act on His own initiative. His judgment is just because He seeks the Father’s will. Jesus is true, because the Father testifies about Him.

**5:33-35** The Jews sent to John to find out about Jesus and John confirmed the truth. The true testimony about Jesus, though, is not from man. John “was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.”

**5:36** “But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.”

**5:37-38** The Father sent Me and has testified of Me. “You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.”

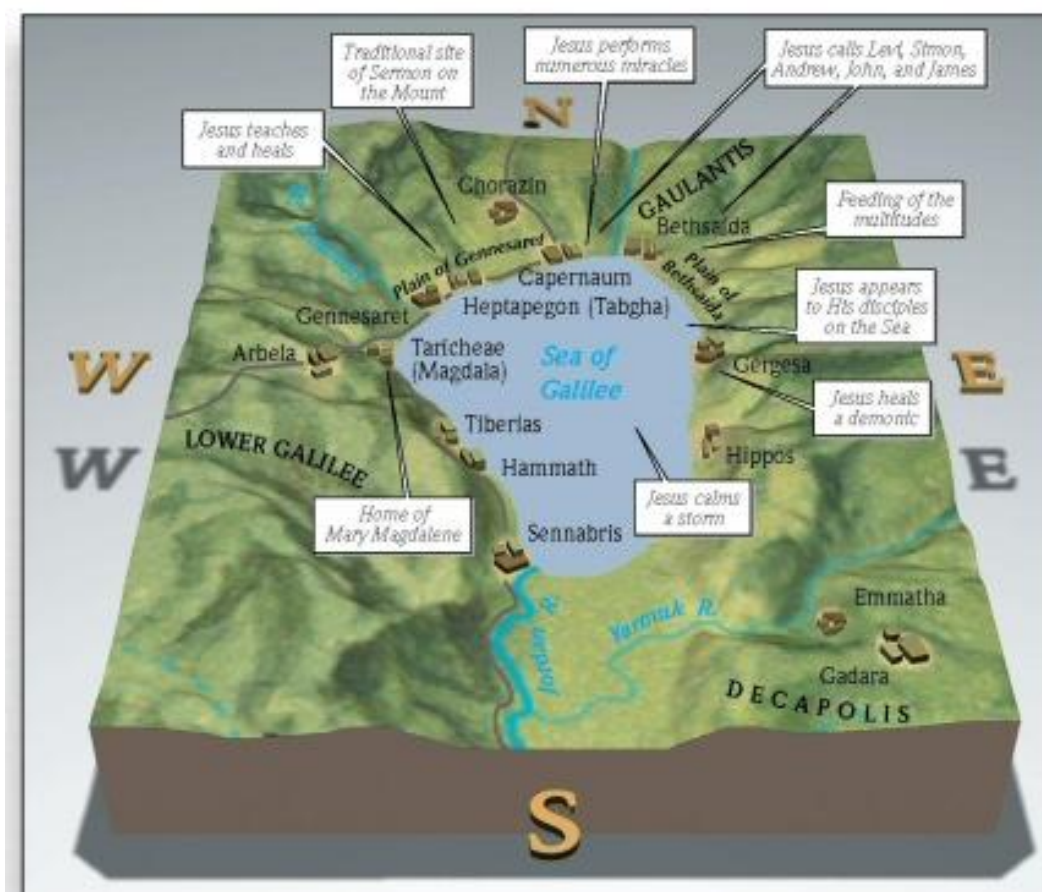
**5:39-40** They refused to hear the Scriptures which testified of Jesus.

**5:41-47** Because they sought the glory of men, they did not have a love for God. Jesus was rejected though He came in His Father’s name. They did not seek the glory that is from the one and only God. Moses accuses them, because they would not believe him. If they had believed Moses, they would believe in Jesus, “for he wrote about Me.” “If you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

#### **Feeding of the Five Thousand (6:1-14)**

**6:1-2** “After these things...” Sea of Galilee is the Sea of Tiberius, Genessaret (Lk. 5:1), and “sea of Chinnereth” (Num. 34:11; Dt. 3:17). A large crowd followed, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.





**6:3-7** They sat down up on the mountain. This is probably the Golan Heights just east of the Sea of Galilee (Mt. 14:23; Mk. 6:46).  
**6:4** This is the second of the three Passovers mentioned in John (cf. 2:13; 11:55).  
**6:7** Two hundred denarii equals

roughly eight months wages, since one denarius equaled one day's pay (Mt. 20:2; Jn. 12:5).

**6:9** Barley was common food for the poor. The more well-to-do preferred wheat bread. The fish were likely dried or preserved.

**6:10-11** The men (males) numbered 5,000. If you add the women and children (cf. Mt. 14:21), the total could be as high as 20,000 people.

**6:14** The people regarded Jesus as the "Prophet," fulfilling Moses' prediction (Dt. 18:15, 18). Peter identifies Jesus with this prophecy in Acts 3:22-23; 7:37). Jesus, of course, is much more than a prophet.

### **Jesus Walks on Water (6:15-25)**

**6:15** Jesus did not want to be made king in a way that challenged the Jewish and Roman governments of the time and that would bring bloodshed. His reign as King was spiritual (18:36).

The Sea of Galilee is a freshwater lake nestled in the hills of northern Palestine. Its surface is nearly 700 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea, which is thirty miles west. It is fed mainly by the Jordan River. The nearby hills of Galilee are about 1500 feet above sea level. The lake thirteen miles long and eight miles wide at its greatest east-west distance. Because of its location, it is subject to sudden and violent storms of short duration.

**6:19** They rowed about 3-4 miles. The distance between the feeding and Capernaum would be 5-6 miles. Walking on the sea was not something Jesus did to amaze the disciples but was a powerful demonstration of his power over the elements. God rules the seas (Ps. 29:10-11; 89:9; 107:28-30; Jonah 1).

**6:20** “It is I” could be translated “I am,” reminiscent of Exodus 3:14, “I am Who I am.” This becomes more clear in 6:35; 8:24, 58.

**6:21** Immediately the boat was at the land. The people did not know how Jesus got to Capernaum (6:25).

**6:23-24** Tiberius is the chief and largest city on the Sea; it is on the western shore about 7 miles south of Capernaum which is on the northern edge of the sea. It was founded by Herod Antipas and named in honor of the Roman emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14-37).

### **Discourse on the Bread of Life (6:26-71)**

**6:26** “Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.” Their interests were physical not spiritual.

**6:27** God set his seal on the Son of Man. Seals, which are made of wax, clay, or soft metals, signified either ownership or authentication of an item or document.

**6:28-29** The labor Jesus wishes for the people to do in order to do the work of God is to believe “in him whom he has sent.” The Messiah!

**6:30-34** The true bread from heaven is not manna (Ex. 16:4, 15) but “he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” This is Jesus himself.

**6:35-36** “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” They saw his signs (6:2) but did not believe.

**6:37** “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” (See 6:39; 10:28-39; Rom. 8:37-39.) This does not mean saved people cannot leave the Lord by their own choosing (Jn. 15:8-10; Jude 24).

**6:38-40** Jesus came to do the Father’s will, not His own. “For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” The last day is the final judgment.

**6:41-43** This grumbling reminds one of the pattern of grumbling against God in the OT (Ex. 16:8; Num. 14:27; Ps. 95:8-9). Forgetting his signs, the people point to his family.

**6:44-46** Only those drawn can come to Me. How are they drawn? By being taught. Only Jesus has seen the Father.

**6:47-51** Jesus gives life, and those who eat of the bread of life will live forever and have eternal life. “And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

**6:52-59** One must eat the flesh of Jesus and drink His blood to have eternal life, “and I will raise him up on the last day.” Life has its source in the Father and through the Son. This is not a reference to the Lord’s Supper but rather refers to trust in Him as the Son of Man and in His atoning sacrifice for our sins. We believe in Him. The concept of “eating” Christ’s flesh is symbolic. Material bread must be eaten and digested—it must become part of us. In the same way all that Christ is and teaches must become a part of us. We must appropriate Him by faith, take Him in completely that He might become a part of us and sustain us.<sup>22</sup>

Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

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<sup>22</sup> Richards, L. O. (1991). *The Bible reader’s companion* (electronic ed., p. 683). Wheaton: Victor Books.

**6:60** “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” It was hard because they wrongly understood it. They were thinking of the physical not the spiritual. Some did not believe (6:64).

**6:63** “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” God works through His word.

**6:64** Jesus knew from the beginning. Jesus knows about unbelievers and Judas.

**6:65** “Granted by the Father.” This is not a denial of freewill (Jn. 3:36) but rather an affirmation that God has standards for who will be saved (Jn. 1:11-12; 3:36).

**6:66** Many of the early disciples were not committed, for they turned back and “no longer” walked with Him. (See Lk. 8:13). They quit because they heard something they didn’t like.

**6:67-69** When the apostles were asked if they too would leave, Peter answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” No one else has the words of eternal life. Jesus is holy!

**6:70-71** Jesus chose the twelve apostles, but one is “a devil.” Judas will betray Him.

## Chapters 7-8

### Jesus' Teaching at the Feast of Booths (7:1-53)

**7:1** Jesus would go about in Galilee but not Judea, “because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.”

**7:2** The Feast of Booths or Tabernacles is celebrated in September/October, two months prior to the Feast of Dedication. It is called the Feast of Booths, because people lived in leafy shelters to remember God's faithfulness to Israel during her wilderness wanderings (Lev. 23:42-43; cf. Mt. 17:4). It is also a time of celebration and thanksgiving for the harvest (Lev. 23:39-41; Dt. 16:13-15). It is one of three feasts which Jewish men were required to attend. Booths were often erected in the vineyards during the harvest to guard the fields. Lasting a full week—eight days with a Sabbath added at the end, it was a popular festival among the people.

**7:3-5** His brothers (Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3) encouraged Him to go to Judea and display His works openly. His brothers did not believe in Him. They lived and ate and slept in the same rooms as the eternal Son of God and did not know it.

**7:6-9** Jesus acts at the right time. It was not the right time. The world hated him, but it was not time for Him to suffer upon the cross. This is not a falsehood, for the Greek could be translated, “I am not now going.”

**7:10-13** Jesus went up privately and later. The people looked for Him. There was much muttering and questioning as to who Jesus is: a good man or leading people astray. For fear of the Jews, no one spoke openly about Him.

**7:14-15** Jesus taught in the temple. The Jews (the crowd or the authorities) wondered how “this man has learning, when he has never studied?” Jesus lacked by their standards formal rabbinic training (as did his disciples, Acts 4:13), but his authority and teaching came from God (Jn. 7:16; 8:28; cf. Mt. 5:21ff.; 7:28-29).

**7:17-18** Whether people follow Jesus depends on whether they are willing to obey Him. Those who are willing to follow Jesus will be intellectually convinced that He is the Way. Jesus is credible because He does not speak on His own authority or seek own glory.

**7:19-20** Jesus pointed out they did not keep the Law of Moses but were trying to kill Him. They accuse Him of having a demon.

**7:21-23** “I did one work, and you seek to kill me.” This is probably the healing of the man in 5:1-5, which was done on the Sabbath. Circumcision could take place on the Sabbath.

**7:24** “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.” The Pharisees often worried about appearances and judged accordingly (Mt. 6:1-18; 7:1-5).

Can This Be the Christ?

**7:26-27** They wonder because of His works whether He is the Christ, but they discount Him because they know where He comes from.” Some rabbis taught that the Messiah would be wholly unknown until he set out to procure salvation for Israel, while others were sure about His birthplace (7:42, thinking Nazareth not Bethlehem).

**7:28-30** Jesus declares that He came from Him (God the Father), but no one arrested him at that time.

**7:31** Many believed. “When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?”

**7:32-36** The Pharisees and Chief Priests send officers to arrest Him, but Jesus promises to go to the Father where they cannot find Him. They thought He meant going to the Gentiles in the Dispersion.

**7:37-39** Jesus spoke of the Spirit, who was not yet given. The promised Spirit would yet be given in the full and powerful sense that was promised for the new covenant age (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:1-13; cf. John 20:22).

**7:40-44** Jesus thought to be the Prophet and the Christ, but others said that because Jesus was from Galilee, He could not be from the City of David, Bethlehem. This caused division. Some wanted Him arrested, but no one laid hands on Him.

**7:45-46** Though sent to arrest Jesus, the officers answered the priests and Pharisees, “No one ever spoke like this man!”

**7:47-49** “Have you also been deceived? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.” Counting noses does not determine the truth; after all, the whole world once thought the earth was flat!

**7:50-51** Nicodemus’ response: “Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?” Nicodemus was “one of them.”

**7:52** They replied, “Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.” Prophets did occasionally arise from Galilee, such as Jonah (2 Kgs. 14:25) and possibly Elijah (1 Kgs. 17:1) and Nahum (Nah. 1:1). John may be reporting their willingness to distort the facts in order to make their arguments against Jesus (cf. Jn. 8:44-45).

### **The Adulterous Woman (8:1-11)**

Virtually every translation of the English Bible, this side of the 1611 King James Version, at least footnotes the passage, calling attention to the weak manuscript evidence behind the section embraced by John 7:53-8:11. All of the best Greek manuscripts, including the two oldest papyri (P<sup>66</sup> and P<sup>75</sup>—dating from about A.D. 200 and later P<sup>39</sup>) omit it. It is absent from Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, the Diatessaron, and most of the church fathers. Its first appearance is in D (Codex Bezae, ca. 400) but is not contained in other MSS until the ninth century. When it does appear in Greek manuscripts, there are often marks that suggest it is spurious. Most scholars—including many conservative ones—doubt that this section was a part of John’s original Gospel.

Professor Bruce Metzger of Princeton University, a renowned textual scholar (and no conservative), concedes that “the account has all the earmarks of historical veracity” (1971, 220). There is nothing here unworthy of sound doctrine. It rings of truth.

The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman who had been caught in adultery. They wanted Him to pronounce judgment upon her. Their purpose was to trap Jesus. If He neglected to suggest a stoning, as the Law required, He could be charged with being a lawbreaker. If, however, Jesus did advocate stoning, He would bring the wrath of the Roman government down on Him. Jesus met this dilemma with the statement, “if any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her” (8:7). And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.

Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.” This story captures both the gracious, forgiving spirit of Jesus and His firm

call to repentance and transformation of life. Jesus spoke to the woman's two greatest needs: her need for forgiveness and her need to change her life.

### **Discourse on Light of the World (8:12-30)**

**8:12-20** contains Jesus' rebuttal to these Pharisees who had boldly told Nicodemus that the Scriptures make no mention of even a prophet (much less the Christ) being raised up in Galilee. Jesus argues the Scriptures do speak of Christ coming from Galilee. He said "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." This likely comes from Isa. 9:1-2. John 8:12 and Isa. 9:1-2 speak of the Messiah coming to give light to those who walk in darkness. This proves the Pharisees are wrong. See also Mt. 4:12-16. Many could not believe He was the Messiah because of His Galilean roots. Jesus, of course, was a Son of David and was born in Bethlehem (Mt. 2:1-6; Lk. 2:1-11; cf. Micah 5:2). Micah also notes that "his origins are from old, from eternity."

Jesus is saying something quite bold by saying that to know Him is also to know the Father. He was speaking to some of the most educated and religious people of His day. They were confident that they already knew God and understood His ways. But their rejection of Jesus shows they did not know God. They knew only their own ideas about God.

**8:13-14** The challenge to his authority, but Jesus defends Himself as in 5:31-47.

**8:15-18** Jesus says the Father bears witness with Him that His testimony is true.

**8:19** "They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." Since Jesus is speaking to very educated people, this would have been a shocking statement. The Jews were confident they knew God and understood His ways. But their rejection of Jesus shows they didn't know God. They knew only their own ideas about God.

**8:20** "He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the treasury." This area was part of the Court of the Women and very close to the hall where the Sanhedrin met. No one arrested Him because His hour had not yet come.

**8:21-22** Jesus said He was going away, the Jews would seek Him and die in their sins (out of unbelief). The Jews thought He might kill himself. Ignorance, deception, and bias...

**8:23** I am not of this world.

**8:24** "I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." Many have wondered how a loving God can condemn persons to hell. The proper response is that He does nothing of the kind. Individuals condemn themselves by rejecting Jesus and the truth He teaches.

**8:25-27** They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father.

**8:28** "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me."

**8:29-30** "And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him." As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

### **Discourse to Believing Jews (8:31-59)**

**8:31-32** So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." The Lord's determination as to who is "truly my disciple" is in whether they "abide in my word." Truth sets

people free! We believe the truth when we believe what the Person who teaches the truth says. One cannot separate trust in Jesus from trust in His words.

The word “abide” (*meno*) is variously translated as “continue,” “remain,” or “hold to.” The teaching or doctrine of Jesus is His “word.” Holding, abiding, or continuing in His word is not a passive act, but active. One who abides in the word not only knows it but makes his home in that word, holds to it. Continuing in the word reveals one’s sincerity and the genuineness of his professing faith in Jesus Christ. True disciples here are put in contrast to professing ones.

**8:33** The Jews thought they had never been enslaved to anyone.

**8:34-36** Sin enslaves (Rom. 6:16; 2 Pet. 2:19; Prov. 5:22). Christ sets us free indeed (36)!

**8:37** Jesus’ word found no place in them. Their hearts (attitude) prevented them from hearing and caused them to want to kill Jesus.

**8:38** Jesus follows His Father; and the Jews follow their father (8:44-45).

**8:39-40** They claim Abraham as their father, but Jesus shows they do not do the works of Abraham (believing) but want to kill Him.

**8:41** They claim God as their Father.

**8:42-43** “Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word.” The word hear should be taken in the sense of receiving or accepting that leads to obedience and loyalty.

**8:44** Your father is the devil. He was a murderer “from the beginning” and a liar (Gen. 3:1-6). There is no truth in Him. He is the father of lies. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

**8:45-47** Whether one hears God or the devil depends on whether one is “of God.” The Jews could not convict Jesus of sin but wanted to kill Him. They did not believe the truth.

Many have wondered how a loving God can condemn people to hell. God does not do this arbitrarily (as some teach). Individuals condemn themselves by choosing to reject Jesus Christ and the truth He came to share with the world.

**8:48-49** The Jews justify themselves in calling Jesus a Samaritan and having a demon. But Jesus honors His Father while they dishonor Jesus.

**8:50** The Father seeks to glorify Jesus and He is the judge.

**8:51-52** “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’”

**8:53** “Surely you are not greater than our father Abraham, who died?”

**8:54-55** Jesus knows the Father, tells the truth, and is glorified by the Father

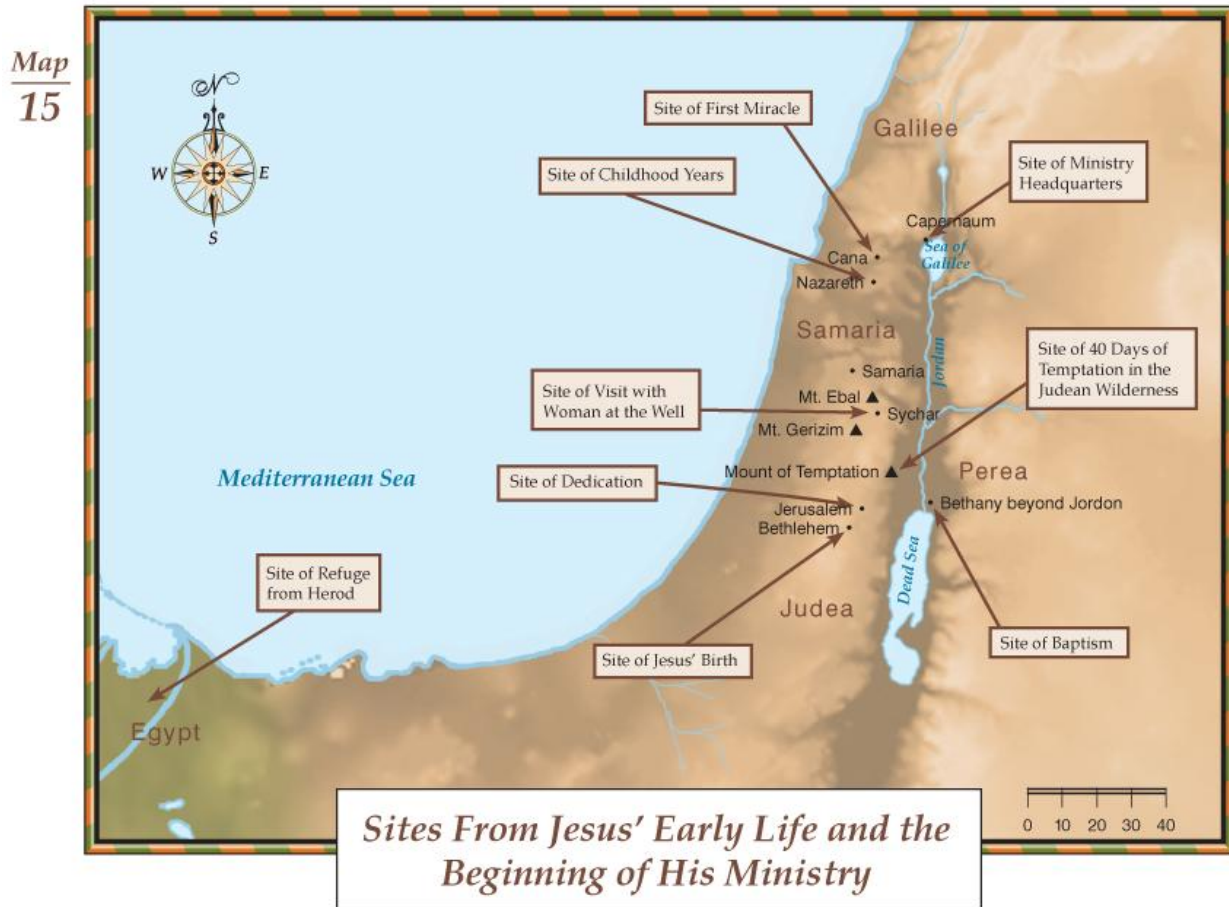
**8:56** “Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” By faith Abraham could see all that was involved in the coming of Jesus to the earth. Abraham had a general joy in the fulfilling of the purposes of God in Christ, by which all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 18:18). Abraham saw it by faith from afar.

**8:57** Jesus was about thirty when he began his ministry (Lk. 3:23).

**8:58** “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” A solemn, emphatic echo of God’s declaration in Ex. 3:14. Jesus does not say “I was” but “I am,” using the present tense. Jesus is thus claiming not only to be eternal but also to be God who appeared to Moses at the burning bush.

**8:59** So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. Since they understood Jesus’ statement, they considered Him guilty of blasphemy. Stoning was the prescribed punishment for blasphemy (Lev. 24:16; Dt. 13:6-11; Jn. 10:31-33; 11:8).

However, this punishment was supposed to be the result of righteous judgment not mob violence (Dt. 17:2-7).





### **Healing of the Man Born Blind (9:1-12)**

**9:2-3** “And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.” The Jesus customarily assumed that suffering was the result of sin. But the NT clearly teaches that suffering is not always a direct result of a person’s sin (Lk. 13:2-3; 2 Cor. 12:7; Gal. 4:13; and Jesus’ crucifixion.

The rabbis taught that no one died unless there had been sin. Even a child could sin in the womb, they suggested.

**9:4** make the most of your opportunities.

**9:5** “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

**9:6-7** Jesus applied mud (dirt and his saliva) to the man’s eyes and said, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. This large pool is filled with the water from the Gihon Spring. The pool was 225 ft. long on one side with steps leading down into the pool.

**9:8-12** The neighbors find out about this healing.

### **Controversy over the Man (9:13-34)**

**9:13-17** The Pharisees enter the story, which took place on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees say Jesus is not from God because He broke the Sabbath. Others said, “How can a sinner do such signs?” The blind man said, “He is a prophet.”

**9:18-23** The Pharisees call in the parents who affirm he is their son and was really born blind, but they do not know who healed him. “Ask him; he is of age.” They feared the Jews, “for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.”

**9:25** The blind man answered, “Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

**9:30-33** “If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

**9:34** “They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.”

### **Jesus Affirms His Deity**

**9:35-38** Do you believe in the Son of Man? “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.

**9:39-41** Jesus came to make the blind to see and the seeing blind. The Pharisees claim to sight showed they never understood their spiritual blindness and need for Jesus. Some claim to see but are spiritually blind. Others admit their blindness and come to Christ for sight.

### **Discourse on the Good Shepherd (10:1-21)**

**10:1** The sheepfold was commonly a courtyard near or beside a house and bordered by a stone wall or hedges. One or several families kept their sheep there at night. Sometimes caves and natural formations were also used as a sheepfold. Sheepfolds may not have a formal door but would be guarded by a gatekeeper, who used his body as the door. A thief is one who steals by stealth and a robber steals by violence (Lk. 10:30, 36).

**10:3-6** The sheep hear the shepherd’s voice, and he calls them by name and leads them out. The sheep follow him, because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger. Jewish

shepherds lead their sheep; they do not drive them. Shepherds call their own sheep. Flocks that sleep together are easily separated by the voices of the shepherds.

**10:7-9** I am the door of the sheep. Those who enter by me will be saved.

**10:10** “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

**10:11-13** The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, unlike the cowardly hired hand, who cares nothing for the sheep. The word “good” (*kalos*) here speaks to beauty and virtuous character, a model of perfection. The “goodness” of this shepherd comes from the fact that He does not spare Himself in caring for the sheep. He willingly lays down His life for His sheep.

**10:14-15** The Father loves the Lord Jesus because He lays down His life for the sheep. He knows His sheep and His sheep know Him. This is like the relationship of Father and Son.

To know is to love and to obey (1 Jn. 2:3-6).

**10:16** The other sheep that are not of this fold are Gentiles (Isa. 56:8). The phrase “one flock, one shepherd” refers back to Ezek. 34:23; 37:24; but here Jesus applies it more broadly, as Jews and Gentiles are united in one new body (Mt. 28:18-20; Eph. 2:11-22).

**10:17-18** “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” Jesus voluntarily gives up His body to the cross, but He is also able to take it up again. This shows His divine nature.

**10:19-21** Again his words caused division. “Demon...insane.” “Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

### **Jesus Asserts His Deity as Feast of Dedication (10:22-42)**

**10:22** Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication, was not a required pilgrimage festival, but the eight-day celebration of lights in the temple was beautiful, and many pious Jews from nearby Galilee would come to Jerusalem. It was the next festival after those immediately connected to the Feast of Tabernacles (7:1–10:21). This feast celebrates the rededication of the Jewish temple in December 164 B.C., after its desecration by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus Epiphanes IV in 167.

**10:23** This word for temple (*hieron*) refers to the larger temple area. Jesus was in Solomon’s colonnade, a covered walkway on the eastern side of the Temple Mount, for it is here that the older parts of the temple were still remembered as being from Solomon (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 20:220-221; Acts 3:11. It is winter, perhaps this is why Jesus is there.

**10:24-27** Jews asked Jesus to tell us plainly if you are the Christ. Jesus says his works in the Father’s name testify about Him. Jesus’ sheep hear His voice.

**10:28-29** “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.” This gives great assurance of protection to those who believe, but it does not teach “once saved, always saved.” One can leave the love of God (Jn. 15:8-10; Jude 24). The devil is not greater than the Christ (1 Jn. 4:4; 5:4).

**10:30** “I and the Father are one.” They are one entity—the Greek is neuter (5:17-18; 10:33-38). This echoes the Shema, the basic confession of Judaism (Dt. 6:4-5). This is a claim of deity on Jesus’ part. The unity of Jesus with the Father is the basis of the disciples unity with one another (Jn. 17:20-23). More than one person but only one God.

**10:31-33** The Jews pick up stones to stone Him for “making Himself God” not for His good works and signs.

**10:34-36** A quotation from Psalm 82:6 is called “Law,” “Scripture,” and “word of God.” The Scripture cannot be broken. Jesus is depending on just one word, “gods,” in the OT for His argument. He implies that every single word in Scripture is completely true and reliable. His opponents do not differ with this high view of Scripture. Because of Psa. 82:6, Jesus is not blaspheming to call Himself God.

**10:37-38** If you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know that the Father is in Me and I am in the Father.

**10:39** They sought to arrest Him, but He escaped from their hands.

**10:40-42** And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there. Many came to Him and were saying, “While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true.” Many believed in Him there.

### **The Raising of Lazarus (11:1-57)**

John, under divine guidance, built his case for signs with great skill. In this development he proved himself to be a masterful dramatic logician. Jesus' Jewish critics were quite willing to call Jesus a magician, but a powerful messenger of God's acts they were not willing to recognize.<sup>23</sup>

**11:1 Lazarus** is only mentioned in chapters 11 and 12, but his sisters are mentioned in Lk. 10:38-42. **Bethany** is located two miles from Jerusalem (11:18) on the eastern slopes of the Mount of Olives. This Bethany is different from the one mentioned in Jn. 1:28.

**11:4** "This sickness does not lead to death." (See Mk. 5:39) This is a prediction of Lazarus' resurrection (v. 44), since Jesus knew of his death (v. 14). In fact, Lazarus must have died shortly after the messengers left Bethany, accounting for the four days of vv. 17 and 39: one day for the journey of the messengers, the two days Jesus remained where He was (v. 6), and a day for Jesus' journey to Bethany. God's Son would be glorified through what happened to Lazarus, partly because the miracle shows the power of God to raise the dead. This miracle also led to the events leading to Jesus' death on the cross (vs. 46-53).

**11:6** Jesus acts at God's direction not as people wish.

**11:11-14 Fallen asleep.** This is a euphemism for death (vs. 12-14). The OT parallel is "slept with his fathers" (1 Kgs. 2:10, et. al.) Occasionally, death is compared to a deep sleep from which one day people will be awakened (e.g., Dan. 12:2).

**11:15-16** Jesus is glad he was not there, so that they may believe. Thomas Didymus, the Twin, was ready to die with him. Both these names have the same signification, a twin; Thomas being Aramaic, and Didymus being Greek. It is said to have been customary for the Jews when traveling into foreign countries, or familiarly conversing with the Greeks or Romans, to assume a Greek or Latin name of similar meaning to their own.<sup>24</sup>

### **I Am the Resurrection and the Life (11:17-27)**

**11:17** Lazarus was already in the tomb four days. Though burial usually followed soon after death (Acts 5:6, 10), some later Jewish sources indicate a belief that the soul hovered over the body for three days, hoping to reenter it, but then gave up and departed. By the fourth day, the Jews believed all hope was gone.

**11:19** The first week of deep grief after a close relative's burial would be spent mourning in one's house, sitting on the floor and visited by friends. This custom, called *shivah* (for "seven" days), is still practiced in Judaism today and is very helpful for releasing grief. Mourners abstained from adornment for the next three weeks and from common pleasures for the next year.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Borchert, G. L. (1996). *John 1-11* (Vol. 25A, p. 346). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>24</sup> Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). *Manners & customs of the Bible* (p. 520). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers.

<sup>25</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Jn 11:20). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

**11:21** “Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” This is repeated by Mary in verse 32.

11:22-24 “Your brother will rise again.” Martha assumes this is on the last day.

**11:25–26** “Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” Jesus is the bread that gives life (6:35). He is the One who has the words of life (6:68). He is life (14:6; Acts 3:15; Heb. 7:16). Death cannot hold Him (1 Cor. 15:54-57). Jesus desires personal trust in Him and in His promises. Those who believe will triumph over death, because of the power of Christ.

**11:27** Martha’s confession: “the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world.”

**11:28-29** Martha tells Mary, “the Teacher” is here. Mary got up quickly. “Teacher” is a common way to refer to Jesus prior to the resurrection (1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8; cf. 20:16).

**11:33** **Deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.** Profoundly sorrowful and troubled at the grief his friends had suffered.

**11:35** **Jesus wept.** Jesus joined his friends’ sadness with heartfelt sorrow. This is not loud wailing but quiet weeping. The Jews said, “See how He loved him!”

**11:37** Some questioned why Jesus didn’t act sooner to heal Lazarus if He could heal a blind man.

**11:39** Four days meant there would be a stench. “The body would be wrapped and left lying on the floor in the tomb’s antechamber; only after a year, when the flesh had rotted off, would family members return to collect the bones into a box, which they would then slide into a slot on the wall. After four days (11:17), decomposition was well under way, especially because it was no longer winter (11:55). Whatever spices they may have used to delay the stench (cf. comment on Mk 16:1) would no longer be effective.”<sup>26</sup>

**11:40-43** Jesus acted for the glory of God (v. 4). He acted “so that they may believe that You sent Me.”

**11:44** “Unbind Him.” He was bound up with linen wrappings. “The deceased would be wrapped in long cloth strips. This wrapping was thorough, binding the limbs to keep them straight and even the cheeks to keep the mouth shut; the facecloth may have been a yard square. This tight wrapping would have made it hard enough for a living person to walk, not to mention a formerly dead person coming forth from the entrance to the tomb; this difficulty further underlines the miraculous nature of this event. Men could not wrap women’s corpses, but women could wrap both men and women, so Lazarus may have been wrapped by his sisters.”<sup>27</sup>

**11:45-46** The focus here is on Jesus not Lazarus. Some believed, while others went to the Pharisees and told what Jesus did.

### **Conspiracy to Kill Jesus (47-57)**

**11:47–48** So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” Notice the

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<sup>26</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Jn 11:39). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>27</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Jn 11:43–44). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

enemies of Jesus did not doubt that Jesus worked this miracle. They were envious of his power and fearful of the ramifications with Rome.

The Sanhedrin was the high court of the Jews. In the NT period, it was comprised of three groups: the chief priests, the elders, and the teachers of the Law. Its membership reached seventy-one, including the high priest, who served as the presiding officer. Under Roman jurisdiction, the Sanhedrin was given great power, but it could not impose capital punishment (18:31).

**11:49-52** Caiphas, the high priest for a total of 18 years, longer than any high priest in the first century. He was arrogant and rude, but God still used him at this point to prophesy about the death of Jesus. John thought of the nation Israel not simply as the Jews but people from all nations who came to believe in Him.

**11:53** “from that day on they planned together to kill Him.”

**11:54** Jesus went into the country to Ephraim. He no longer walked publicly among the Jews. If this is the city known as Ophrah, it was about 15 miles north of Jerusalem.

**11:55** The Passover was near, and people were coming into Jerusalem to purify themselves. If they were ceremonially unclean, they could not keep the Feast (cf. 18:28). The temple courts had countless pools (mikveh) for ritual purification.

#### **IV. The Final Week and Crucifixion 12:1-19:42**

##### **Mary Anoints Jesus (12:1-11)**

**12:1** Jesus came six days before the Passover to Bethany to the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. This is likely on Saturday.

**12:2** Dinner usually refers to the main meal of the day and was held in the evening. Reclining at table may imply a banquet rather than a regular meal (cf. 13:2-5, 23). People at special feasts would lie on cushions with their heads near a low table and their feet pointing out away from it, resting on one elbow and eating with the other hand (always the right hand).

**12:3.** The “pound” may have been about twelve ounces. A flask would normally contain not more than an ounce, so Mary is tremendously extravagant here. It was customary to anoint the heads of important guests, but a host would provide only water for their feet. Further, religious Jews resented married women who uncovered their heads and exposed their hair to men’s gazes; because Mary’s brother and sister but not her husband are mentioned, she may have been unmarried (thus young, widowed or divorced); but acting thus toward a famous (albeit single) rabbi might still raise some pious eyebrows.<sup>28</sup> Mt. 26:7 and Mk. 14:3 mention that Mary anointed Jesus’ head; with this much nard, she likely anointed both. The gift likely represented Mary’s life savings, as 500 denarii was a very large sum to ordinary people; 300 denarii was a year’s pay. One should not confuse this event with a similar event in Luke 7:36-50.

Pure nard was imported from northern India and used by the Romans for anointing the head. The plant “nard” yields a fragrant oil of the same name.

**12:4-6** Judas Iscariot’s objection came from his character: Judas “was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.”

**12:7-8** “Jesus said, “Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.” “For in pouring this fragrant

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<sup>28</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Jn 12:3). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

oil on My body, she did *it* for My burial. 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” (Mt. 26:12-13). Some have used this incident as an excuse to neglect the poor, but this situation was unique and the sacrifice of Mary was worth it.

**12:9-11** Lazarus became a sight to see along with Jesus, so the chief priest planned to put him to death to stop the spread of belief in Jesus’ power. Power corrupts. One death now becomes two.

### **The Triumphal Entry (12:12-19)**

**12:12** The “next day” is likely Sunday.

**12:13** “Those already present in Jerusalem typically welcomed pilgrims to the feast and strewed branches in their path. Palm branches were used at the Feast of Tabernacles but had to be brought from Jericho. They had been one of the nationalistic symbols of Judea since the days of the Maccabees, were consistently used to celebrate military victories and probably stirred some political messianic hopes among the people. “Hosanna” means “O save!”; this comes from Psalm 118:25–26. The people perhaps thought of the title “King of Israel” in a political and military sense, hoping Jesus would use his amazing powers to resist Roman rule and lead the nation to independence. Like Caiaphas, they spoke better than they knew, as his disciples later understood (12:16). The cross is followed by the resurrection, which brings faith and understanding.

**12:14-15** A quotation from Zech. 9:9. Jesus is the humble shepherd king, coming into Jerusalem to take His rightful place. An early messianic prophecy speaks of a ruler from Judah who, riding on a donkey, will command the obedience of the nations (Gen. 49:10-11).

**12:17-19** The witnesses of Lazarus’ resurrection testified that He performed this miracle, and the people went out to meet Jesus. The Pharisees realized the world had gone after Him.

### **Greeks Seek Jesus (12:20-26)**

**12:20-22** Some Greeks who came to worship wanted to see Jesus.

**12:23–26** And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **If anyone serves me, he must follow me;** and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.”

Jesus here speaks of what happens to the seed that bears fruit. It must first die. It must lose its own identity, that the new plant may spring up.

### **The Jews Fail to Believe (12:27-50)**

**12:27-28** This is one of three instances in Jesus’ ministry where a voice from heaven attests to his identity (the others at his baptism and at the transfiguration). In ancient times a person’s name summed up his whole person. “Glorify your name.”

**12:30** This voice came for the people’s sake.

**12:31** “Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.” The ruler of the world is Satan (16:11; 1 Jn. 5:19). The cross seems to be Jesus’ defeat, but it is really His triumph! Out of the cross comes the greatest good to come to the world.

**12:32-33** The cross exalts Christ as supreme (cf. 3:14). Jesus will draw all men to Himself. The cross reveals His love. All people (Jews and Gentiles); this is vital considering the Greeks were present.

**12:34-36** The Law here represents the entire Hebrew Scriptures, in which there are several passages that speak of the perpetual existence of the Davidic Messiah (2 Sam. 7:13; Ps. 61:6-7; 89:3-4, 35-37; Isa. 9:7; Dan. 7:13-14). Jesus wants them to take advantage of the opportunities of this time to believe! Jesus went away and hid himself.

**12:37-41** Quotations from Isa. 53:1 and Isa. 6:10 speak of the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. These are fulfillment verses found in John. John emphasizes God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. The people are held guilty for not believing in spite of the evidence. These quotations are strong evidence from Jesus that the entire book of Isaiah was written by one person, the prophet Isaiah. To see the exalted King and the suffering servant is to see the glory of God in Jesus Christ. The Jews did not believe because they would not and could not.

**12:42-43** "Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God." Not all the leaders opposed Jesus; many had come to faith. But their fear of the Pharisees meant they would not confess their faith publicly. The desire for human approval kept them from God's approval.

**12:44-45** Believing in Christ means believing "in Him who sent Me." Seeing Me means seeing the Father.

**12:46** Jesus came as a Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness (in ignorance and evil).

**12:47-48** Jesus did not come at that time to judge the disobedient; He came to save (cf. 3:16-17). But on the last day, His word will judge. We will be judged by His written teaching (Rev. 20:11-12; cf. Mt. 23:34). Judaism believed that God's law was the standard by which he would judge his people at the end time; Jesus thus presents his words as equivalent to those of God.<sup>29</sup>

**12:49-50** "For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me." Jesus was not presumptuous to speak on his own initiative or authority. He only spoke what He was commanded to speak. He speaks "just as the Father has told Me." He dared not to act on His own. One was to receive an agent or ambassador with the honor due his sender. An agent or ambassador was also expected to represent his sender accurately.

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<sup>29</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Jn 12:47). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



## Chapters 13-14

### Discourse at the Last Supper, Farewell (13:1-14:31)

The second half of John's Gospel consists of Jesus' farewell discourse (chapters 13-17) and the story of the death of Jesus (18-20). Since Jesus has been rejected by the Jews, he turns his attention to his disciples.

**13:3-8.** The couches would be arranged around tables containing the food, with the upper part of each person's body facing the food and their feet away from the table. Jesus would go to the outside of this circle to wash each person's feet.

After travelers had come a long distance, the host was to provide water for their feet as a sign of hospitality, as exemplified by Abraham (Gen 18:4). Yet loosing sandals and personally washing someone else's feet was considered servile, most commonly the work of a servant or of very submissive wives or children (cf. also 1 Sam 25:41). (Travelers' sandals would not be covered in dung, as some scholars have suggested. Side roads were very dusty; the main streets of Jerusalem, however, would have been kept as clean as the city could make them, especially the Upper City, where Jesus ate this Passover meal.) Jesus' removing his outer garments to serve them would also appear as a sign of great humility before them.<sup>30</sup>

Foot washing was an act necessary for the comfort and cleanliness for anyone who had walked on dusty Palestinian roads in their sandals. It was a blessing to have one's feet washed, but it is not an act of worship.

On this occasion, there was no servant and no one volunteered. Jesus set an example of humility and selfless service, which would lead him eventually to the cross. Jesus was one among them as one who serves (Lk. 22:27).

When Peter said "never," he was showing a mixture of humility (he didn't want Jesus to perform this lowly service for him) and pride (he tried to dictate to Jesus). Peter needed cleansing and needed to let Jesus have this place in his life. "Let Him have his way with thee." Receiving loving service in humility also shows a form of selflessness needed in our lives. Do not be ashamed to let others serve you. They are serving the Lord when they serve you.

**13:9-10** Peter's response was wholehearted, but he was still dictating to Jesus. Jesus didn't need to wash his whole body.

**13:11** Jesus knew Judas would betray Him. He washed Judas' feet too.

**13:12-17** Jesus is the example for us to follow. No one is too good to serve others. "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (Jas. 1:22-25; 4:17).

**13:18-19** Jesus is preparing them for Judas' betrayal. Quoting from Psa. 41:9, Jesus reveals the great betrayal of one who is blessed by Jesus but still betraying Him.

**13:20** To receive the message of the apostles is to receive Jesus Himself and to receive the Father. The apostles' message in the epistles are from the Lord. Jesus sent out his "apostles" (to send with a message). This would apply to those who fulfill the great commission in every age.

### Jesus Predicts His Betrayal (13:21-38)

**13:21** Jesus' betrayal troubled Him.

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<sup>30</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Jn 13:3-8). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

**13:22-26** Jesus identifies Judas to John by giving him the morsel of bread. John uses Judas' full name.

**13:27-30** After the morsel, Satan then entered into him (see v. 2). Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." The others did not know what errand Judas was going to do. So he went immediately and it was night.

**13:31-32** Judas' actions, though sinful, would set in motion the glorification of the Son of Man. God will glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately. See Isa. 49:3.

**13:33** Jesus predicts that He will not be with them much longer (Mt. 16:21). Where He is going they cannot come (the cross and death).

**13:34-35** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." The distinguishing mark of discipleship for the world is our love for one another (note these other distinguishing marks in 8:31-32 and 15:8-10). We are to love, - even as Jesus loves.

There is a tradition that when John was an old man, his pupils would have him sit in their midst, and he would quote the words of Jesus and say, "Little children, love one another."

**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 will follow afterward." A prediction of the death of Peter (see 21:18).

**13:37-38** Peter is willing to lay down his life for Jesus, but Jesus predicts, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times" (cf. Mt. 26:33-35, 69-75). Mark notes the rooster crowed twice (Mk. 14:30, 68, 72).

### **Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (14:1-14).**

**14:1** Do not be troubled; believe! The apostles had just received troubling news (13:33, 36). Belief is the antidote for a troubled heart. ESV translates this "Believe in God" as an imperative. Belief denotes personal trust, relational trust.

**14:2-3** "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." Since Jesus is going to the Father, Jesus is speaking here of heaven. The word "rooms" or "dwelling places" refers to permanent places of abode (note v. 23). Jesus is now in heaven preparing our places, interceding for us (1 Jn. 2:2). Jesus promises to come again for us (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:10-12).

**14:4-6** Thomas wants to know the way He is going. Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus personifies the way by His obedience to the Father. Jesus personifies the truth, because He is the Light! Jesus personifies the life, because He gives life to those who believe.

**14:7-9** To know Jesus is to know the Father. To see Jesus is to see the Father.

**14:10-11** Jesus identifies with His Father because He does not speak on his own initiative and because He does the works of the Father.

**14:12** Believers will do His works also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. The book of Acts details many miracles performed by the apostles and other believers. Works include both miracles (7:21) and other activities in his ministry (4:34; 5:36; 10:32; 17:4). These are all manifestations of the Father in Jesus Christ. The greater works will come about by the power of the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send. The entire ministry of the church (miraculous and non-miraculous) will show that God is active in them.

**14:13-14** God will grant requests in the name of Christ. Praying in Jesus' name and by His authority means praying in a way consistent with His character and His will (names represent people). Adding "in Jesus' name" at the end of every prayer is neither required nor wrong. Acceptable prayer delights in the will of the Lord Jesus and the Father (Jas. 4:2-3). Some regard v. 14 as permission to pray to Jesus, but Jesus in other verses suggest prayer to the Father (Jn. 15:16; cf. Mt. 6:8-9).

God is sovereign over all and subject to none. We must pray in accordance with His will, just as Jesus prayed "Your will be done." When Christians pray in this manner, their prayers will surely be answered. To pray in Jesus' name is to pray in accord with His will and His mission. It is to pray by His authority.

**14:15** Love, like faith (Jas. 2:14-26), cannot be separated from obedience (1 Jn. 2:3-6; 3:16-18). These words echo the covenant requirements of love and obedience found in Deuteronomy 5:10; 6:5-6; 7:9; 10:12-13; 11:13, 22). They reflect God's true authority. True love demonstrates itself in willing, careful obedience.

### **The Role of the Spirit**

**14:16-17** The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, is *another* (of the same kind) Helper like Jesus. He will be with them forever. The world cannot receive the Spirit, because it doesn't see or know him. The Spirit abides with you and will be in you. The apostles received the Spirit (Jn. 20:22) and were baptized with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4).

**14:18-19** Jesus will appear to his disciples after the resurrection. The world won't see, but you will see Me. "Because I live, you will live also."

**14:20-21** In that day (you see Me again) you will know I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. Keeping the commandments shows love. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to Him. The love of the Father and the Son cannot be separated.

**14:22** Judas here is probably "Judas the son of James" mentioned in Lk. 6:16 and Acts 1:13. The Jewish idea of the Messianic predictions fulfilled in Christ but not showing Himself to the world was confusing.

**14:23-24** "Jesus answered 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. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me." Love and obedience are once again intertwined. His words were the Father's words. The Grk. word for "home" here is the same word used for "dwelling place" in verse 2. If we wish to have a permanent dwelling place with God, then we must keep His word so He may dwell with us here in this life. We have been living with God since we became Christians.

**14:26** "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 that I have said to you." The word "Helper" (*parakletos*) is masculine and used as a description of the Spirit, which is a neuter word. "He will teach you" (not "it"). John understood the personhood of the Holy Spirit and uses the same masculine form in 15:26 and 16:13-14. He will teach them and remind them of "all that I have said to you." This promise is specifically given to the apostles. As a counselor and helper, the Holy Spirit will give aid to the apostles when they have need.

**14:27** “Peace...My peace I leave with you.” Jesus’ peace is real and present. It refers not only to the absence of turmoil but also the blessing of God that comes from a right relationship (Num. 6:24-26; Ps. 29:11; Hag. 2:9). They would need this peace from God, considering the tribulation they would face in the future (Jn. 15:18-19; 16:33). Don’t be troubled or fearful!

**14:28** Rejoice that I am going to the Father. The Father is “greater than I.”

**14:29-30** The time is soon and the ruler of the world (Satan) is coming; and he has nothing in Me. He has no claim on me. The devil thinks he can win. (see 12:31)

**14:31** “but I do (“exactly” NASB) as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.” ‘Just as’ (καθὼς)... ‘even so’ (οὕτως).

These phrases speak of a careful, accurate obedience. Jesus acts exactly in his obedience to demonstrate His love for His Father.

**Discourse on the way to Gethsemane (15:1-16:33)**

**Jesus is the Vine—Followers are the Branches (15:1-11)**

**15:1** In saying that He is the true vine, Jesus is contrasting Himself with OT Israel. The OT frequently uses the vineyard or vine as a symbol for Israel, God's covenant people (Isa. 5:1-7; 27:2-6; cf. Ps. 80:8-9). However, Israel's failure to produce fruit resulted in divine judgment. Jesus is, by contrast, the true vine; and his followers who abide in Him produce fruit.

**15:2** God as the vinedresser does two things that the vine may produce fruit: (1) he removes unfruitful branches, and (2) he prunes all the others so they will be more fruitful.

**15:3** The apostles were clean (pruned) by the word.

**15:4-5** The branch must abide in the vine *to live* and to *bear fruit*. Apart from Christ, we cannot do anything! But when we abide in Him and He abides in us, we bear *much* fruit.

**15:6** "If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned." This verse echoes Ezek. 15:1-8, where a vine that does not produce is good for nothing but to be cast into the fire (Heb. 6:7-8). Fire is a common Biblical symbol for divine judgment (Isa. 30:27; Mt. 3:12; 18:8; 25:41).

**15:7** "If you abide in Me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." Two conditions are here for answered prayer. If God's people truly abide in Jesus, they will desire what He desires and will pray according to His words, and those prayers will be pleasing to Him.

**15:8** The Father is glorified in the work of the Son (13:31-32), and He is glorified in the fruit-bearing of the disciples (Mt. 7:20; Lk. 6:43-45).

**15:9-10** The way to abide in the love of the Father and the Son is to keep "my commandments" in the same way Jesus kept the Father's commandments and abides in His love. Jude 21: "keep yourselves in the love of God." God will never desert you, but you must not desert Him.

**15:11** "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." Obedience is not drudgery (1 Jn. 5:3) but is joyful. See John 10:10; 1 Pet. 1:8-9.

**Love One Another (15:12-17)**

**15:12** Love one another, as I have loved you.

**15:13** Sacrificial shows the greatest love. That's how Jesus loved.

**15:14** You are my friends if you do what I command you. "Friends!" This word reveals a deep level in relationship (cf. 21:15-17). What greater joy or honor can there be than to be a "friend" of the One who created us. In the OT only Abraham (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8) and Moses (Ex. 33:11) are called friends of God. Here Jesus extends this privilege to all obedient believers.

**15:15** Jesus contrasts slaves who don't know with his friends who have learned it all.

**15:16** Jesus chose the apostles and appointed them that they should go and bear fruit and that their fruit should abide, so that so that *whatever you ask* the Father *in my name*, he may give it to you. God loved us and provided the sacrifice of Jesus for us "while we were still sinners." He set everything in motion and gave us the cross and the gospel to persuade us to follow Him.

**15:17** "These things I command you, so that you will love one another." God commands us to love one another and recognize one another as fellow friends.

### **The Hatred of the World (15:18-27)**

**15:18-19** If the world hates you, it hated me first. If you were worldly, they would love you. Jesus chose us out of the world, which causes the world to hate us (cf. 3:19-20). We are not “of the world” (Rom. 12:1-2). We are not of the world, and the world is not of us (Gal. 2:20; 6:14).

**15:20-21** Because Christians do not belong to the world, they will persecute them. The world doesn’t know or love the Father and so mistreats those who do. A slave is not greater than his master.

**15:22** Privilege and responsibility go together. Jesus spoke, they rejected. They have no excuse for their sin.

**15:23** “Whoever hates me hates my Father also.”

**15:24** They hated Jesus for the works He did that no one else could do—envy (Mt. 27:18).

**15:25** Their hatred fulfills the prophecy, “They hated me without a cause” (Ps. 69:4; cf. Ps 35:19 and Isa. 6:9-10). Psalm 69 reveals a righteous sufferer who is zealous for God but is persecuted by God’s enemies for no good reason. They persecuted Jesus, not because Jesus had done any wrong, but simply because of the irrational evil in the hearts of the persecutors.

**15:26** “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.” I will send the Helper (parakletos), who will come in obedience to the directions of the Father. The words of the Spirit in Acts 2:1-40 will bear witness of Christ.

**15:27** The apostles will also bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning. They were eyewitnesses of His glory and His resurrection (Lk. 24:48; Acts 2:32).

### **Jesus’ Warning (16:1-4)**

**16:1-3** Jesus warns them to keep them from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues. In their minds, killing you is a service to God (Acts 8:1-3; 26:9-11; Gal. 1:13-14; 1 Tim. 1:13). Not all religious zeal is good. Some thinking they are following God are actually utterly evil. They don’t know the Father!

**16:4** When the hour of persecution comes, you will remember this. I was with you and didn’t need to tell you earlier.

### **The Holy Spirit Promised (16:5-15)**

**16:5-6** I am going to the One who sent Me. Because I said these things about leaving and about the persecutions, sorrow has filled your heart.

**16:7** It is to your advantage that I go away. Jesus is going to the Father, but the Holy Spirit would carry on Jesus’ ministry over the entire world.

**16:8-11** The Spirit will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. The word translated “convict” means “to expose, to convict, to cross-examine for the purpose of convicting or refuting an opponent, especially used of legal proceedings.

Concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me (Jn. 3:18);

and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me;

and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

People do not see themselves as sinners, because they do not believe. We live in a world that believes in universalism, that all people will go to heaven regardless of what they believe or what they do. The defeat of Satan is not merely a victory; it is also a judgment, a condemnation (Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8; Rev. 20:10).

**16:12–15** “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

Jesus did not reveal everything during His earthly ministry; the disciples needed time to grasp other things. They could not bear them at that time, especially as they moved into a Gentile world. He would send the Spirit that would guide them into “all the truth.” The Spirit, like Jesus, would never dare to speak on his own initiative or authority (12:49-50). Like Jesus, he will speak what He hears. The Spirit will glorify Jesus, by taking what is mine and declaring it to the apostles. Whatever the Father has is now the Lord’s (Jn. 3:35; Mt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-23).

The Spirit will foretell the things that are to come, the future, something that only God can do. This shows the divine nature of the Holy Spirit.

### **Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection (16:16-22)**

**16:16-19** A little while till his death, and afterwards a little while to His resurrection. He will go to the Father. “A little while” is used in 7:33; 12:35; 13:33; and 14:19.

**16:20–22** “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.”

**16:23–24** “In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” Pray to the Father in the name of Jesus. The Holy Spirit will be present “in that day” to guide them. You will find joy, because God will answer!

### **I Have Overcome the World**

**16:25-28** The hour is coming when Jesus will avoid figures of speech and will speak plainly about the Father. In that day, you will ask in My name and Jesus will not ask the Father, because the Father loves them (for loving Me and having believed that I came from God. Jesus came from the Father in heaven and is going back to Him.

**16:30-31** The disciples express their faith that Jesus came from God and knows all things.

**16:32** “Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.” Jesus predicts their scattering (cf. 19:27); this probably alludes to Zech. 13:7 (cf. Mt. 26:31, 56). The shepherd will be deserted by his sheep.

Jesus was not alone; the Father was with Him (1 Pet. 2:21-24; 4:19).

**16:33** Jesus is speaking to give them peace. In the world you have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world (1 Jn. 2:13-14; 4:4; 5:4-5). The force of the verb here suggests a continuing victory. This is more than a promise; it is a fact. Through Him we today are able to overcome the world.

## Chapters 17-18

### Jesus' Prayer (17:1-26)

**17:1** Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven; this was a customary posture in prayer (Ps. 123:1; Mk. 7:34; Lk. 18:13). **Father, the hour has come.** He is speaking here of the hour of his crucifixion, the time when He would sacrifice His blood in an atoning death to save His people from their sins. "Glorify your Son, that the Son may glorify You." This implies the deity of Jesus, since the Lord God will not share His glory with any other (Isa. 42:8; 48:11). God is glorified in the cross of Christ!

**17:2-3** God gave Jesus authority of all flesh, all people and nations (Mt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-23; Rev. 19:15-16). He has the ability to give eternal life (14:3). "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." God is the only true God (Deut. 6:4; Jn. 5:44; 1 Jn. 5:20). Jesus is the "one of a kind" Son sent by the Father (Jn. 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18) and the only way to the Father is through Him.

**17:4-5** Jesus glorified the Father by accomplishing the work the Father sent Him to do, including His death and resurrection. He asks the Father to glorify Him with the glory they shared "before the world existed." The pre-existence of Jesus (Jn. 1:1; Phil. 2:5-8). "World" occurs 18 times in this prayer.

**17:6** Jesus manifested the Name (the person represented by the name; his works and his words) to those the Father gave Him out of the world. They belonged to the Father, and the Father gave them to Jesus. They have kept your word. God values loyalty and obedience.

**17:7-8** They understand that the words of Jesus are really the words of God, the Father.

**17:9-10** Jesus makes a request for those who belong to Him. Jesus separates those given from those of the world. Jn. 6:44-45 speaks of how God draws us through teaching. They believe and follow the Lord. Everything that belongs to the Father belongs to the Son, and all that belongs to the Son belong to the Father! God is glorified in the believers (2 Thess. 1:10-12).

**17:11** Jesus realizes He is leaving the world to come to the Father, yet the believers are staying. "Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one." The Father and Son are one in purpose, one in character, and one in mind and judgment. A profound unity should be the norm among genuine believers. They should have the kind of unity the Father and Son have. "Keep them in your name" means keep them faithful to the end as your devoted children. This is repeated in v. 15. "Holy Father" echoes Lev. 11:44. This is the only time Jesus uses this form of address to the Father.

**17:12** Keeping is guarding them, so they would not leave the fellowship. Not one perished "but the son of destruction" (son of perdition in NASB). "that the Scripture might be fulfilled": Ps. 41:9; 69:25; 109:8.

### The Disciples and the World (17:13-19)

**17:13-14** "these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 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." The world hostile to God is hostile to them, because they have His word.

**17:15** "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep (guard) them from the evil one." Satan is the evil one (Mt. 6:13). "Evil" here is an adjective and may refer to the devil or may refer to evil in general. The evil is the result of the hatred of the world for the word of God (cf. 1 Jn. 5:19-20). God's protection is indispensable.



**17:17** “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” The sanctification of Christians is a lifelong process both as separation from sin at conversion and as remaining free from participation in sin or being influenced by evil throughout life. The TRUTH is what distinguishes the Christian from the world. The truth comes from the word Jesus imparted to the apostles that came from the Father. “I have given them your word” (17:14). No unity can exist apart from their devotion to the truth. Sanctification (making one holy) and revelation cannot be separated (15:3). True disciples abide in the word (8:31-32). Sanctification results in a changed lifestyle for the believer.

**17:18-19** Jesus sent them into the world. Jesus consecrated or sanctified himself (12:49-50), set the example, “that they also may be sanctified in truth.” The verb “consecrate” is used of consecrating priests (Ex. 28:41) and sacrifices (Ex. 28:38; Num. 18:9). Jesus solemnly sets himself apart to do God’s will, sacrificed himself on the cross, that He might set us apart in truth to the service of God.

### **The Prayer for Unity (20-26)**

**17:20–21** “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” Jesus’ prayer would include all who believe the gospel. Jesus prays for a true and perfect unity of all the believers, the kind He had with the Father. Unity will lead to the world believing; division will keep people from believing.

**17:22–23** “The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.” Unity means allowing God to live in us. His will becomes our will; His teaching becomes our devotion. The Father’s love for believers is compared here to the Father’s love for His Son Jesus!

"There is one great danger in seeking union among men – that is, in uniting with men we may separate from God. Often when we seek to get closer to one body we move away from another. We must be careful not to separate from God, because a union without God is a union in falsehood, a union with death." David Lipscomb (The Gospel Advocate 1909 pp.1486, 1487)

**17:24** “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.” The purpose of our salvation can be found in this verse. The fullness of our salvation comes when Jesus comes to receive us to Himself. In heaven, we will be able to enjoy the love of God that He gave to His Son (Eph. 2:7; 2 Pet. 1:10-11). This love is eternal, has always been, and will always be.

**17:25–26** “O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” God is righteous (Ps. 116:5; 119:137). Though He will be betrayed, the love of the Father will always be. The world may not know the Father, but the Lord Jesus does and those sent do. Jesus made known to them your name.

### **Judas' Betrayal and the Arrest (18:1-11)**

**18:1** The Kidron Valley lies east of the temple in Jerusalem at the bottom of the Mount of Olives. The valley contains a wadi (sporadic brook) named Kidron, which occasionally runs during the rainy season. The garden is likely to be identified with the orchard of "Gethsemane" on the Mount of Olives. The verse mentions that Jesus and his disciples "entered," which may suggest Gethsemane was a walled garden. Gethsemane means "oil press" and was the place where the oil from the olives was prepared.

**18:2-3** "Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons." This was the temple police controlled by the Sanhedrin that kept the peace.

**18:4-5** Jesus knew what would happen and identified himself as Jesus of Nazareth.

**18:6** They drew back and fell to the ground. Falling to the ground is a common reaction to a divine presence (Acts 9:4; 22:7; 26:14; Rev. 1:17; 19:10; 22:8). Though they sought to kill Jesus, they knew His power.

**18:7-9** Jesus reaffirms his identity, but pleads for the officers to let the disciples go. Such compassion touches the heart. Jesus was fulfilling the word he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one" (17:12; cf. 6:39; 10:28). Jesus is the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep (cf. 10:11, 15, 17-18, 28). Jesus saved them physically and spiritually.

**18:10-11** 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.) So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?" (See Mt. 26:51-54.) Peter's sword was likely a Roman short sword (gladius) that could be hidden under a person's garment (Lk. 22:38). The short sword is for stabbing, not slicing, so Peter probably intended to kill the soldier with a lethal blow to the head, but the servant was able to evade the sword and lost his ear instead. This is the only mention of Malchus. Jesus will drink the cup the Father gave to Him ("let this cup pass..."). Such determination to do what is right in the face of real threat is incredibly brave and confident.

Drinking the cup is a metaphor for death and symbolizes God's wrath (cf. Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15-17, 28-29; 49:12; Rev. 14:10; 16:19). Notice the cup was given to Jesus by the Father, and so Jesus was prepared to drink (14:31). In addition to the physical suffering of the cross, Jesus suffered the agony of bearing God's wrath, which was poured out on him as an atoning sacrifice as a punishment for our sins (Heb. 2:14-17; 1 John 2:2).

### **The Trials of Jesus (18:12-40)**

**18:12-14** The Roman cohort and the Jewish commander and officers arrested Jesus and bound Him. Jesus had to let them bind Him; they could not have done so otherwise. They led him first to the house of Annas, former high priest and father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Annas had been deposed from the high priesthood by the Romans in 15 A.D. but was probably still regarded by many as the true high priest. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people (11:50). John is here suggesting that a man who predicted such a thing could not give a fair trial. They intended to kill him.

In Jewish law a man could not be sentenced on the day his trial was held. The two examinations (this one mentioned only by John) and that before Caiaphas—may have been conducted to give some form of legitimacy to what they did. This was a kangaroo court held at

night, assuming and finding Jesus guilty with false testimony. They certainly mistreated the Son of God and did not allow any defense.

**18:15-18** Simon Peter and another disciple (John) followed the crowd to the house of the high priest. John went in, because he knew the high priest, but Peter was stuck outside the door to the court. John went to the doorkeeper to get him and bring him in. The slave girl who kept the door accused Peter of being one of Jesus' disciples. He said, "I am not." Peter was warming by the charcoal fire with the slaves and officers. All four gospels tell us that a slave girl gave Peter his first challenge. She was the most unimportant person imaginable.

**18:19-21** The high priest questioned Jesus about his teaching and his disciples. Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret." It would be easy to find witnesses to his teaching. Jesus had said nothing subversive. "Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said."

**18:22-24** An officer struck (slap with an open hand) him and said, "Is that the way you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered, "If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?" The word "testify" is a legal term and indicated the need to act in a proper legal way. Notice how this is different from Paul's defense at Caesarea (Acts 23:1-5; cf. Ex. 22:28). Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

**18:25-27** Peter's second denial comes while he is warming himself, and **they** ask him, "You also are not one of his disciples, are you?" Mt. 26:71 says another girl asked him, whereas Mk. 14:69 says it was the same girl, and Lk. 22:58 says that it was a man. But with a group of servants talking around the fire, several would doubtless take up and repeat such a question, which is no doubt the meaning of "they." The answer expected the answer of "no." The servants probably didn't expect to find a servant of Jesus in the high priest's courtyard.

One of Malchus' relatives said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed (fulfilling the prophecy of 13:38).

### **Jesus Before Pilate (18:28-40)**

**18:28** The Praetorium was the palace of the Roman governor Pilate. John says little about the Jewish phase of Jesus' trial but much about the Roman trial. The chief priests evidently held a second session of the Sanhedrin after daybreak to give some appearance of legality to what they did (Mk. 15:1). This occasion would have been immediately after that, perhaps between 6 and 7 am., early morning. If Jews entered a Gentile residence, they would become ceremonially unclean (defiled) and unable to eat the Passover. Jesus and his disciples had already eaten the Passover. The word "Passover" sometimes refers to the whole festival of Passover and Unleavened Bread, which lasted seven days and included a number of meals. (See Appendix A)

**18:29-30** Pilate tolerated them and went out to meet them. "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered him, "If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you."

**18:31-32** Jews were not permitted to put anyone to death. Jesus knew that He would be crucified (Mt. 20:18-19) and "must" be lifted up (Jn. 3:14-15; 12:32-34). The Jews looked upon crucifixion with horror. Jewish execution for blasphemy was by stoning (Lev. 24:14-16; Acts 7:58-60). Hanging upon a tree carried with it a curse (Dt. 21:22-23). The Romans, not the Jews,

would put Jesus to death, even as God had overruled in the matter (Ps. 2:1-3; Acts 4:25-28). The Sanhedrin clearly desired that Jesus' execution be done officially in keeping with Roman law. They realized Pilate would not be interested in condemning a man for religious reasons such as blasphemy (Mt. 26:64), so they brought a political charge against Jesus. They accused him of treason by saying he claimed to be king in opposition to Caesar (18:33, 37; 19:3, 12, 15, 19).

**18:33** Pilate takes Jesus back into his headquarters out of the hearing of the Jews and asks, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Pilate wants to know if Jesus poses a threat to Rome.

**18:34-35** Jesus wants to know the source of Pilate's question; was it from himself or from others? Pilate responds that he is not a Jew and points to the chief priests' accusation. "What have you done?"

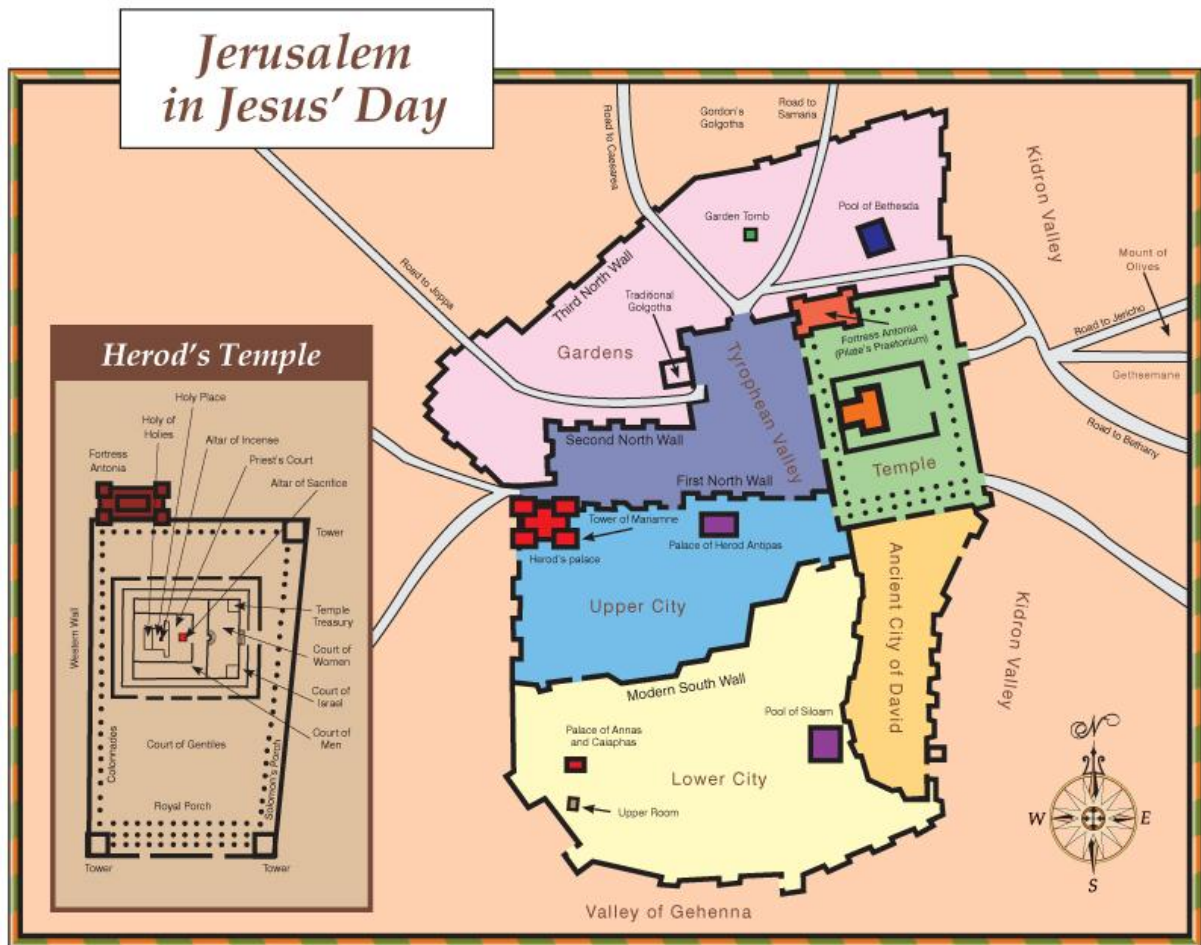
**18:36** The kingdom of Jesus is spiritual not of this world. "Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself" (Jn. 6:15). Jesus was not interested in a violent takeover. Cf. Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 27.

**18:37** Jesus came to bear witness to the truth (1:14, 17; 8:31-32; 14:6). Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice (10:4-5). Truth is a distinguishing factor in following Jesus and being right with God. Truth comes from the words of Jesus (8:31-32; 17:17).

**18:38** What is truth? Ironically, the one charged with determining the truth in the matter dismisses the relevance of the truth in a shallow and superficial way in the very presence of the person who is the truth! Pilate imagines Jesus as a teacher of philosophical questions for which no one can find an answer. He does not see Jesus as a threat and proclaims this as so to the Jews outside. "I find no guilt in him." He repeats this three times (19:4, 6; Lk. 23:4). Considering the death sentence later given to Jesus in response to Jewish pressure, this is truly ironic.

**18:39** Pilate hopes to release Jesus through the Passover custom of releasing a prisoner. Pilate used the title, "King of the Jews," perhaps hoping to influence their decision.

**18:40** Barabbas means "son of the father." In place of the son of the father, the Son of the Father died. Barabbas had committed multiple crimes: robbery, insurrection, and murder (Mt. 27:16; Mk. 15:7; Lk. 23:18-19).



## Chapters 19-20

### The Trials of Jesus (19:1-15 continued)

**19:1** Here the punishment of Jesus by the Romans begins. Some think there were two different beatings administered by the Romans to Jesus. John 19:1 and Luke 23:16 use the verbs *mastigoo* and *paideuo* respectively to refer to this flogging (a light form of flogging for minor crimes), whereas Mt. 27:26 and Mk. 15:15 use a different word, *phragelloo*, “scourge” to refer to a more severe beating that Jesus received after the death sentence is pronounced.

Scourging was a particularly vicious form of punishment usually administered in connection with capital punishment, including crucifixion. The victim was stripped of his clothes, and his hands were raised above his head and tied to a post. Then one or two soldiers would repeatedly beat the victim with a whip, usually made of several leather strips with jagged pieces of iron or sheep bone tied onto them.

One blow after another was delivered across the shoulders, back, and buttocks. Initial blows ripped gashes into His already tender skin, and those that followed dug deeper into our Savior’s tissues, tearing muscles and blood vessels. The subsequent blood loss further weakened Him. Torn and exposed nerves on the back caused indescribable pain.

This brutal scourging was only the beginning of Jesus' suffering. After being untied from the blood-stained scourging post, the soldiers placed a scarlet robe on Him. Each breath, each movement of His body, caused the robe to rub against His torn flesh. The purpose of scourging was to so weaken the individual that he had no strength to fight when he was crucified.

**19:2** "And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe." The crown of thorns was a mock crown. Purple is the imperial color. How ironic, since Jesus is not merely king. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16).

Then a crown of thorns was placed on His head. As the trained Roman soldiers beat Him, these thorns drove deeper into His head, causing profuse bleeding and intense pain. These thorns would distort the person's face. Later, the scarlet robe was torn from His back, reopening the deep wounds.

How horrible was Jesus's suffering at this point? "Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" (Isa. 52:14). Jesus had been so severely beaten, He no longer looked like a human being.

**19:3** "They came up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and struck him with their hands." They slapped the face of Jesus.

**19:4** Pilate brought out Jesus from the back to tell them, "I find no guilt in Him."

**19:5** "Behold the man!" Jesus bloodied, wearing the purple robe and crown of thorns before the Jews, who longed for His blood. "Look at this poor fellow!" It must have seemed strange they had no compassion for this mocked, beat-up man!

**19:6-7** "When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, 'Crucify him, crucify him!' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.' The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.' The anger and heartless cry for the crucifixion of an innocent man is striking! Even the pagan Pilate had more compassion.

**19:8** "When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid."

**19:9-11** When Jesus refused to answer Pilate's question as to his origin, Pilate informed him that he had the authority to crucify or set Him free. Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin." All authority resides in God, and Jesus is to receive all that authority (17:3; 3:35; Mt. 28:18). Jesus has all authority "from above."

There are greater and lesser sins (Lev. 4:2, 13; 5:17; Num. 15:28-32; Ezek. 8:6, 13; Mt. 5:19; 23:23). However, all sin has the same penalty (Rom. 6:23).

**19:12** The Jews argued that Jesus making Himself a King opposes Caesar, and Pilate cannot befriend Jesus and not oppose Caesar as well. "Friend" here is likely a technical term suggesting that Pilate, in his role as an imperial procurator, was not responding as a good "client" to his "patron" Caesar. "Caesar" was originally the last name of Gaius Julius Caesar (d. 44 B.C.) and became the title of subsequent Roman emperors (v. 15; Mt. 22:17, 21).

**19:13** The judgment seat (bema in Grk.) was usually a raised area used for official judgments (Mt. 27:19). Gabbatha seems to mean "the hill of the house" or a raised place.

**19:14** The **day of preparation of the Passover** likely refers to the day preceding the Sabbath of Passover week (cf. Mt. 27:62; Mk. 15:42; Lk. 23:54). All four gospel accounts agree that the Passover meal and the Last Supper were eaten on Thursday night (the onset of Friday—the day of preparation). The sixth hour in Jewish time is noon. Many scholars argue that the slaughter of the Passover lambs began about noon. "About" makes this time approximate, since people

did not keep precise time in those days. Mk. 15:25 has the “third hour” for the time of the crucifixion. Various solutions have been proposed. The answer may be that John is using Roman time (6 a.m.) was the time when Jesus appeared before Pilate and 9 a.m. for his crucifixion. Or it could be that the actual time was 9:30 to 10:00 a.m. John knew this. His intention was not to note the actual time but to show it was nearing the time (“about” the middle of the day of preparation) when the Passover lambs would begin to be sacrificed in Jerusalem, thus highlighting a direct connection with Jesus as “the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world” (Jn. 1:29). Pilate’s words, “Behold, your King!”

The “day of Preparation” was the day that the Passover lamb would be slaughtered to be eaten that night (cf. comment on 18:28). (Jewish people reckoned days from sunset to sunset, so what we would call Friday night they considered the beginning of the sabbath, or Saturday.) Later rabbis estimated that offerings began earlier on Passover eve, but the slaughter of Passover lambs probably had to continue all day and was finally completed about the time the evening offering was slaughtered, roughly when Jesus died (about 3 p.m.).<sup>31</sup>

**19:15** “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.”

### **The Crucifixion (19:16-37)**

**19:16** “So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified.” Pilate gave in to the crowd out of weakness and fear. The Jews could have written to Caesar, complaining about Pilate and causing him much trouble.

**19:17.** Condemned criminals normally carried their own cross (the horizontal beam, the *patibulum*, not the upright stake) to the site of the execution; the victim was usually stripped naked for the procession and execution as well, although this full nakedness must have offended some Jewish sensibilities in Palestine. Jesus carried his cross until He collapsed on the way, whereupon Simon of Cyrene was pressed into service (Mt. 27:32).

The probable site of Golgotha was outside the city wall and not far from Herod’s palace—perhaps a thousand feet north/northeast of it. Roman custom placed crucifixions, and Jewish custom located stonings, outside towns rather than at their center (in the Old Testament, cf. Lev 24:14, 23; Num 15:35–36; Deut 17:5; 21:19–21; 22:24; in the New Testament, cf. Luke 4:29; Acts 7:58).<sup>32</sup> The phrase “place of a skull” translates the Aramaic *Gulgulta*, Hebrew *Golgotha*, and Latin *Calvary*.

Jesus’ crucifixion between two thieves is reminiscent of Psalm 22:16 (“a company of evildoers encircles me”) and Isa. 53:12 (“numbered with the transgressors”). In his death Jesus identified with sinners. None of the gospel writers dwells on the physical suffering of Jesus. The mere word contains enough horror.

Much has been written on the exact medical cause of Jesus’s death. The possibilities include cardiac rupture, asphyxiation, cardiac arrhythmia, and hypovolemic shock. However, a close examination of Scripture gives the proper answer to this question. John 10:17–18 tell us, “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 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.”

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<sup>31</sup> F. Rienecker, C. Rogers, ed. *The Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, 254.

<sup>32</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Jn 19:17). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

When Jesus had fulfilled all on the cross, John 19:30 tells us, “He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.”

It usually took two to five days for a person to die by crucifixion. Jesus died in only a few hours. Why the difference? The reason is simply that Jesus chose to die. He willingly gave up His life when His work was done.

We would all do well to remember that at any point Jesus could have stopped the terrible torture that He suffered (Mt. 26:51-54). He endured it because He loves us, despite our unworthiness. As horrible as His physical suffering was, we must understand that it paled in comparison to the suffering He endured in His heart, as He took upon Himself the sins of the world. That is indeed love beyond compare.

**19:19-20** The purpose of the inscription was to indicate a person’s specific crime, in the hope it would deter others from the same act. Pilate’s words, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of Jews,” revealed profound truth, more than the Jewish people or Pilate realized. The inscription was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. This insured that the widest possible awareness of the official reason why Jesus was being crucified. How amazing, since Jesus shed His blood for the whole world (1 Jn. 2:1-2).

**19:21-22** The Jews wanted to edit the inscription to suggest it was only Jesus’ claim, but Pilate would have none of it. “What I have written, I have written.” Jesus’ claim was true, no matter what was written. God’s word “stands written.”

**19:23-24** The soldiers’ actions fulfilled prophecy. John quotes Psa. 22 (the psalm most frequently quoted in the NT), in which the psalmist gives numerous details of the execution scene that are fulfilled in Jesus’ crucifixion nearly 1,000 years later. This is the first of several references to Jesus as the righteous sufferer (Jn. 19:28, 36, 37). By dividing Jesus’ garments among them and by casting lots for his tunic, the Roman soldiers unwittingly fulfilled Scripture, continuing John’s theme of Jesus’ enemies unknowingly participating in God’s plan of redemption.

Jesus’ seamless robe would have been quite valuable, so they gambled for it. They divided the other four pieces among themselves, each having one piece. “Roman law as later codified in their legal Digests granted the soldiers the right to the clothes the executed man was wearing; it was customary to execute the condemned man naked. The basic unit of the Roman army was the *contubernium*, composed of eight soldiers who shared a tent; half-units of four soldiers each were sometimes assigned to special tasks, such as execution quads.”<sup>33</sup>

**19:25** John lists four women were present at the cross: Jesus’ mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. His mother’s sister may have been Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee mentioned in Mt. and Mk. Mary the wife of Clopas may wife of the Cleopas mention in Lk. 24:18. Mary Magdalene is mentioned in 20:1-18 and Lk. 8:2-3. Lists that differ from these four should not disturb us. “Many women were there looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee while ministering to Him. Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee” (Mt. 27:55-56).

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<sup>33</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Jn 19:23). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.



**19:26-27** Jesus honored his mother (Ex. 25:12; Dt. 5:16) by making provisions for her after his death. Mary was almost certainly widowed and probably in her late 40s or 50s and had little or no personal income. For Jesus to call her “Woman” was not a sign of disrespect but of polite distance (Jn. 2:4). Jesus does not here “revere” Mary to a divine place. Mary is not a co-mediatrix of our salvation (1 Tim. 2:3-6). John, the beloved disciple, took Mary into his own home.

### **The Death of Jesus**

**19:28-30** Jesus is thirsty, fulfilling Ps. 69:21, “for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink” (cf. Mt. 27:34 and Ps. 22:15). Soldiers used this “sour wine” to quench their own thirst; this is different from “wine mixed with myrrh,” a sedative Jesus was offered (and refused) on the way to the cross (Mk. 15:23). Hyssop was a simple shrub that could grow from the crack of a wall. It was used for the sprinkling of blood on the doorposts at the original Passover (Ex. 12:22; cf. 1 Kings 4:33).

This wine moistened his parched lips and throat in order to be able to proclaim a loud cry of triumph (Mt. 27:50; Mk15:37). “It is finished” proclaims Jesus’ success at finishing the work the Father had given Him to do (cf. 4:34; 9:4), this particularly has to do with the exceptionally difficult task of bearing the penalty for sins of the people. There is no more penalty left to be paid for sin. Jesus’ suffering was sufficient and finished bearing it all (Heb. 1:3; 9:11-12, 25-28). “Gave up” emphasizes the voluntary nature of this sacrificial death (Jn. 2:19; 10:17-18) and is reminiscent of Isa. 53:12.

Jesus gave up his “spirit,” i.e., his own human spirit, which he released from his body and which meant death (Jas. 2:26). He died so that He might return to the presence of the Father (Lk. 23:43, 46). His spirit would remain in heaven with His Father until it returned to His body at His resurrection “on the first day of the week” (Jn. 20:1).

### **The Confirmation of His Death**

**19:31-33** “Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.” The day of preparation was Friday, and the high day Sabbath would have been the Sabbath day (or Saturday) that fell during the week of the festival. The Jews request was based on Deut. 21:22-23, which teaches that bodies of hanged criminals were not to defile the land by remaining on a tree overnight (cf. Josh. 8:29). The Romans typically left decaying bodies on crosses long after death. However, on certain ceremonial occasions they could take the bodies down early, and breaking the legs would bring about a quick death by preventing a person from prolonging his life by pushing himself up with his legs to be able to breathe. Arm strength would soon fail, and asphyxiation took place. The excavated bones of a crucified man from Givat ha-Mivtar (discovered near Jerusalem in 1968) revealed a man whose legs had been broken, confirming this practice.

They broke the legs of the two thieves but found that Jesus was already dead, so they did not break his legs.

### **Blood and Water**

**19:34** “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.” The soldier pierced Christ’s side with a spear. Although Scripture does not clearly say which side was penetrated, most believe this wound was in the chest because the Greek word used (*pleura*) refers to the thorax. Also, a killing thrust would most likely be delivered to the

chest rather than the abdomen. So the heart, pulmonary vessels, or even the aorta could be the source of the blood.

But what about the water? This fluid may have come from around the lungs or around the heart. A spear piercing the side would pass through the pleural cavity, releasing any fluid that had accumulated there during this ordeal. Also, this killing thrust would most likely have been aimed at the heart (whether from the right or the left side), and thus would have entered the pericardial sac on its course. Perhaps a pericardial effusion was the source of the water.

**19:35-37** The author testifies that he was an eyewitness and is telling the truth. This means the author had to be someone who was physically present at the cross.

The piercing of Jesus' side and the neglect to break His bones came to pass to fulfill Scripture (Ps. 34:20; Ex. 12:46; and Num. 9:12). Jesus escaped the breaking of bones and the spear likewise failed to break any bone. His piercing fulfills Zech. 12:10 (cf. Rev. 1:7).

### **The Burial (19:38-42)**

**19:38** Joseph of Arimathea was a wealthy member of the ruling council (Mt. 27:57); he did not consent to the death of Jesus. He was a secret disciple (for fear of the Jews) but reveals his devotion in this bold act (unlike those of 12:42-43). Joseph fulfills the prediction that the suffering servant would "make his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death" (Isa. 53:9). The rolling stone (Mt. 27:60; Mk. 15:46; Lk. 24:2) is consistent with Joseph being a very rich man.

**19:39** Nicodemus of chapter 3 joined Joseph in the burial of Jesus. One hundred pounds was a very large amount, such as was used in royal burials (cf. 2 Chron. 16:14).

**19:40** Linen wrappings were thin strips like bandages. There was also a shroud, a large sheet (Mt. 27:59; Mk. 15:46; Lk. 23:53).

**19:41** "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."

**19:42** "Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there."

### **Burial Practices**

The value of proper interment in Jewish tradition is witnessed in many quarters. It is implicit in the prominence given reports of burial in the OT narratives (e.g., Gen 23; 49:29-33; 50:25-26). To be refused burial, to be left exposed as refuse for birds and beasts—this fate is understood as a divine curse (e.g., Deut 28:26; Jer 8:1-2; 16:1-4; Ezek 29:5). Furthermore, Josephus observes that among his people the obligation to share is realized in part by not leaving a corpse unburied (*Ag. Ap.* 2.29 §211).<sup>34</sup>

When death occurred the eyes of the deceased were closed, the mouth bound up, the corpse washed (cf. *Gos. Pet.* 6:24) and anointed (*m. Sanh.* 13:5)—perhaps both at the place of death (cf. Jn 19:40) or at the home of the deceased and again at the tomb (cf. Mk 16:1). The warm climate dictated a speedy burial, with the use of spices necessary to counter the stench of decomposition. For the same reason the body might be laid on sand or salt. The deceased were buried in their own clothes or in specially prepared wraps (cf. Mk 15:46; Jn 19:40; *Gos. Pet.*

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<sup>34</sup> Green, J. B. (1992). Burial of Jesus. In S. McKnight (Ed.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (p. 89). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

6:24). Coffins were used in some cases (cf. Lk 7:14), though it is unclear whether their usage was normal in Jerusalem. When the body was in place, the tomb was closed off by a large rock (the *gōlēl*), held in place by a smaller stone (the *dōpēq*). After a twelve-month period of decomposition, the bones were collected and placed in an ossuary.<sup>35</sup>

## **TOMB OF JESUS**

According to the NT accounts, the tomb of Jesus was located in a garden in the place where Jesus was crucified (Jn 19:41) outside the city walls of Jerusalem (19:20). It was a “new tomb” which had been “cut into the rock” by Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27:60; cp. Luke 23:50–56) who had apparently prepared it for his own family’s use. It was not uncommon for the well-to-do to prepare such a tomb in advance because of the difficulty of digging graves in the rocky ground around Jerusalem. The tomb was large enough for someone to sit inside (Mark 16:5; cp. John 20:11–12) and required that one stoop down to look inside and enter (John 20:5–6, 11; cp. Luke 24:12). A great rolling stone sealed the entrance (Matt. 27:60; Mark 15:46; 16:3).

This description suggests a typical Jewish tomb of the Herodian period consisting of (1) an antechamber, (2) a slow doorway that could be sealed with a stone (in many cases a rolling stone fitted into a groove or track so that the tomb could be opened and closed by rolling the stone back and forth in front of the doorway), and (3) a passageway leading to a rectangular-shaped tomb chamber. Here the body (having been wrapped in a linen cloth) could be laid lengthwise in either a rectangular, horizontal, oven-shaped shaft driven back into the vertical rock face measuring 78×25×20 inches or laid on a simple rock shelf cut laterally into the rock with a vaulted arch over it. The sequence of events narrated in the Gospel accounts (esp. John 20:5–6) would seem to indicate that Jesus’ tomb had this vaulted arch.

The traditional site of the tomb of Jesus is marked by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which stands over the site of a first-century rock quarry that in Jesus’ day was outside the city walls of Jerusalem and in which other typical first-century tombs have been discovered. An alternative site known as the “Garden Tomb” (adjacent to “Gordon’s Calvary”) was identified in 1883.<sup>36</sup>

## **V. The Resurrection 20:1-29**

### **Peter and John visit the empty tomb (20:1-10)**

**20:1–2** “Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. So 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.”

Mary came early in the morning while it was still dark. The first day of the week began, according to Jewish time, began at sundown on Saturday (and there was evening, and there was morning, Gen. 1:5). Mark says when the sun had risen (16:2). Perhaps the group of women came separately, and Mary came earlier than the others. John may be referring to when Mary left

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<sup>35</sup> Green, J. B. (1992). Burial of Jesus. In S. McKnight (Ed.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (p. 89). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>36</sup> Gloer, H. (2003). Tomb of Jesus. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (pp. 1603–1604). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

home rather than to the arrival. Mary does not know where they have “laid Him,” not realizing that He had resurrected. “We” implies others were with her.

**20:3-4** Peter and John ran to the tomb. John arrived first.

**20:5-7** They saw the linen wrappings lying there but not the body. John did not go in the tomb until Peter arrived. Why would they see the linen wrappings but not the body? The linen wrappings are clear evidence that Jesus’ body had NOT been taken by grave robbers (Mt. 28:11-15) or by his disciples attempting to steal the body (Mt. 27:62-66) or by his enemies, who would not have taken time to remove these cloths (Jn. 19:40). The Greek text simply says the cloths were lying (keimai) there. Though it is sometimes suggested otherwise, nothing in the text indicates Jesus’ body passed through the cloths, or that the cloths were lying in the shape of Jesus’ body. The facecloth being folded up in a place by itself suggests Jesus himself had taken it off and folded it nearby.

The NT elsewhere affirms the real physical materiality of Jesus’ resurrection body (Mt. 28:9; Lk. 24:30, 39, 42; Jn. 20:17, 20, 27; Acts 10:41). Either Jesus unwrapped himself or the angels who moved the stone unwrapped Him. Not needing the wrappings, they left them behind.

**20:8-9** The presence of two male witnesses rendered the evidence admissible under Jewish law (Dt. 17:6; 19:15), but the two did not yet understand the Scripture. This shows the disciples did not fabricate a story to fit their preconceived notions of what Jesus predicted. They had to be confronted with the facts, which they at first did not understand (Ps. 16:8-11; Mt. 16:21). Just as Jesus must be crucified, Jesus “must rise again from the dead.”

**20:10** They went home. John, remember, had taken Mary the mother of Jesus into his house.

### **Mary Magdalene sees the Risen Jesus (20:11-18)**

**20:11-12** This Mary is Mary Magdalene (20:1, 18). She was weeping and looked into the tomb, seeing two angels in white. Angels often appear in pairs (Acts 1:10) and are often described as appearing in white (Ezek. 9:2; Dan. 10:5-6; Rev. 15:6). Luke has two men in dazzling clothing (Lk. 24:4).

**20:13** Mary is weeping because she is seeking the Lord and doesn’t know where he is.

**20:14-15** Jesus speaks to Mary but Mary does not recognize but thinks He is the gardener and asks where the body of Jesus is. Jesus’ body would have looked different than what she had seen on the cross. Others did not immediately recognize Jesus (Lk. 24:16, 31). His resurrection body would be in health, a contrast to the body he had in His tremendous suffering (Isa. 53:2-3).

**20:16** Mary! Rabboni! (my teacher) Mary recognized His voice.

**20:17-18** Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.”

The KJV, “Touch me not,” has caused some confusion. Mary would have grabbed Jesus once she recognized Him. Jesus is not saying “don’t touch me at all” but rather “stop clinging to Me.” He had something more important for her to do. Others touched the resurrected body (Lk. 24:39; 1 Jn. 1:1).

This ascension is not the one of spirit who goes to God at the time of death (Eccl. 12:7; Jn. 19:30; Lk. 23:46) but His ascension in bodily form (Lk. 24:51; Acts 1:9-11).

Notice the humility of this resurrected Lord: “To my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” Jesus speaks of her going to his brothers (disciples, v. 18) and telling them.

### **Appearances to the apostles (20:19-29)**

**20:19** Jesus “came and stood among them” in the upper room “on the evening of that day, the first day of the week.” This would have been Sunday night and is reckoned in Roman time not Jewish time. The doors were locked for fear of the Jews. How Jesus entered is unknown. He may have just appeared or the doors may have miraculously been opened (as Acts 12:10). Jesus greeted them, “Peace be with you.”

**20:20** Jesus revealed the physical evidence of his hands and his side to them, so they would know it was truly the Lord Jesus.

**20:21–22** Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Jesus commissions the apostles to go forth as His messengers and representatives (cf. 17:18). All three persons of the Godhead are involved in this sending. When Jesus breathed on them and gave them the Holy Spirit, this is best understood as a foretaste of what they would receive at Pentecost (Acts 2). Certainly the Holy Spirit had already had a place in their lives before this (Jn. 7:39; 14:16-17; Mt. 10:1-4).

**20:23** “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.” The perfect tense in this verse means “they have been (and are still) forgiven” and “they have been (and are still) withheld.” The perfect tense gives the sense of a completed action with results that continue to the present. The idea is not that these individuals (or a church) has the power to forgive people, but rather that as the Holy Spirit speaks the gospel message of forgiveness through them, they can have forgiveness. Those who believe and obey through repentance and baptism have the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), but those who disbelieve or disobey have their forgiveness withheld. They are presenting a message that has already been decided in heaven.

### **Jesus and Thomas (20:24-29)**

**20:24-25** Apparently Thomas, who was not present on the earlier occasion, was unconvinced by the testimony of the other disciples. Thomas demands to touch the wounds found in Jesus’ hands and side, or he will “never believe.” Thomas wants physical proof, not testimony.

**20:26** “Eight days later” refers to the following Sunday, one week after the day of the resurrection (20:19), because the starting day was also included in counting the number of days. The festival of Unleavened Bread was over, and the disciples would soon be returning to Galilee. Again the doors are locked. Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”

**20:27** Jesus calls to Thomas and asks him to touch his hands and side. “Do not disbelieve, but believe.” Jesus does not rebuke Thomas for his disbelief; He provides the proof Thomas requires and urges him to faith. On other occasions, Jesus does reproach their unbelief and hardness of heart (Mk. 16:14; cf. Lk. 24:25-27, 37-39).

**20:28–29** Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” Thomas’ confession of Jesus as “Lord” and “God” provides a confirmation of John’s statement of the deity of Jesus in the prologue (1:1-4, 14, 18). Thomas said these words directly to Jesus, and Jesus accepted them. We who have not seen depend upon the testimony of those who did see and were willing to die for their faith in fulfilling God’s commission.

## **VI. John’s Purpose for Writing      20:30-31**

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

Jesus worked His many miracles in the presence of the disciples (and many others). While we do not know all the miracles Jesus did, these are sufficient and compelling reasons to believe. They show why we should believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Believing brings about “life in his name.”

Faith has content. To claim, “I believe” but to ignore *what* you believe is like getting into a car that has no gas and like jumping into a pool that has no water. *What* we believe is as important as the fact *that* we believe.

## Chapter 21

### VII. Epilogue (21:1-25)

#### **The appearance at Galilee (21:1-14)**

**21:1** Jesus appeared at the Sea of Tiberias, which is also called the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Chinnereth. The city of Tiberias is the major city on the sea and is located on the western shore less than ten miles south of Capernaum.

**21:2–3** “Simon Peter, Thomas (called the Twin), Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.” Nighttime was favored by fishermen in ancient times, but they caught nothing.

Peter returns to his original occupation. As a leader of the group, he leads the others to do the same (Mark 1:16–20).

**21:4-8** The “disciple whom Jesus loves” has to be one of the seven mentioned in verse 2. At daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but they did not know it was Jesus. Jesus addressed them as “Children”; this is reminiscent of Isa. 9:6-7, where Jesus is described as “Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” Cast on the right side of the boat (cf. Lk. 5:4-11). They were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. John told Peter it was the Lord, so Peter put on his outer

garment and swam ashore. Peter did not want to greet the Lord without clothes. The others dragged the nets full of fish with the little boat.

**21:9-11** Jesus had the charcoal fire started, fish laid on and bread available. “Bring some of the fish you have caught.” Simon Peter helped draw in the nets that were not torn and the 153 large fish. The nets were torn in Lk. 5:6.

21:12-14 This was Jesus’ third manifestation to the disciples. He gave them fish and bread

### **The challenge to Peter (21:15-17)**

**21:15** “When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, 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.”

The Greek word for “love” (*agapao*) in Jesus’ first two questions is different from the word for “love” (*phileo*) in His third question and the word Peter uses to answer Jesus all three times. *Agapao* refers to a love in which the entire personality, including the will, is involved. *Phileo* refers to spontaneous natural affection or friendship (cf. 15:13-15). It seems difficult to believe Peter would answer so serious a question with a trivial or flippant response. We should not assume *phileo* love cannot also include *agapao* love.

“Do you love Me more than these?” “These” could refer to the fishing, or to the other men. Peter had previously claimed a devotion greater than others (13:37; cf. Mt. 26:33; Mk. 14:29).

If you love Me, show Me: “Feed my lambs.” Take care of the new believers who have not matured. Give them the spiritual nourishment they need. Jesus uses the word *arnia*, which emphasizes the fledgling form of the early believers and their need for a strong leader. The Spirit will be their ultimate leader on earth, and Jesus will be their Lord; however, they need a leader in person (see 14:26).<sup>37</sup>

**21:16** He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.”

“Tend (shepherd) My sheep.” Jesus uses a different word than before, *probata*, emphasizing that Peter must also minister to those who are further along in their faith, including Jesus’ disciples. Peter describes himself as a fellow elder (1 Pet. 5:1-4). Jesus is the chief shepherd. Shepherds must assume complete care for the sheep: feeding, protecting, nurturing, and healing the sick. Peter defends himself, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.”

**21:17** He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, 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 everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

Peter’s grief is obvious for the third time the same question, “Do you love Me?” He answers, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” “Feed my sheep”: give them the spiritual nourishment they must have to grow (Acts 2:42; 1 Pet. 2:2).

This is the first time Jesus and Peter are alone since Peter’s denial of the Lord three times. The Lord does not rebuke Peter for these denials but gently asks for three affirmations of love.

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<sup>37</sup> Barry, J. D., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Mangum, D., & Whitehead, M. M. (2012). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Jn 21:15). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Jesus could see this episode in Peter's life more clearly than Peter could. He knew Peter, in spite of his denials, would return to serve the Lord (Lk. 22:31-34). Jesus prayed for Peter. When we sin, Jesus prays for us.

### **The future of Peter and John (21:18-23)**

**21:18-19** Jesus predicts the kind of death Peter is to die; it is unpleasant. The early church understood the phrase "stretch out your hands" to be a prediction of his crucifixion. Peter's death would be a glorification of God. According to church tradition, Peter was hung upside down on a cross. Tertullian is the first to mention that Peter was indeed crucified, and Origen said he was crucified upside down because he did not deserve to die like Jesus Christ did.

"Follow Me" was Jesus' central command since the beginning of His ministry (1:43). It is the essence of His other command about eternal life coming through Him (12:50) and His subsequent commands to love others (13:34; compare 12:25).

**21:20-22** Here is an example of an irrelevant question that is beside the point Jesus had just made. (This is a good answer to hypothetical questions about baptism and salvation.) Seeing the disciple whom Jesus loved (John), Peter asked about his future, "What about this man?" Jesus' response is classic: "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!" What God asks of others is not important; following Christ is! Our task is to follow Christ.

**21:23** John emphasizes that this was not the intent of Jesus' statement, showing how easy it is for someone to misinterpret Jesus' words. Apparently, this saying caused confusion. John clears up this statement that he would not die. It was a false rumor based on a misunderstanding of this conversation. John certainly lived longer than the other disciples and was the only disciple to die a natural death (according to tradition).

### **The testimony of John (21:24-25)**

**21:24-25** "This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true. Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

By "This is the disciple" John is referring to himself (13:23). This disciple had to be one of the Twelve and had to be one of the seven mentioned in 21:2. We know "his testimony" is true. Testimony is important throughout the book, and the beloved disciple is the eyewitness behind the whole book. The beloved disciple is the author and was in a position to know! He was not collecting other people's records (as Luke in Lk. 1:1-4) but was personally present when these things happened.

John recognizes Jesus did "many other things" not found in this book. They were so many things the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." While this book does not contain everything, it is sufficient to give us everything we need to know to believe and to have eternal life in His name.





## Appendix A

### The Time of the Passover

The chronological reckoning between John's gospel and the synoptics presents a challenge, especially in relation to the time of the Last Supper (13:2). While the synoptics portray the disciples and the Lord at the Last Supper as eating the Passover meal on Thursday evening and Jesus being crucified on Friday, John's gospel states that the Jews did not enter into the Praetorium (the Roman governor's headquarters) early Friday morning, "lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover" (18:28). So, the disciples had eaten the Passover on Thursday evening, but the Jews had not. In fact, John (19:14) states that Jesus' trial and crucifixion were on Preparation Day for the Passover and not after the eating of the Passover, so that with the trial and crucifixion on Friday, Christ was actually sacrificed at the same time the Passover lambs were being slain (19:14). The question is, "Why did the disciples eat the Passover meal on Thursday?"

The answer lies in a difference among the Jews in the way they reckoned the beginning and ending of days. From Josephus, the Mishna, and other ancient Jewish sources we learn that the Jews in northern Palestine calculated days from sunrise to sunrise. That area included the region of Galilee, where Jesus and all the disciples, except Judas, had grown up. Apparently most, if not all, of the Pharisees used that system of reckoning. But Jews in the southern part, which centered in Jerusalem, calculated days from sunset to sunset. Because all the priests necessarily lived in or near Jerusalem, as did most of the Sadducees, those groups followed the southern scheme.

That variation doubtlessly caused confusion at times, but it also had some practical benefits. *During Passover time, for instance, it allowed for the feast to be celebrated legitimately on two adjoining days, thereby permitting the temple sacrifices to be made over a total period of four hours rather than two.* That separation of days may also have had the effect of reducing both regional and religious clashes between the two groups.

On that basis the seeming contradictions in the gospel accounts are easily explained. Being Galileans, Jesus and the disciples considered Passover day to have started at sunrise on Thursday and to end at sunrise on Friday. The Jewish leaders who arrested and tried Jesus, being mostly priests and Sadducees, considered Passover day to begin at sunset on Thursday and end at sunset on Friday. By that variation, decided long ahead of time by God's sovereign provision, Jesus could thereby legitimately celebrate the last Passover meal with His disciples and yet still be sacrificed on Passover day.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> MacArthur, J. (2003). *The MacArthur Bible handbook* (p. 346). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

## Appendix B

### The Work of the Three Persons of the Godhead

By presenting the Father, Son, and Spirit all doing what no one else ever does, the Gospel according to John gives us the basic teaching about the Three in One. Observing what God says and does helps us to know Him, and observing which actions are done by which members of the Godhead helps us to see what roles they play.<sup>39</sup>

Action	Father	Son	Spirit
Give Life	5:21, 26; 6:33; 17:3	5:21, 25-26, 40; 6:33; 17:3	3:6, 8; 6:63
Proclaim Future	1:33	13:19, 26, 36-38; 14:3, 29; 16:1-4, 16-28, 32; 20:18	16:13
Indwell Believers	14:23	14:20, 23; 15:4-7; 17:23, 26	14:17
Teach	6:45; 7:16, 17; 8:28	7:14; 8:2, 20; 13:13-14	14:26
Testify of Jesus	5:32, 37; 6:27; 8:18	8:12-14, 18	15:26
Glorify Jesus	5:22-23; 8:50, 54; 13:31-32; 17:1, 22	1:14; 2:11; 13:31-32; 17:5, 24	16:14

#### Activities Common to the Father and the Son

Action	Father	Son
Glorify the Father	4:23; 12:28; 13:31-32	2:16; 9:3-4; 11:40; 12:28; 13:31-32; 14:13; 17:1, 4-5
Give the Spirit	3:34; 14:16	4:10-14; 7:37-39; 20:22
Send the Spirit	14:26	15:26; 16:7

#### Activities Common to the Son and the Spirit

Action	Son	Spirit
Be given by the Father	3:16	4:10-14; 14:16
Be sent by the Father	3:17; 4:34; 5:23-24; 6:29, 57; 7:28-29, 33; 8:16, 26, 29, 42; 9:4; 10:36; 11:42; 12:44-45; 13:20; 15:21; 17:3, 8, 18, 23, 25; 20:21	14:26; 15:26
Speak not from himself	5:19, 30; 6:38; 7:16; 12:49-50	16:13
Speak only what he hears	3:32, 34; 5:30; 8:26, 40; 12:50; 15:15	16:13
Convict	3:19-20; 4:16, 18; 5:27; 8:7, 34, 40; 11:40; 12:7-8; 13:8	16:7-11
Be received	1:10-12	7:39
Disclose what belongs to God	1:18	16:13-14

<sup>39</sup> This is adapted from the ESV Study Bible, p. 2055.

## Appendix C

### The World and Jesus

Jesus, the emissary from above, has come into this world (1:9–10; 3:16–17, 19; 6:14; 10:36; 11:27; 12:46; 16:28; 17:18, 21, 23; 18:37). His mission was an expression of God's love\* for the world (3:16). This world is dominated by darkness and the prince of this world. The world in view is humanity. The coming of the emissary was to save, not to condemn the world (3:17; 4:42; 6:33, 51; 12:47), but condemnation is inevitable where the saving mission is rejected (9:39). The coming of the emissary is expressed in terms of the coming of the light into the world as the light of the world (3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). The light does not belong to the world (8:23; 17:16; 18:36) but has come to reveal the Father and his love for the world (14:31; 17:21, 23–24). His coming was to bring life to the world (6:33) by giving his life for the world (1:29; 6:51).

Having entered the world and completed his mission, the emissary departs from it (13:1; 14:19; 16:28), having commissioned his disciples to continue his mission to the world (17:21, 23). Those who are called out from the world (by the emissary) and no longer belong to it (15:19; 17:6, 11, 14, 16) are consequently hated by it, as the emissary himself was hated (15:18–19; 17:14). The mission was made possible by the coming of the Paraclete/Spirit of Truth (*see* Holy Spirit) to expose the world to the truth revealed by the light (3:19–21; 16:8). Yet the world does not recognize the Spirit just as it did not recognize the emissary. It knows only the mission of Jesus and those who continue his mission. Only those who believe perceive the light of the world which has the power to transform those who belong to the world so that their lives are shaped by the light from above.

In John the focus moves from the world perceived as creation to the world of humanity dominated by the darkness of false loves, false values, false knowledge and to the mission to save the world. Much of this interpretation of the world is given in the words of the narrator (1:9–10; 3:16–17, 19) or other characters such as John the Baptist (1:29), the Samaritans (4:42) and the crowd (6:14) in addition to Jesus himself. Jesus, narrator and believing witnesses present a consistent view of the world, its predicament and its salvation.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Painter, J. (1992). World. In J. B. Green & S. McKnight (Eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (pp. 890–891). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.