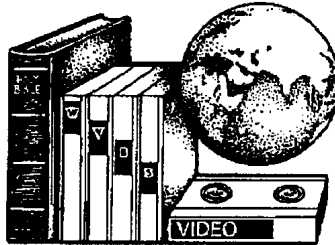


World Video Bible School®

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GOSPEL OF JOHN



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THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS

(Prepared by Steve Lloyd)

INTRODUCTION:

These notes are taken from Leland Ryken's book *Words of Life: A Literary Introduction to the New Testament*.

- A. The first rule of analytical reading is to classify a book according to its kind or subject matter.
 - 1. In the first lesson we identified "John" as gospel insofar as literary form is concerned.
 - 2. Leland Ryken, in his book *Words of Life: A Literary Introduction to the New Testament*, has done an excellent job of surveying this kind of literature.
 - 3. This lesson comprises much of what he has to say on the subject.
- B. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John contain the same three ingredients:
 - 1. The historical impulse to record the facts.
 - 2. The theological impulse to teach religious truth.
 - 3. The literary impulse to recreate experiences in our imagination.
 - 4. Their distinctiveness had a great deal more to do with content than with literary form.

THE GOSPEL AS A LITERARY FORM:

- A. The combination of literary elements in the gospel accounts are without parallel:
 - 1. Historical narrative.
 - 2. Parable.
 - 3. Drama or dialogue.
 - 4. Sermon or oration.
 - 5. Saying or proverb.
- B. How literary are the gospel accounts?
 - 1. They are filled with vivid details.

- a. The writers consistently go beyond the documentary impulse to cause us to experience the events.
 - 1) Examine Lk 6:6-10.
 - 2. They offer an interpretation of the events they record.
 - a. All four present a different aspect of Jesus.
 - 3. They present their accounts in artistic form.
 - a. Pattern, unity, balance, symmetry, contrast, foil, repetition, foreshadowing.
 - b. Examine Mt 1:1-16.
 - 1) Three segments of fourteen names each (see 1:17).
 - 2) In Matthew, as a whole, units of narrative and units of teaching alternate.
 - a) There are five blocks total.
 - b) Each end with "...when Jesus had finished these sayings" (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1).
 - c. The gospel accounts are not a collection of unrelated fragments.
- C. Narrative as the Primary Form:
- 1. Above all, the Gospel accounts tell a story.
 - 2. Narrative is the organizing framework within which the sayings and discourses are arranged (setting, characters, plot, conflict, dialogue, narrator).
 - 3. They present their message in episodes.
 - a. One episode does not necessarily lead to the next.
 - b. But the episodes selected highlight His various roles.
 - 4. "Given the many-sided nature of his life, the mixture and arrangement of ingredients that one finds in the Gospels capture the reality of Jesus' life better than more traditional concepts of plot" (p. 32, ...*Life*).
- D. Unity in the Gospel Accounts:
- 1. The most important uniting factor in the Gospel accounts is the unity of hero.
 - a. Everything focuses on the person, acts and sayings of Jesus.

2. In general, they move from His birth through His three-year ministry to His death, followed by His resurrection.
 - a. And each writer structures his account to make the death of Jesus the climax toward which the story moves.
 3. Within the general framework of chronology each writer arranges his material to fit his purpose.
 4. They are unified by recurrent situations or type scenes:
 - a. Jesus is always the central figure.
 - b. Next to Him are His disciples.
 - c. There is the constant force of hostility from the Pharisees.
 - d. Another constant group is the crowd of ordinary people.
 - 1) The crowds are normally caught between the claims of Jesus and the Jewish authorities.
 - 2) Thus, the crowds are always found at the moment of choice.
 5. Geography also unifies the four accounts - Palestine.
 6. Individual episodes are unified by the same principles of narrative unity.
 - a. So, the questions to ask of the text are about setting, characterization and plot – Where? Who? What happens?
 - 1) Why did the author relate this incident?
 - 2) What did he intend to convey?
 - 3) What kind of response did he expect from his readers?
 - 4) Why did he include it in His gospel?
- E. The Portrait of Jesus:
1. The Gospel accounts give us portraits of Jesus.
 - a. In each one certain things are highlighted and others omitted.
- F. Their Style:
1. The most notable stylistic trait is their economy of words and details.
- SUBTYPES WITHIN THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS:**
- A. Annunciation and Nativity Stories.

1. Matthew and Luke begin with events surrounding the birth of Jesus.
2. In some of these annunciation stories are:
 - a. The appearance of angels.
 - b. Predictions about the birth of Jesus or related incidents.
 - c. Lyric poems.
3. Their main purpose is...
 - a. To highlight the uniqueness of Jesus.
 - b. To explain His significance.
 - c. To validate historical facts of the matter.
 - d. To record supernatural occurrences surrounding the events.
 - e. To document the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah.
 - f. To convey the world-changing events that they narrate.

B. Calling or Vocation Stories:

1. These accounts recount Jesus calling people to follow Him or to respond to a specific command.
2. There are four ingredients and corresponding questions to ask of these texts.
 - a. The characters involved: who is called?
 - b. The circumstances in which the call occurs: how does the call of Jesus come to people?
 - c. The nature of the call: to what does Jesus call people?
 - d. The response to the call: what constitutes the right or wrong response to the call of Jesus?
3. These characters many times represent the human race.
 - a. We do not equate ourselves with Jesus, but rather with the ones He calls.

C. Recognition Stories:

1. In recognition stories a character discovers who Jesus is.

2. Two ingredients play important roles in:
 - a. The circumstances of the recognition, including:
 - 1) Occasion.
 - 2) Setting.
 - 3) Characters.
 - b. The nature of what a character comes to recognize about Jesus.

D. Witness Stories:

1. Either Jesus or another character testifies about who Jesus is or what He has done.
2. Witness stories consist of three main ingredients.
 - a. Who? (the witness).
 - b. What? (the testimony).
 - c. Why? (the proof, which might include circumstances.)
3. When the witness is Jesus, the focus is on the second of these elements.
4. Because evidence is important it is usually profitable to explore the relationship (logic) between the claim that is made about Jesus and the evidence on which it is based.

E. Encounter Stories:

1. A characteristic pose for Jesus is encountering a character or group.
 - a. Lk 19:1-10 (Zacchaeus).
 - b. Jn 4:1-42 (Samaritan Woman).
 - c. These can be divided into scenes and speeches.
 - d. The essential action consists of dialogue rather than action.
2. Encounters have a predictable movement to them.
 - a. They begin with the initial encounter.
 - b. Then we trace the progress of the dialogue toward its goal.
 - c. Encounter stories are strongly goal oriented, being essentially quest stories.

3. At the end of the encounter, Jesus and the claim He has made on their life is either accepted or rejected.
4. These accounts address the human condition and of how Jesus speaks to that condition.

F. Conflict or Controversy Stories:

1. These stories pit Jesus against an opposing person or group.
 - a. They give the Gospel accounts much of their color and excitement and promote the overall movement of these accounts toward the trial and death of Jesus.
2. Jesus is always the protagonist.
 - a. What we need to do is identify the antagonists, or villains and the means by which they try to trap or defeat Jesus.
3. The action:
 - a. Note Jesus' strategy of defense and offence.
 - b. Note how the conflict is finally resolved.
 - c. Consider also this outline (suggested by Thomas Warren):
 - 1) Identify:
 - a) The disputants.
 - b) Protagonist and his argument.
 - c) Antagonist and his argument.
 - d) The heart of the issue.
 - e) Its results.

G. Pronouncement Stories:

1. This is a brief story in which an event in Jesus' life is linked with memorable saying or proverb by Jesus.
 - a. The saying is embedded in the narrative in such a way that the two are remembered together.
 - b. The story is related to the saying as a stimulus is related to a response.
 - 1) It interprets or illustrates the event.

2. Pronouncement stories can themselves be subdivided into six categories. Stories of...
 - a. Correction.
 - b. Objection.
 - c. Commendation.
 - d. Quest.
 - e. Test.
 - f. Inquiry.
3. "Pronouncement stories are a Gospel hallmark" (p. 39).

H. Miracle Stories:

1. Typical structure (with minor variation).
 - a. A need is established.
 - b. Jesus' help is sought.
 - c. The person in need expresses faith or obedience.
 - d. Jesus performs a miracle.
 - e. Characters in the story respond to the miracle and/or to Jesus.

I. Passion Stories:

1. "The events surrounding the trial, death and resurrection of Jesus form the climax of all four Gospels" (p. 40).
 - a. 29% of Matthew.
 - b. 38% of Mark.
 - c. 25% of Luke.
 - d. 38% of John.
2. As a composite picture of all four, we can subdivide them into discernible stories:
 - a. Arrival in Jerusalem.
 - b. The Passover and the upper room.
 - c. Suffering in Gethsemane.

- d. Arrest.
- e. Trial.
- f. Crucifixion.
- g. Burial.
- h. Resurrection.
- i. Post-resurrection appearances.

J. Hybrid Stories:

- 1. Many of the stories already identified converge in individual stories.
 - a. So, it is possible to discuss stories in terms of two or more types.
 - 1) Miracle stories often become recognition stories.
 - 2) Memorable sayings also fit pronouncement stories.
 - 3) Calling stories many times include a miracle story.

THE GOSPELS AS STORIES:

A. What is gained by reading the gospels as complete and unified stories?

- 1. It corrects the fragmentation that characterizes most people's experience of the Gospel.
 - a. Many view them as a collection of disconnected stories.
- 2. The total impact of each account is enhanced.
 - a. Individual episodes will have much more meaning for us if we can relate them to the overriding framework.
 - b. Isolated facts have little meaning until people can place them into a bigger unified framework.
 - 1) So, read the Gospel accounts as continuous and whole stories.
- 3. Meaning is communicated through specific literary forms.
- 4. Famous sayings of Jesus are almost always linked with a specific narrative situation.
 - a. Sayings and addresses are embedded in a narrative context.
- 5. It also opens the door for an artistic response to the Gospels.

- a. They are literary masterpieces that exhibit unity coherence and emphasis.

GOSPEL OF JOHN OUTLINE

1. Prologue. 1:1-18
2. Public Ministry. 1:19-Ch 12
3. Private Ministry. Ch 13-17
4. Passion Account. Ch 18-20
5. Epilogue. Ch 21

GOSPEL OF JOHN EXPANDED OUTLINE

1. Prologue. 1:1-18
2. Public Ministry. 1:19- Ch 12
 - a. The Testimony Of John The Baptizer. 1:19-34
 - b. The First Disciples. 1:35-51
 - c. The First Sign. 2:1-11
 - d. Cleansing Of The Temple. 2:12-25
 - e. Reborn From Above (Discourse). 3:1-21
 - f. The Pre-Eminence Of Christ. 3:22-36
 - g. Living Water. 4:1-42
 - h. Except Ye See. 4:43-54
 - i. Scripture Versus Tradition. 5:1-18
 - j. Jesus' Defense. 5:19-47
 - k. This Is A Test. 6:1-27
 - l. Jesus: The Bread Of Life. 6:25-71
 - m. Jesus' True Identity. Ch 7
 - n. The Adulteress. 8:1-11
 - o. Jesus: The Light Of The World. 8:12-59

p.	Blind Man Healed.	Ch 9
q.	Jesus: The Door.	10:1-10
r.	Jesus: The Good Shepherd.	10:11-18
s.	His Sheep.	10:22-42
t.	Jesus: The Resurrection And The Life.	Ch 11
u.	Final Public Discourse.. . . .	12:1-36
v.	Yet They Believed Not.	12:36-50
1.	Private Ministry.	Ch 13-17
a.	Betrayed.	Ch 13
b.	The Farewell Discourse.. . . .	Ch 14
c.	Jesus: The Vine.	Ch 15
d.	Farewell Discourse (Continued).	Ch 16
e.	The Lord's Prayer.	Ch 17
4.	Passion Narrative.. . . .	Ch 18-20
a.	Arrest And Trail.	Ch 18
b.	It Is Finished.	Ch 19
c.	The Resurrected Christ.. . . .	Ch 20
5.	Epilogue: Peter.	Ch 21

JOHN

“AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH”..... 1:1-18

INTRODUCTION:

- A. John’s account of the life of Christ is designed to demonstrate the reasonableness of belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.
 - 1. He says so at the end of his book: “Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ. the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name” (Jn 20:30,31).
 - 2. The first half of his book contains the record of seven signs performed by our Lord, demonstrating His power over the material and the immaterial realm.
 - a. The second half of the book elaborates on the final week prior to our Lord’s death.
 - 1) There we get a very intimate glimpse into the mind of our Lord as we listen to Him pray to His Father.
- B. The book begins with a remarkable prologue which will be the focus of our lesson.

THE WORD:

- A. John begins by writing, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn 1:1).
 - 1. “In the beginning”...points back to the beginning of time and the creation.
 - a. Gen 1:1.
 - b. Mt 19:4 “...from the beginning...”.
 - c. Mk 10:6 “...from the beginning of the creation...”.
 - d. Rom 1:20 (slightly different terminology) “...since the creation of the world...”.
- B. There are seven truths concerning the Word that John uses to introduce his readers to the Word.
 - 1. “In the beginning was the Word...”.
 - a. This would not have been too startling a claim for John to make to the world of the first century because to them a reference to the Word was a reference to reason.

- 1) The world was designed and governed by reason, as exhibited in the order evident in it.
2. John then writes, "...and the Word was with God."
 - a. So, not only was the Word in the beginning of time and the creation, it was with God.
 - b. Because of the greatness associated with the Word, it is not surprising to see it linked with deity.
3. But John also writes, "...and the Word was God."
 - a. John is not just saying that the word was divine; he is saying that the Word was God (deity).
 - b. The Jehovah's Witnesses translate this, "...and the Word was a god" (New World Translation).
 - 1) But what John is saying is that the very essence of the Word is that it is deity; not that it is "a deity" or "a god."
 - c. And he again affirms, "The same was in the beginning with God."
4. Fourthly, we are told that all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made.
5. A fifth aspect of the Word that John identifies is that "in him was life" (v 4).
 - a. He's not referring to biological life, but rather to existence.
 - 1) The word John chose here is many times qualified in John's writings with the word "eternal."
 - b. So John affirms that in the Word was life, and the life was the light of men.
 - c. But when the light came into the world, it received Him not.
 - 1) "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not" (1:11).
 - d. John the immerser is also introduced at this point as bearing witness of the light.
 - e. So, we have...
 - 1) The Word as the light of men.
 - 2) John bearing witness of the light.
 - 3) The true light coming into the world but being rejected.

6. The sixth point made by John is the clincher.
 - a. Up to this point, John had said nothing that would have caused his readers, whoever they be, to sit up and take notice.
 - b. But now he does: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."
 - 1) The Word became human; it became one of us.
 - 2) John is implying that man could now point at, look at, touch and converse with this powerful, creative Word.
 - c. And he identifies Him by name.
 - 1) The Word that became flesh was full of grace and truth.
 - 2) He existed before John - obviously (1:1).
 - 3) The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ - the Word.
 7. And the final point in the prologue that he draws our attention to is one of the purposes the God who became flesh had in dwelling among men.
 - a. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (1:18).
 - 1) The word that John selected for "hath declared" means "to tell, relate, explain, report, make known, reveal."
 - a) NIV - "Has made him known."
 - b) It is a compound word which can mean "to lead out," and in fact, it is this word from which we get our word "exegete" and "exegesis."
 - (1) In exegesis we are bringing out the meaning of a passage of Scripture.
 - (2) Perhaps what John is saying is that Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us, and in the process, makes the Father's character, His purpose and His will known to us.
- C. Let's go back and look at each point with Jesus in mind.
1. He was in the beginning.
 - a. John the immerser later says, "After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me," (1:30) and yet, John was born six months before Jesus.

- b. Jesus told His antagonists, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was born, I am” (8:58).
 - 1) The Jews took up stones to stone him.
 - 2) Abraham lived some two thousand years before Jesus’ appearance in the flesh.
- 2. He was with God.
- 3. He was God (Phil 2:5).
 - a. On numerous occasions our Lord’s antagonists sought to kill Him because what He did and what He said implied that He was God.
- 4. All things were made through Him.
 - a. Paul confirmed this when he wrote, “...for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him, and he is before all things, and in him all things consist” (Col 1:16, 17).
- 5. In Him was life.
 - a. Speaking of Jesus Christ and of God John wrote in one of his letters, “This is the true God, and eternal life” (1 Jn 5:20).
 - b. Jesus Himself declared. “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (14:6).
- 6. The Word became flesh.
 - a. This stirred up quite a controversy in that day; so much so that many denied that He had come in the flesh.
 - 1) Some believed that He had only “seemed” to have come in the flesh but, in fact, did not.
 - a) This group came to be known as the “Docetics.”
 - 2) But their doctrine was totally unacceptable to God and His people.
 - a) It came to be known as “antiChrist” doctrine.
 - (1) 1 Jn 4:2,3.
 - (2) 2 Jn 7.
- 7. He came to declare or to make the Father known.

- a. In Leon Morris' book, *Reflections on the Gospel of John*, he writes, "John is going to write about God, but his God is not some remote being living on the top of Mount Olympus (or, for that matter, hidden behind the curtain that screened the Holy of Holies). His God is love, and in love for sinful people He came to this earth" (p. 9).

CONCLUSION:

- A. Throughout John's account we will find witness after witness testifying who they are convinced Jesus was.
 - 1. From that testimony we will be able to draw our conclusion, as so many have in the past and the present, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we may have life in His name.
- B. Perhaps one of the saddest verses in the Bible is found in our text (1:11).
 - 1. S. D. Gordon approached the passage by picturing someone coming home from a hard day's work.
 - a. He is glad to be finished with his work and is looking forward to being with his family.
 - b. He feels for the keys in his pocket, but they're not there; but that doesn't matter; the family is at home.
 - c. So he goes to the front door and rings the bell. But nothing happens.
 - d. The curtains are drawn back a little, and the eyes that he knows so well look out and see him.
 - e. But they leave him standing there.
 - 2. You may say, "No! It could never happen."
 - a. But it did!

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN. 1:19-34

INTRODUCTION:

- A. After introducing Jesus as...
 - 1. Being in the beginning,
 - 2. Being with God,
 - 3. Being God,
 - 4. Being the One through whom all things were created,
 - 5. Being the source of life,
 - 6. Becoming flesh and
 - 7. Making the Father known to man,he begins to rehearse the testimony given concerning Him.
- B. I have come to view John as taking us into a court of law wherein he calls various witness to the stand for us to hear.
 - 1. That which he seeks to prove (and does prove) is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
 - 2. And he wants us to draw that conclusion for our own benefit - "...that believing ye may have life in his name" (20:31).
 - a. But the kind of belief that brings about life is one that does not doubt.

JOHN THE IMMERSER:

- A. The first one who John brings to the witness stand is John the immerser.
 - 1. In verse 19 he writes, "And this is the witness of John,...."
 - a. The words "witness" and "bears witness" play an important role in John's account. The word "witness" occurs fourteen times.
 - 1) And for example, the phrase "bears witness" introduces us to nine different sources.
 - a) John the immerser (1:15).
 - b) Jesus' works (5:36).
 - c) The Father (5:36).

- d) The Scriptures (5:39).
 - e) Jesus Himself (8:18).
 - f) The Holy Spirit (15:26).
 - g) Jesus' disciples (15:27).
 - h) Jesus' words (18:23).
 - i) John through this gospel (21:24).
- 2) These are certainly by no means the only sources or the only ones lending their testimony to the book, but the word "witness" and phrase "bears witness" give us a sense for John's emphasis.
- a) Even though they are not introduced with either of these, Andrew, Philip and Nathanael bear witness in chapter 1, as do others later in the book.
 - b) The principle is also stated that at the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established.
 - (1) John provides far more than two or three witnesses.

2. Who was John, that his testimony should matter?

- a. We are first introduced to this character in 1:6-8.
 - 1) There we are told that he was "sent of God...for witness."
 - a) That he might bear witness of the light.
 - b) That all might believe through him.
- b. We find out more about John in 1:19ff.
 - 1) The Pharisees (1:24) sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem asking him who he was.
 - a) The reason for the attention is that he was baptizing people in the wilderness.
 - (1) His was a baptism of repentance unto remission of sins (Mk 1:4).
 - b) But the religious leaders wanted to know by what authority he was baptizing (1:25).

- c) According to Leon Morris, the Jews baptized Gentile proselytes. So, what was John doing baptizing Jews?
 - d) Other accounts inform us that the people also thronged to hear him. (They must have been hungry.)
- 2) They asked him, "Who art thou?"
 - a) He openly confesses, "I am not the Christ."
- 3) So they ask him, "Art thou Elijah?"
 - a) And he said, "No."
- 4) So they asked him, "Art thou the prophet?"
 - a) He answered, "No."

B. Now why would they have asked him if he were Elijah or the prophet? Why would they have suspected him to be one of them?

- 1. It is most likely the case that they suspected him to be Elijah because of what was prophesied in Malachi.
 - a. READ Malachi 4:4ff.
 - b. That promise marked the end of God's communication with His people for about four hundred years.
 - 1) And that silence wasn't broken until John appeared on the scene.
 - c. So, when the silence was broken, he was asked if he was Elijah.
 - 1) John said, "No."
 - 2) But Jesus, in praising John's work said, "If ye are will to receive it, this is Elijah, that is to come" (Mt 11:14).
 - 3) In essence this apparent discrepancy is cleared up when we recognize the fact that Elijah was type of John.
 - a) In other words, John and Elijah had a number of significant characteristics in common.
 - b) In fact, when the angel appeared to Zacharias, the father of John, to announce the birth of his son, he said, "And he shall go before his face (that is the face of the Lord) in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers of the children, and the dis-

obedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord people prepared for him" (Lk 1:17).

2. They asked him if he was "the prophet" because of what was prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:15-19.
 - a. Notice that they did not ask if he was a prophet, but if he was "the prophet."
 - b. The prophet like unto Moses, we will learn later, is Jesus Christ.
 - c. So, when John was asked if he was that prophet, he said, "No!"
 - d. If he was not the Christ, or Elijah, or the prophet, then who was he?
 - 1) He identified himself by saying, "I'm the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet" (1:23; Isa 40:3).
 - 2) He was the forerunner - the one designed to clear the path for the Lord.
- B. Now that we have his credentials out of the way, what testimony did he give concerning Jesus of Nazareth?
 1. He said of Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world!" (1:29).
 2. How did John know that Jesus was the Lamb of God?
 - a. John was instructed by God to baptize in the wilderness so that Jesus, by this process, would be manifested to Israel.
 - b. He said, "I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit."
 - c. John then said, "I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (1:34).
 3. John was not only sent by God, he was an eyewitness of the fact that Jesus was the Son of God.
 - a. So, we have the credible eyewitness testimony of John concerning Jesus Christ, that He is the Lamb, of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

THE LAMB OF GOD:

- A. What is so significant about the truth of John's testimony is that this Lamb of God is the only sacrifice that would or could ever be offered for the sins of the world.

1. READ Hebrews 10:1-10.

CONCLUSION:

- A. What sweet news it should have been that the Christ whom the Jews hoped for had arrived!

1. But these lawless Jews crucified Him instead of receiving Him - rejecting Him as their king.

- B. John later wrote, "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 Jn 2:1,2).

1. But many do not avail themselves to the saving message of the gospel or the blood of Christ.

THE FIRST DISCIPLES..... 1:35-51

INTRODUCTION:

- A. John the baptizer's testimony concerning Jesus bore good fruit.
 - 1. On one occasion, John was standing with two of his disciples and saw Jesus walking.
 - a. He said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (1:35).
 - b. And as soon as John's disciples heard him, they followed Jesus.
- B. Now one of these men was named Andrew (the other one is unnamed; though many believe him to be John, the writer of this account).
 - 1. But they were both disciples of John's, which says something about their character.
 - a. John wasn't your "run of the mill" preacher of the first century (or any other for that matter).
 - 1) Notice what Jesus said concerning him (Mt 11:7-14).
 - a) Mark tells us that, "John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey" (Mk 1:6).
 - 2) He preached repentance unto forgiveness of sins (Mk 1:4).
 - a) Andrew was of such an honest and good heart that he responded to John's preaching and became one of his followers.
 - b) When the Lamb of God was pointed out to him, he followed.
 - 2. Andrew is also identified as Peter's brother.
 - a. John 1 informs us that after having spent one day with our Lord, the first thing Andrew did was find his brother Peter and tell him, "We have found the Messiah, (which is, being interpreted, Christ)."
 - b. And he brought him to Jesus, and Jesus looked upon him and said, "Thou art Simon the Son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is, by interpretation, Peter)."
 - 3. We are not told a lot about Andrew aside from the fact that he was the brother of Peter (and Peter is the more predominant of the two in Scripture).
 - a. But that doesn't mean that Andrew's work was insignificant.

- 1) It seems as though many people of lesser ability are able to bring some with greater ability to the Lord and his service.
- b. And one thing that figures predominantly in what the Scriptures record concerning him is that he was not hesitant to bring people to the Messiah.
 - 1) In chapter 6, at the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus tested His disciples by asking, "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" (6:5).
 - a) Philip didn't know what to do, but Andrew unhesitatingly said, "There is a lad here. who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many?"
 - b) It is as if Andrew figured if he could put the food and the Messiah together, it would all work out, even though he didn't know how.
 - c) But the point here is, he presented the lad to the Lord.
 - 2) Some Greeks, on another occasion, came to Philip saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus" (12:21).
 - a) And as if Philip didn't know whether he should bring Greeks to Jesus or not, he told Andrew.
 - b) Andrew went to tell Jesus; Philip was with him.
4. What is so significant about Andrew's willingness to bring others to Jesus?
 - a. What he did is precisely what we are to be doing.
 - b. Andrew was very prompt to tell others about the Messiah, while some are very hesitant.
 - 1) In fact some never tell others of their commitment to Him.
 - a) There's a man I always enjoyed seeing when I attended the services where he attended.
 - (1) He always had a smile on his face and greeted you with a warm handshake, and always made you feel like he was glad to see you.
 - (2) He served in helping people who came in late to services find a seat.

- b) But I heard something about that man that was very disturbing to me.
 - (1) He never would tell his mother that he was a member of the church for fear that it would hurt her, or that it would place a wedge in their relationship.
 - c) What's wrong with that?
 - (1) By not telling her what he believed and why he believed it, he was withholding crucial information from his mother.
 - (2) How could she make a wise decision when he was withholding vital facts?
 - (3) He was hindering the truth.
 - (a) Rom 1:18.
 - (b) Mt 23:13 "...woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut up the kingdom of men against men."
 - (c) Though the motives maybe different, this man was hindering the truth.
 - c. Andrew, on the other hand, was one who did not hesitate bringing others to the Lord.
 - 1) In fact, though his talent may not have matched those of his brother, Peter, he still had what it took to be chosen as an Apostle.

PHILIP:

- A. The next one to join ranks with the Lord was Philip.
 - 1. After having spent a few days in the region where John the baptizer was preaching Jesus went to Galilee and found Philip. He said, "Follow me."
 - 2. Then Philip went to Nathanael, his friend, and said. "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law. and the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."
 - a. How is it that Philip knew this we're not told.
 - 1) It is certainly possible that he was familiar with the preparatory message of John since he was from the same city as Andrew and Peter, but the text does not say.

- 2) Whatever the case might be, he was convinced enough concerning Jesus' identity to commit himself to following Him and persuading Nathanael.

NATHANAEL:

- A. Nathanael was not as quick to respond at Philip's insistence that the one they had been looking for had actually come.
 1. In fact, his response was very negative.
 - a. He asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"
 - 1) No evidence is given telling us why Nathanael had such a bad view of Nazareth, though some have suggested small town rivalry as the reason.
 2. But Philip responded to his friend's critique by saying, "Come and see."
- B. When Nathanael came to meet the man who so impressed Philip, Jesus said to him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"
 1. Nathanael said, "Whence knowest thou me?"
 - a. And Jesus said, "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee."
 - b. Nathanael responded by saying, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art king of Israel."
 2. In assessing Nathanael's character, Jesus made it known to Nathanael...
 - a. That He knew the hearts of men.
 - b. That Philip's impression of Jesus was well-founded.
 - c. That something good could come from Nazareth.
 3. Because he was so quick to respond Jesus said to him, "Thou shalt see greater things than these."
 - a. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."
 - b. The "greater things" of which Jesus spoke included seeing the heavens opened.
 - 1) Heaven was closed, and closed off from human sight; but God can open it if He so chooses. Four times in the New Testament it was opened to men.

- a) Heaven was opened at the baptism of Jesus in which the spirit descended as a dove and the Father said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased" (Mt 3:17).
 - b) Heaven was opened at the stoning of Stephen, and Stephen saw the Son of man standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55,56).
 - c) It was opened for Peter in a vision in Acts 10.
 - d) One other occasion we may include is 2 Cor 12, where Paul describes one who was caught up into the third heaven.
- 2) But the way to heaven was opened by the work of our Lord in His death, burial and resurrection.

REMARKS:

- A. A commentator by the name of Godet commented, "One lighted torch serves to light another."
 - 1. This is precisely what occurred in chapter 1.
 - a. John told two of his disciples that Jesus was the Lamb of God.
 - b. One of those men, named Andrew, told his brother, Peter.
 - c. Jesus told Philip to follow him.
 - d. And Philip took the torch to light Nathanael.
- B. What is recorded here by John is designed to pile up the testimony concerning the Christ.
 - 1. John the apostle and another tells us that:
 - a. Jn 1:1.
 - b. He was the Creator.
 - c. In Him was life.
 - d. He became flesh.
 - e. Full of grace and truth.
 - f. Declared the Father.
 - 2. John the baptizer, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world" (1:29).

3. Andrew: "We have found the Messiah" (1:41).
 4. Philip: "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph" (1: 45).
 5. Nathanael: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel" (1:49).
- C. Testimony like this runs throughout the book and has convinced many that Jesus is who He claimed to be.

THE FIRST SIGN..... John 2:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

- A. John wrote at the end of his account of Jesus' life, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe the Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (20:30,31).
 - 1. Seven of the many signs Jesus performed are found recorded in John.
 - 2. The first of all the signs He performed is recorded in John 2: the turning of water to wine.
- B. Background:
 - 1. There was a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee to which Jesus and His disciples were invited.
 - a. As was the custom wine was being served to the guests, but they ran out of wine.
 - b. This was apparently no small matter, because it solicited the attention and help of the mother of Jesus.
 - 1) Now Mary, you'll remember, is the one who conceived, not having known any man.
 - a) His conception came about by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - 2) She is the one who received gifts from the wise men and shepherds who came to know her special child after His birth.
 - 3) Knowing about His special nature and purpose, she decided to solicit His help - to leave a difficult situation in His hands.
 - c. Jesus responded by saying, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come."
 - 1) This sounds a lot harsher than it really is.
 - a) Calling her "woman" was not a contemptuous address.
 - 2) But He was certainly setting some distance between them.
 - a) While He was in her home He lived by their rules and obeyed them.

- b) But now that His ministry had begun, the focus was now on His being God's Messiah.
 - (1) He would be her God and Saviour.
 - (2) And this, she needed to remember.
 - 3) Jesus said, "Mine hour is not yet come."
 - a) His hour to be glorified had not yet arrived.
 - b) When the time to die neared He said, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (12:23).
 - (1) And, "...for this cause came I unto this hour" (12:27).
 - (2) And, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee" (17: 1).
 - d. His mother said to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."
- 2. There were six water pots of stone used for purifying that contained two or three firkins apiece.
 - a. The NIV translates the amount for us as "twenty to thirty gallons of water."
 - 1) So, since there were six water pots, that would be anywhere from one hundred twenty to one hundred eighty gallons of water.
 - b. Jesus told the servants to fill the water pots with water. They did so "up to the brim."
 - 1) It is noteworthy for the skeptic that Jesus did not fill up the water pots, but the servants filled them, thus eliminating any trickery.
 - c. He then told them to "Draw out now, and bear unto the ruler of the feast."
 - 1) John says that the ruler of the feast tasted "the water now become wine, and knew not whence it was."
 - 2) He called the bridegroom and said, "Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine until now."

- a) The ruler is identifying a custom for us: The good wine is first served, and when men have drunk freely, (NIV: “had too much to drink”) the lesser quality wine is brought out.
 - b) This young couple must have been poor, as exhibited by not having enough wine to last the feast to serve to all the guests.
- 3) Two things should be noted about what Jesus produced from the water.
 - a) He produced an overabundance in quantity.
 - (1) They weren’t about to run out with 120 - 180 gallons at their disposal.
 - b) He produced the very best in quality.
- 4) Some other things to note:
 - a) The ruler is not suggesting that the guests at the feast are drunken with wine.
 - b) Secondly, it is not to be construed that Jesus produced an overabundance of wine to intoxicate the guests at the feast.
 - (1) If this is what a person focuses on they are missing the point of the miracle.

C. 2:11 “This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory.”

- 1. God bore witness of His messages and His Son by “signs and wonders, and by manifold powers and by gifts of the Holy Spirit” (Heb 2:3).
 - a. Just like signs on a highway are designed to point us to something, so the sign performed by our Lord was designed to point to something.
 - b. They were not an end in and of themselves. They were means to an end (20:30,31).
- 2. The sign Jesus performed at the wedding feast “manifested his glory.”
 - a. In the prologue to the book John said, “We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father” (1:14).
 - b. In 2:1 we are told that Jesus and His disciples were invited to the feast.

- 1) Among them were Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and if we are right in assuming the one unnamed in 1:35 is John, the apostle and writer, then the author of this book was present to witness this first miracle.
- D. And the miracle accomplished precisely what it was designed to do: "...and His disciples believed on him" (2:11).
1. These men were already convinced that He was the Messiah based on the testimony of John, but the sign He performed at the wedding feast certainly must have worked to solidify that belief.
 2. Speaking with reference to the miracles of our Lord, Leon Morris commented, "The essential characteristic is not that we cannot explain them, but that they are meaningful" (p. 76, *Reflections...*).
 - a. No one but those who deny the supernatural element of what is recorded in the Bible ever attempts to explain how Jesus turned water to wine.
 - 1) They simply look for the meaning or message to which the sign points.
 - b. What Jesus did to the water goes beyond our ability to explain by natural means.
 - 1) Anthony Flew, in his debate with Habermas, concerning the resurrection of Christ admitted, "You really have got to make a miracle naturally impossible if it's going to be something the occurrence of which is exciting" (p. 35).
 - 2) What Jesus did excited belief in His disciples.
 - 3) It probably left the servants who put the water in the pots and served the ruler of the feast with a few questions too.

DANGER IN REJECTING THE MIRACLES:

- A. The danger in rejecting the miracles of Jesus (or the whole Bible for that matter) is demonstrated in Mark 3:20-30.
1. Jesus had just cast out a demon, but due to the hateful and jealous attitude of the scribes and Pharisees, He was accused of having done such by the power of Beelzebub.
 2. After masterfully arguing their point to absurdity, He tells them that they were guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
 - a. He said, "...whosoever blasphemeth against the Father and Son hath forgiveness, but whosoever blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."

- b. He said this because they said, “He hath an unclean spirit.”
- 3. What made blasphemy against the Spirit a spiritual crime of great magnitude more than others?
 - a. The miracles were the very thing that confirmed Jesus to be who he said He was. If they rejected the very thing that gave credence to who He was, there was nowhere else for them to turn.
 - b. It also demonstrates the intensity of unbelief that existed in His religious opponents.
- B. In response to the question “Are miracles possible?” Paul Little responds: “The question really is, ‘Does an all-powerful God, who created the universe, exist?’ If so, we have little difficulty with miracles in which he transcends the natural law of which he is the author. It is important to keep this fundamental question in mind in discussing miracles” (*Know Why You Believe?*, p. 60).
- 1. The approach we take to the subject of miracles is a matter of life and death.

CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE..... John 2:12-25

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In his new book, *Jesus - the Lamb Who is a Lion*, Thomas B. Warren suggests that there are three categories in which the various views people hold concerning Jesus can be placed.
 - 1. Some believe Him to be merely a “lamb” but not a “lion” at all.
 - a. A “no demands” Lord.
 - 2. Some hold that He is a “lion” and not a “lamb.”
 - a. This view would depict Him as hard “taskmaster” and not a loving Saviour.
 - 3. But in his book brother Warren demonstrates that Jesus is the Lamb who is a Lion.
 - a. The book of Revelation depicts Him as such in chapter 5.
- B. Now, depending on the particular view you hold, what occurs in John 2:12-25 may surprise you.
 - 1. We are told that the passover of the Jews was at hand, so we naturally find Jesus in Jerusalem.
 - a. When He entered the Temple He found merchants selling oxen, sheep and doves, and the money changers.
 - 1) These livestock merchants were there for the convenience of the people, because oxen, sheep and doves were in constant demand for sacrificial purposes.
 - 2) Each family was required to eat the passover which was a lamb, so lamb could be found in abundance at the Temple.
 - a) Josephus says it required 200,000 lambs for a pass-over feast (McGarvey says this is an exaggerated amount).
 - b. Jesus is so appalled by what He saw that He made a scourge of cords and drove all out of the temple, pouring out the changer’s money and overthrowing their tables and saying, “Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house a house of merchandise.”
 - 2. Let’s look at the layout of the Temple:
 - a. First of all, there was the small structure which contained the Holy Place and the Most Holy place.

- 1) This was patterned after the Tabernacle in the wilderness.
- b. Then there was the entire space surrounding the Temple.
 - 1) This area was divided into four sections covering about nineteen acres of land.
 - a) Entering the court one would first pass through;
 - (1) The court of the Gentiles,
 - (2) The court of women,
 - (3) The court of Israel, and
 - (4) The court of the priests.
 - 2) It was in the court of the Gentiles that Jesus found the merchants.
 - a) It was a place reserved for prayer and worship, and yet the merchants had turned it into a barnyard.
3. The Jews responded to Jesus' action by asking Him, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?"
 - a. NIV: "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"
 - 1) They figured that only someone appointed by God would even consider doing such a thing.
 - a) Jesus was clearly out numbered, and if the Jews had had a mind to, could have incited a riot against Him, but they did not.
 - b) So, they called on Him to perform a sign to prove He had authority to act.
 - b. McGarvey: "The manner in which he had cleansed the house of it's traffickers was of itself a sign, if they had only eyes to see it" (p. 123, *The Fourfold Gospel*).
 - 1) When His disciples reflected on what had taken place, they were reminded of Ps. 69:9," Zeal for thy house shall eat me up" (Jn 2:17).
 - c. Is it not interesting that independent from the zeal He exhibited in purging the Temple, Jesus gave them no sign on that occasion?

- 1) In fact, the occasions on which He was asked to perform a sign were the occasions you can be sure He would give none.
 - 2) This book was designed to record some of the signs Jesus performed for the purpose of provoking belief unto salvation.
 - a) But knowing the hearts of His challengers, Jesus gave none.
- d. But what He said was this: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (2:19).
- 1) The Jews were dumfounded saying, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?"
 - a) There were three temples built.
 - (1) The first was built by Solomon, but destroyed Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.
 - (2) The second temple was built by those Jews who returned home after Babylonian captivity.
 - (3) The second was torn down and the third one rebuilt by Herod the Great.
 - (a) This third building is the one that the Jews referred to as having been built in forty-six years.
 - (b) They believed Jesus to be saying that He could rebuild it if torn down, in three days.
 - 2) John comments, "But he spake of the temple of his body."
 - a) Jesus referring to his body as a temple is not an uncommon thing in Scripture.
 - (1) Jn 1:14. FN: "...tabernacled..."
 - (2) Peter spoke of his own death as "the putting off of my tabernacle" (2 Pet 1: 14).
 - b) Jesus was making a reference to His resurrection.
 - (1) John writes, "When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spoke this, and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said" (2:22).

- C. The issue at hand was that of the authority of Christ.
1. By virtue of His relationship with the Father, He had the authority to purge the Temple of the merchants.
 - a. The Temple was built for His Father, and He, being the only begotten Son, coming to declare the Father (1:18), made it known that their behavior was unacceptable to the one they thought they served.
 - 1) His action in purging the Temple implied authority to do such.
 - 2) The Jews asked Him for some sign to verify that authority.
 - 3) The only sign He would give them would be His resurrection from the dead - which was plenty.
 - a) Paul says that Jesus was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by His resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 1:4).
- D. On another occasion, certain scribes and Pharisees came to Him seeking signs, but He answered them the same way, “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.”
1. And He responded in the same manner to them “...there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Mt 12:37-40).
 2. Paul characterized the Jews in his letter to Corinth by writing, “Seeing that the Jews ask for signs...” (1 Cor 1:22).
 3. But note; even though He refused to provide a sign for these Jews who asked for them, while in Jerusalem for the feast, “many believed on his name beholding his signs which he did” (2:23).
 - a. And even though many believed, Jesus did not trust them.
 - b. Jesus knew what was in man.
 - 1) McGarvey: “This chapter itself gives us a faithful picture of what was in man. We find in it temple profaners, money-changers, sign-seekers, opposers of reform, false and weak professors of faith, etc... but none to whom Jesus could trust himself” (p. 125, *Fourfold...*).

APPLICATION:

- A. Let’s look at the merchants and moneychangers for a moment.

1. The livestock they had for sale was beneficial for those coming from great distances.
 - a. It would have been difficult to herd animals to Jerusalem for some.
 - b. With the livestock for sale, all they would need to do is bring money to purchase the necessary sacrifices.
 2. The moneychangers were needed because offerings in the temple were to be made only in approved currency (Leon Morris, p. 80).
 3. When Jesus appears on the scene, he is confronted with “commercialism run riot” (Morris).
 - a. Instead of a quiet place where people from the whole world over could pray, He found a noisy trade center.
 - b. He found people exploiting other people in an attempt to provide for them what they needed to satisfy their religious duties.
 - 1) People from other places came to Jerusalem needing lambs and other animals for sacrificial purposes, and for convenience sake, the merchants brought their goods into the Temple grounds themselves.
 4. I am confident that there are many religious leaders today who should be driven from their “temples” for exploiting people who are attempting to serve God!
 - a. They are taking advantage of people by offering them something to satisfy their religious feelings, but at a high price.
 - 1) A high enough price to provide them with multimillion dollar houses, exquisite cars, fine clothes and jewelry.
 5. Since the topic of this text is that of the authority of our Lord and the theme that of Jesus’ relationship with the Father being of such a nature as to provide Him the authority and zeal for purging the temple of its unwanted merchants, a pertinent question to ask is this: “By what authority did these merchants enter the Temple grounds to sell their goods in the first place?”
 - a. Who permitted them entrance to begin with?
 - b. Why didn’t the priests shoo them out? or the Pharisees? or zealous Jews?
 - c. Could this be a commentary on the deplorable spiritual condition in which our Lord found His people?
- B. As I have already alluded, the subject of these verses is that of the authority of our Lord.

1. If Jesus had authority over his Father's house as Son, how much more so over the church?
 - a. Mt 28:18ff (stated after death, burial and resurrection).
 - b. God "...put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph 1:22,23).
- C. Let's not become so indifferent or insensitive that we find ourselves profaning the church, or questioning Jesus' authority like those in His time.

BORN FROM ABOVE. 3:1-20

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Sometimes preconceived notions make it very difficult for us to perceive the truth or to comprehend truth as it is being taught.
 - 1. For example:
 - a. The disciples of our Lord held some preconceived notions about the establishment and nature of the kingdom.
 - 1) Prior to His ascension back to the Father. His disciples asked Him, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).
 - b. After cleansing the temple of the livestock, merchants and money-changers, the Jews said, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?"
 - 1) Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (2:19).
 - 2) Now the Jews thought Jesus was referring to the Temple that took forty-six years to build, but He was really speaking with reference to His body.
- B. In John 3 we have Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, coming to Jesus by night and confessing, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him."
 - 1. The Pharisees were characteristically one of the leading antagonists of our Lord.
 - a. Nicodemus, a Pharisee himself, is the only one we find coming to Jesus with his disposition during our Lord's life.
 - 2. Jesus' night visitor was apparently curious about the kingdom, so Jesus immediately addresses the subject.
 - a. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
 - 1) Jesus introduces His first comment to Nicodemus with the words "Verily, verily..." or "Truly, truly..."(Amen, amen...)."a) In the Gospel accounts, these words are doubled up "exclusively introducing solemn statements of our Lord" (Abbott-Smith).

- b) You can be certain that when you happen across a statement of our Lord introduced with “truly, truly” what you’re about to read is of the utmost importance.
 - 2) What Jesus said was, “Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
 - a) Translations:
 - 1) NASV: “Unless one is born again...” (FN: from above).
 - 2) NIV: “Unless a man is born again...” (FN: born from above).
 - b) Apparently, the words Jesus used meant to be born “again” and “from above.”
 - 1) One commentator suggests phrasing these words, “reborn from above” which would satisfy both meanings.
- 3. Throughout the conversation, we obtain more and more light into the character of Nicodemus.
 - a. He now responds by asking, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”
 - b. Nicodemus braved coming to Jesus, but “by night.”
 - 1) After all, he was a ruler of the Jews (3:1), “the teacher of Israel” (3:10), and a Pharisee.
 - 2) But he did not have the heart to understand the message of our Lord.
- 4. Jesus further elaborated on the nature of being reborn from above.
 - a. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”
 - b. Jesus’ words here are confusing to many.
 - 1) But much of the confusion can be cleared up if we recognize the fact that Jesus has only addressed Himself, at this point in time, to one birth - the new birth, or being born from above.
 - a) Nicodemus is the one confusing the subject with a natural birth.
 - 2) Follow my line of reasoning:

- a) First of all, Jesus introduces the subject of being born again from above (3:3).
 - b) Secondly, when questioned, He parallels being “born anew” with being “born of water and the spirit.”
 - 1) There are two aspects to the new birth.
 - c) Thirdly, to distinguish between what Nicodemus had in mind with what He was referring to, He continues by saying...
 - 1) “That which is born of the flesh is flesh;”
 - 2) “And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”
 - c. Jesus then tells him not to marvel or to be surprised that He says, “Ye must be born anew.”
- C. To many the process by which men and women are born again is not hard to understand, but for Nicodemus it was a difficult concept to grasp.
 - 1. In fact, our ruler of the Jews persisted by saying, “How can these things be?”
 - 2. What Jesus was expounding was not too difficult, but if Nicodemus had trouble understanding this, there wasn’t any sense in trying to answer his question on “How can these things be?”

TOPIC AND THEME DEVELOPED:

- A. The subject of the text is that of being born again.
 - 1. “Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (3:3).
- B. Nicodemus had trouble understanding how this could be.
 - 1. But remember, Jesus was speaking of a new birth while Nicodemus could not, or would not, shake the idea of being born of natural birth.
 - 2. So, Jesus told Him that there was no sense in delving into his last question if he did not grasp what preceded it.
 - a. He said, “We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.”
 - b. “How would Jesus know about heavenly things?” Nicodemus may have asked himself.
 - 1) Jesus said, “And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven” (3:13).

- 2) He was from heaven (1:1-18, prologue).
3. But Jesus did present to Nicodemus the same basic message He gave to the Jews at the temple during the Passover.
 - a. There He spoke of the temple being destroyed and Him raising it in three days (2:19f).
 - b. Here He begins by saying, "...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life" (3: 14,15).
 - 1) The allusion to Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness is found in Numbers 21.
 - a) The Israelites were murmuring about their divine provisions, so God sent fiery serpents among them.
 - 1) These serpents bit them and many of the Israelites died.
 - b) Moses prayed for the people and Jehovah responded saying, "Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a standard; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live" (Num 21:8).
 - 1) So Moses did as the Lord had commanded; if a serpent bit any man, and he looked upon the fiery serpent, he lived.
 - 2) Now, just as the serpent was raised to heal those who had faith to look upon the serpent, "So must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life."
 - a) The reference to His being lifted up is to His death on the cross.
 - c. The reason why He was lifted is found in the next verse. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (3:16).

APPLICATION:

- A. All that is said in 3:1-21 is done to promote developing the subject of being born again.
 1. Jesus introduced the subject by saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

2. Nicodemus had trouble seeing Jesus' reference to being born again in any other terms than physical and finally asks, "How can these things be?"
 3. And our Lord's reference to being lifted up, in the simplest terms possible, was identifying the basis upon which men are saved.
 - a. Those who believe on Him should not perish but have eternal life.
- B. Now, what did Jesus mean when He made reference to being born anew with "water and the Spirit?"
1. Several fanciful notions have been suggested in the past, most of which are centered around the ideal that Jesus was speaking with reference to two births - natural and spiritual.
 - a. Bag of waters.
 - b. Semen.
 2. The fact of the matter is, Jesus is referring to one birth (the new birth) which has two elements - water and the Spirit.
 3. Let's see how these two elements apply to being reborn from above.
 - a. Paul wrote that Jesus sanctified the church, "Having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word" (Eph 5:26).
 - 1) Baptism washes away sin and it saves.
 - a) Paul was told, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on His name" (Acts 22:16).
 - b) Peter wrote, "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism" (1 Pet 3:21).
 - 2) It is the word of the Spirit that instructs men on what they must do to be saved.
 - b. So we have "water" as a reference to baptism; and a reference to the Spirit, who is the One who instructed men on what they must do to be saved, which leads men to being baptized.
 4. Examples in Acts:
 - a. Being born anew from above is the practical equivalent to being saved.
 - 1) If then, we learn what men and women of the first century were told they must do to be saved, we will then learn how we are to be born anew (from above).
 - b. Examples:

- 1) After Philip preached Jesus to the man from Ethiopia, and they came to a certain body of water, the Ethiopian said, "Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36).
 - 2) When the Spirit fell on the household of Cornelius, he asked, "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" (Acts 10:47).
- c. When men and women obey from the heart what the Spirit teaches concerning baptism, then they are born anew.

C. Why is it that all men do not respond to heaven's calling?

1. Read 3:20,21.

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST. 3:22-36

INTRODUCTION:

A. John the baptizer was a great man.

1. Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist" (Mt 11:11).
2. He would be seen clothed with camel's hair and a leather girdle about his loins.
 - a. His diet consisted of locust and wild honey.
3. And when religious hypocrites came to see him, he would call them offspring of vipers and command them to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.
 - a. Fearless, courageous, rugged, godly - these are terms that describe John.
4. It is no wonder he attracted followers, disciples.

But, John was also a forerunner whose mission was to prepare the way for one mightier (Mt 3:11).

- a. The One mightier than he had come, and John bare witness of Him saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29).
- b. And when some of his disciples heard him identify Jesus as such, they immediately followed Jesus.
- c. But some still followed John.
 - 1) Even after his death, and later, after the death of our Lord, we find some following the teachings of John (Acts 19).

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST:

A. Prior to the time when John was cast into prison, his disciples got into a debate with a Jew concerning purifying, or the matter of ceremonial washings.

1. We're not told exactly what went on in the debate, but it was apparently provoked by the fact that Jesus and His disciples were spending time in Judea and baptizing.
 - a. John was in Aenon because there was much water, and they came, and were baptized.
 - b. John 4:1 says, "Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John."

2. Apparently, John's disciples must have thought this implied there was a competition for disciples between Jesus and John, which would certainly evidence their misunderstanding concerning the nature of John's work.
 - a. Notice though that John was not caught up in the debate, only his disciples.
 - b. Their frustration is also hinted at in the exaggerated way they described people coming to Jesus.
 - 1) They said, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him."
- B. John proceeded by informing them that what they observed is precisely the way it was meant to be.
1. He reminds them that they can testify to what John had earlier said, that he was not the Christ, but that he was sent before the Christ.
 2. John then said, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, that standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is made full" (3:29).
 - a. The bride represents the disciples.
 - b. The bridegroom is Christ.
 - c. The friend of the bridegroom is John.
 - 1) What a beautiful way to depict the roles and relationships of all involved.
 - a) If John had become self-serving and power hungry, he would have been taking the bride away from his friend, the bridegroom - in this case Christ.
 - b) But John was truly "the friend of the bridegroom" and rejoiced to hear His voice.
 3. Then he informs them, "He must increase, but I must decrease."
- C. What our author is telling us is that even as great a man as John was (by the Lord's standard), Jesus is the One who rightfully possesses the role of Pre-eminent One.
1. With that in mind, John helps his disciples to learn this truth by telling them, "He must increase, but I must decrease."
 2. But why was Jesus pre-eminent?

- a. First of all, because He came from above, and “He that cometh from above is above all.”
 - 1) This was established by the writer in the beginning of the book.
 - a) He was in the beginning.
 - b) He was with God.
 - c) He was God.
 - d) All things were made through Him.
 - e) In Him was life.
 - f) He became flesh.
 - g) He was full of grace and truth.
 - h) He came to declare or make the Father known to man.
- 3. But, sadly enough, very few accepted His testimony.
 - a. “What he hath seen and heard, of that he beareth witness, and no man receiveth his witness.”
 - 1) Certainly some accepted it, but so few that John overstates the case to drive home his point.
 - 2) John, the writer said, “He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not” (Jn 1:11).
 - 3) Jesus said, “For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved” (3:20).
 - b. And to highlight John the baptist’s sadness, he reminded them that they had accepted and would testify to what he said (3:28), but they would not receive or accept what Jesus said (3:32).
 - 1) And the implications of this are great.
 - a) “He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true.”
 - (1) In other words, he who accepts what Jesus teaches has stamped his seal of approval to the fact that God is true.
- 4. The Father loves the Son and had given all things into His hands.

- a. Jesus is depicted as the One whom God sent: and “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.”
- D. John ended his testimony by saying, “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him” (3:36).
 - 1. “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life;”
 - a. Belief here implies an “obedient faith.”
 - 1) Dick Sztanyo wrote, “Knowledge without commitment is disbelief” (*The Concept of Rational Belief*, p. 19).
 - 2) And “Faith is a volitional commitment of an informed intellect. It is a joint act of the will and the intellect, not one without the other” (Ibid. p. 21).
 - a) “Knowledge without commitment is disbelief.”
 - b) “Commitment without knowledge is irrationality.”
 - 3) Faith that does not act (obey) is a dead faith (Jas 2), but faith that acts (obeys) without record for the consequences is saving faith.
 - b. Notice also that John said, “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life.”
 - 1) “Obey not” is used as the opposite of “believeth.”
 - 2) Thus, one who believes obeys; but one who believes not, obeys not.
 - 3) And the wrath of God rests on the one that obeys not.
 - a) The wrath of God rests or abides on him because he has sinned and has not accepted the only means of escape.
 - b) The only means by which he can be freed from sin is through belief in the Son of God.
 - c) Which focuses our attention back to the purpose of the book, “That ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name” (20:31).

LIVING WATER. 4:1-42

INTRODUCTION:

- A. It was about the sixth hour of the day, which is equivalent to our twelve noon, if we reckon it like the Jews.
 - 1. Jesus had left Judea, probably to avoid early and unnecessary confrontation with the Pharisees (4:1), and we find Him passing through Samaria on His way to Galilee.
 - 2. And being tired from his trip, we find Him sitting by Jacob's well.
- B. Samaria was not a likely place to find a Jew (and Jesus was a Jew).
 - 1. There was a centuries old feud/rivalry between the Jews and the Samaritans that's identified in 4:9. "For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans."
 - 2. A brief, but excellent, survey of the beginnings of that feud can be studied in 2 Kings 17.
 - a. Once Israel (the ten northern tribes) had been stripped off the promised land by Shalmanezzer, king of Assyria, he replaced them with people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, Sephavvaim.
 - 1) So these foreigners were settled in the towns of Samaria in Israel's stead.
 - 2) And these foreigners practiced all kinds of religious rites which were an abomination to the Lord, i.e., idolatry including sacrificing their children to their own gods.
 - b. But lions came into Samaria killing many, which led them to believe the god of that land was upset with them.
 - 1) So, Shalmanezzer sent one of the Israelite priests back to instruct the people concerning God, and they began worshipping Jehovah along with their own gods.
 - 2) "They persisted in their former practices" (2 Kgs 17:40) and their children and grandchildren did the same.
 - c. Much later in history we are told that there was a reformation that took place - perhaps around the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.
 - 1) But even with reformation, it left them at odds with the Jews.
 - 2) Everett Fergeson, in his book, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, lists characteristic beliefs in common with the Jews.
 - a) An uncompromising belief in and worship of the one God.

- b) Avoidance of idols.
- c) Loyalty to the law given by Moses (Gen - Deut).
 - 1) Rigid observance of the Sabbath.
 - 2) Circumcision.
 - 3) Festivals.
- d) A sense of being the chosen people with attachment to the land given to their fathers.
- e) Expectations of a glorious destiny.
- 3) There were also some differences:
 - a) They preserved their own version of the Pentateuch.
 - b) They only accepted Genesis through Deuteronomy. A view shared by the Sadducees.
 - c) They rejected the idea of resurrection.
- 4) But, "...the most obvious point of difference between the Samaritans and the Jews, and one that went right to the heart of religious unity, was the adherence to a rival sanctuary on Mt. Gerizim (Ferguson, p. 424).

C. So, we have Jesus, as a weary traveler, in territory despised by the Jews, resting at Jacob's well.

- 1. And a woman from that detested region comes to the well and Jesus asks her, "Give me to drink."
 - a. That was His second "mistake."
 - b. The Jews did not speak to Samaritans, much less a Samaritan woman.
 - 1) Jesus' disciples were in the city buying food, but when they returned, "they marveled that he was speaking with a woman" (4:27).
 - 2) Leon Morris says that there was an ancient Jewish prayer that began, "Blessed art thou, O Lord...who has not made me a woman" (Vol. 1, p. 126).
- 2. She even recognized the oddity of the moment by responding to Jesus' request saying, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman?" (4:9).

- a. Jesus said, "If thou knewest the gift of God and who it is that saith to thee, 'Give me to drink;' thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given the living water" (4:10).

LIVING WATER:

- A. When Jesus spoke of living water, the word "living" referred to running moving flowing water as opposed to stagnant water that sat still.
 - 1. A similar picture is painted by Jeremiah when the Lord said, "...my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer 2:13).
 - 2. Jesus was offering her living water saying, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life" (4:14).
- B. Now, Jesus and the woman were speaking on two different plains.
 - 1. Jesus was not speaking of H₂O. He was communicating to her spiritual truths clothed in language that was familiar to her and their surroundings, (they were at the well).
 - 2. But the woman thought H₂O, as seen in her response to His offer, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou that living water?"
 - 3. And when He told her that she would never thirst after imbibing of the water He provided, she said, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw."
- C. She still did not understand.
 - 1. So Jesus said, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither."
 - a. She said, "I have no husband."
 - 2. But Jesus said, "Thou saidest well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this hast thou said truly."
 - 3. At this, she perceived that Jesus was a prophet, so she brought up the pet question of the day, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."
 - a. She was wanting him to settle the centuries-old question that so divided the Jews and Samaritans.
 - b. Note Jesus' response: 4:21-24.

4. It seems that the woman was so impressed with our Lord's response that she was led to comment about the coming Messiah.
 - a. So Jesus said, "I that speak unto thee am he" (4:26).
 - 1) Literally, "I am, the one speaking to you."
- D. In her excitement, the woman left her water pot and returned to the city saying, "Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?"
 1. So the people left the city to see Him.
 2. But, before they arrived, Jesus has a brief discussion with His disciples.
 - a. Notice again, the two-fold use of the same word.
 - 1) His disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, eat."
 - 2) But Jesus said, "I have meat to eat that ye know not."
 - 3) They then said, "Hath any man brought him aught to eat?"
 - 4) And Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work."
 - a) Then He compared the souls ready and waiting to respond to the fields that were already white unto harvest.
 3. Note how the Samaritans responded to Jesus. READ 4:39-42.

OBSERVATION:

- A. To this point, in John's account, there have been four examples of the fallacy called "Equivocation." [Equivocation means the use of an ambiguous word...in more than one sense in a given unit of discourse" (Lionel Ruby, p. 56)]
 1. In John 2 Jesus mentioned destroying the temple, and in three days He would raise it up.
 - a. They were at the Temple at this time.
 - 1) The Jews thought He was referring to the temple that took forty-six years to build.
 - 2) But He was speaking of His body.
 2. In John 3 Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about being born anew.
 - a. Nicodemus thought He was implying that a man needs to crawl back into his mother's womb.

- b. Jesus was speaking of spiritual rebirth.
- 3. In John 4 Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria about living water.
 - a. They were at Jacob's well.
 - 1) So, the woman thought Jesus was referring to fresh H2O.
 - 2) Jesus was speaking in spiritual terms.
- 4. And later Jesus spoke of meat.
 - a. It was time to eat, and the disciples had just returned from the city after shopping for food. They said, "Rabbi, eat." Jesus replied, "I have meat to eat that ye know not."
 - 1) They thought He was hiding meat from them.
 - 2) He was speaking about doing the Father's will.
- B. Why did He do it? Why did He talk like that?
 - 1. With the Jews concerning the Temple, He didn't say, "Oh, no, you misunderstand me. I'm talking about the resurrection of my body from the dead after you murder me."
 - 2. He didn't say to Nicodemus, "Oh, let me explain myself, I'm talking about hearing the word and being baptized."
 - 3. And He didn't explain to the woman what the living water was - that He wasn't referring to H2O.
 - 4. Why?
 - a. Notice that one of the things Jesus did on these occasions is provoke others to ask of Him questions.
 - 1) The Jews wanted to know how He could raise up in three days what took forty-six years to build.
 - 2) Nicodemus wanted to know how a person could be born again.
 - 3) The woman at the well wanted to know with what Jesus would draw the living waters.
 - b. It was a way of provoking, in a powerful way, the curiosity of others.
 - c. And perhaps He used them in the same way He used the parables.
 - 1) Those who sought to understand Him would pursue a meaning to His words.

2) Those uninterested would drop the subject.

C. What was the living water to which Jesus referred?

1. Of it He said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life" (4:14).
2. In a later text of the book, John tells us what the well of water springing up unto eternal life is.
 - a. Jn 7:37-39.
 - b. Tie in with Acts 2:38f.
 - c. Gal 4:6 "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The longer I study, the more impressed I am with the fact that there are varying degrees of faith.
 - 1. The father of an epileptic boy admitted to Jesus, “I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mk 9:24).
 - 2. The centurion in Matthew 8 had “great faith” (8:10).
 - 3. Then there are those who have no faith (Mk 6).
 - 4. Some claim to have faith, but their behavior proves it to be dead, profitless and barren (Jas 2).
- B. Our text is about faith.
 - 1. Jesus is once again in Cana of Galilee.
 - a. Cana’s claim to fame is that Jesus performed His first miracle there, turning the water to wine at the wedding feast.
 - 2. He had just left Judaea, stayed two days in Samaria, and was entering Galilee.
 - a. Galilee had several important cities in it that play an important role in our text.
 - 1) While in Nazareth of Galilee, He was rejected, thus the comment by our Lord that a prophet has no honor in his own country (Jn 4:44).
 - 2) Capernaum was located at the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.
 - a) Here is where the “nobleman” was from and where his son lay sick nigh unto death.
 - 3) And Cana of Galilee is where the Lord is, some twenty miles from Capernaum.
 - b. Apart from Nazareth, Jesus was well received by the Galileans; primarily because they were in Jerusalem at the feast and saw the things He did there (2:23-25).
 - 3. When Jesus came to Cana, He was met by a nobleman whose son was sick some twenty miles away at Capernaum.
 - a. A nobleman is a royal officer or a king’s man.

- 1) J. W. McGarvey suggests that he was an officer of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee.
- b. John tells us that he begged Jesus to “come down” and heal his son because he was close to death.
- c. Jesus said to him, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe” (4:48).
 - 1) But he persisted saying, “Sir, come down ere my child die.”
 - 2) Jesus said, “Go thy way; thy son liveth.”
- d. And, believing Jesus, the man left to return home to be greeted by his servants who said that his son lived.

QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS:

- A. Why was Jesus so seemingly harsh at the request of this man whose son was dying?
 1. The Lord said, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe” (4:48).
 2. What did Jesus mean when He said, “Ye will in no wise believe?”
 - a. He believed enough to travel twenty miles to find Jesus.
 - 1) Why would he travel such a distance to meet Jesus? What were his beliefs concerning Christ?
 - a) 4:45 says, “The Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also went unto the feast.”
 - b) And Cana of Galilee is where Jesus performed His first sign.
 - c) Surely the message concerning His works had reached Capernaum.
 - d) Jesus had even spent a few days in Capernaum prior to his return to Galilee (2:12).
 - b. This officer believed enough in Jesus’ presence to perform wonders that he said, “Sir, come down ere my child die” (4:49).
 - 1) He must have thought that Jesus’ presence was necessary to the performing of a sign and wonder.
 - a) Matthew tells of a man seeking the healing of his servant who said, “Lord, I am not worthy that thou

shouldest come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed” (8:8).

- c. But the Lord challenged his faith by saying, “Go thy way; thy son liveth” (4:50).
 - 1) ASV: “The man believed the word Jesus spoke unto him, and he went on his way.”
 - 2) NIV: “The man took Jesus at his word and departed.”
 - 3) So, the man believed at least to the extent that he returned home.
- d. And when he returned home to find that his son had been healed the very hour the Lord spoke His powerful words of healing John writes, “So he and all his household believed” (NIV).
 - 1) The nobleman didn’t return from Cana until the following day.
 - a) And when he asked his servants about the hour his son was well, they said, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.”
 - b) “So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, “Thy son liveth” (4:53).
 - c) And he believed.
 - 2) With the miracle of healing to confirm the words of Jesus spoken a day prior, an even firmer belief now made it’s residence within the bosom of this grateful father.
- 3. Jesus said, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe.”
 - a. He deserves a belief characterized by dedication and not mere amazement (Tenney).
 - b. Guy N. Woods: “The reply Jesus made was not a refusal of the request it was a necessary lesson to the nobleman to prompt him to a deeper knowledge of, and greater appreciation for the Lord and His work” (*Commentary*, G.A., p. 92).
 - c. And while Jesus spoke directly to the nobleman, He was addressing the entire audience.
 - 1) When Jesus said, “Except ye see signs and wonders...” the “you” is plural.
 - 2) One translation demonstrates this by rendering it, “Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders...”.

- B. What we are seeing in this text is a faith that grew, being fed reasons to grow.
 - 1. This man was more interested in the healing of his son than he was in the identity of Jesus.
 - a. But by means of his son's miraculous cure, faith was procured.

APPLICATION:

- A. We are much the same as the nobleman of Capernaum.
 - 1. We start with simple faith; we experiment with the teachings of the Word; we prove them true; and our faith is strengthened.
 - 2. We face a crisis in our lives; and with no where else to turn we turn to God; He proves Himself sufficient to meet our need; and the trust we had in Him grows.
 - a. We learn to trust Him with greater needs.
 - b. We are, consequently learning throughout life to give and to trust more and more of our will and our lives to God.
- B. But what of the believers today? We don't observe the awe-inspiring wonders and signs of Jesus performed today. How can we acquire the kind of faith some in the first century had?
 - 1. First of all, it is important for us to realize that Jesus was upset that people were always asking Him for a sign.
 - a. To the nobleman He said, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe" (4: 48).
 - b. When the Jews asked Him for a sign He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn 2:19).
 - c. His closest friends did not believe the initial reports of His resurrection and Jesus "upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart; because they believed not them that had seen him after he was risen" (Mk 16:14).
 - 2. Secondly, signs did not always convince.
 - a. Of the very city the nobleman was from Jesus said, "And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee" (Mt 11:23,24).
 - b. READ John 20:26-29 (Thomas).

3. The signs recorded in John's account were written to provide evidence for faith that saves (Jn 20: 30,31).
 - a. SEE Romans 10:6-8.
 - 1) Rom 10:17.

SCRIPTURE VERSUS TRADITION..... 5:1-18

INTRODUCTION:

- A. All societies of people have traditions - some good, some bad and some indifferent.
 - 1. For example, it is purely a matter of judgment when we meet on Sunday morning whether it be 9:45 a.m. or 9:30 a.m. or 10:00 a.m.
 - 2. It is good that we meet.
 - a. We are commanded to meet.
 - b. Thus, we have a good tradition; a divine one.
 - 3. But then there are bad traditions.
 - a. Bad because they make void the word of God (Mt 15:6).
 - 1) NIV: "Nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition."
- B. In today's text we find human tradition bucking against the Word of God. So much so that it blinded many from experiencing the wonder and amazement of a miracle.
 - 1. It passed right under their nose unnoticed.
 - 2. It flashed right before their eyes and they didn't see it.
 - 3. They had eyes to see, but did not see; ears to hear, but did not hear.

SETTING:

- A. Jesus was once again in Jerusalem for another feast of the Jews.
 - 1. "All Jewish male adults were required to go up to Jerusalem for the three most important feasts of the year, the Passover (or Feast of Unleavened Bread), the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles" (Deut 16:16).
 - 2. Our text does not tell us which feast this was.
- B. All the action takes place at a pool named Bethesda (which means "house of mercy").

ACTION:

- A. There are three acts or phases to the story, the first let's title "The Miracle."
 - 1. At the pool named Bethesda, we are introduced to a man who had been infirm (invalid) thirty-eight years.

2. He was at this particular pool because of a superstition associated with it.
 - a. Of the various translations I checked only the KJV and NKJV include verse 4.
 - 1) The rest of the more reliable ones omit it, and place it as a footnote indicating that it was a later addition to the text.
 - b. Even though spurious, it explains the then-believed reason people brought the sick, blind, halt and withered to the pool (NIV: "the blind, the lame and paralyzed").
 - 1) The pool, at sporadic and undetermined intervals, would function as a whirlpool, the action of which was ascribed to an angel.
 - 2) Those brought to the pool, in a last ditch attempt, believed that the first one in the pool (when the whirlpool-action began) would be healed.
 - c. Once those by the pool saw the water stir, there would be a mad dash to be first in the pool.
 - 1) Can you imagine the frenzy and desperation that accompanied the stirring of the waters?
3. Jesus came to the pool and asked the invalid, "Wouldest thou be made whole?" (5:6; NIV: "Do you want to get well?").
 - a. He didn't know who Jesus was, and said, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming another steppeth down before me" (5:7).
 - b. Jesus saith unto him, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk" (5:8).
 - c. And John records, "And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked" (5:9).

B. Act Two: The Reaction.

1. Enter the Jews:
 - a. Note the last part of verse 9 and verse 10: "Now it was the sabbath on that day. So the Jews said unto him that was cured, 'It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed.'"
 - b. Breaking the Sabbath carried with it severe penalties - penalties the man once invalid wanted to avoid.
 - 1) So, he says, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, 'Take up thy bed, and walk.'"

- 2) Notice what the Jews said, "Who is the man that said unto thee 'Take up thy bed and walk?'"
 - a) They didn't ask, "Who made you whole?"
 - b) They wanted to know who it was that told him to break their laws concerning the Sabbath.
- 3) But the man who was healed did not know.

C. Act Three: The Temple.

1. Next we find the healed man in the Temple.
2. Jesus finds him and says, "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee."
3. Does the man thank our Lord?
 - a. No! He went to the Jews to inform them that it was Jesus who made him well.
4. And John writes, "And for this cause the Jews persecuted Jesus because he did these things on the sabbath."
 - a. Jesus responded to them by saying, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."
 - b. "And they sought the more to kill him" because
 - 1) Not only did He break the Sabbath,
 - 2) "But also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God."

OBSERVATIONS:

- A. John writes that the Jews sought to kill Him for two reasons, the first being that He breaks the Sabbath.
 1. But Jesus did not break the Sabbath according to the law of Moses; He broke their human traditions.
 2. In the Jewish community of the first century their leaders had amassed quite a large body of oral traditions concerning the law of Moses.
 - a. These oral traditions made up the Talmud, and was viewed by the religious leaders as binding.
 3. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfill" (Mt 5:17).

- a. He was born under the law (Gal 4:4).
 - b. He kept it flawlessly.
 - 1) He did not violate the spirit of it even in one point.
- 4. The problem was that the Jewish leader had exalted their traditions to an equal or greater plain than God's law.
 - a. They were so blinded by their own traditions that they did not acknowledge, even once, the amazing miracle that Jesus performed.
- 5. His initial response to them was, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work" (5:17).
 - a. The Genesis account instructs that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested the seventh day.
 - 1) What He rested from was His creative work.
 - 2) But the work of sustaining this universe and providing for men had not ceased.
 - b. Jesus later argues with the Jews that what they see Him do is what the Father is doing.
 - 1) He and the Father are so much "one" that they are doing the same things.
 - 2) He never acted independently of the Father.
 - 3) So when Jesus healed someone, the credit also went to the Father.
 - c. When Jesus healed on the Sabbath, the Father was also.
 - 1) But this implied that He and the Father were equal and that incensed them even more so.
- B. Why couldn't these religious leaders see the truth? Why were their eyes unable to see and respond properly to the sign Jesus had performed on the invalid?
 - 1. Five reasons identified in chapter 5.
 - a. First of all, they were blinded by tradition.
 - 1) They said, "It is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed" (5:10).
 - b. Later in the text Jesus identified another reason.

- 1) He said, "Ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he sent, him ye believed not" (5:38).
 - 2) They searched the scriptures which bore witness of Christ, and yet did not see Christ.
 - c. The law of God was not in them (5:42).
 - 1) Jesus came in the Father's name, and they rejected Him.
 - 2) But if one were to come in their own name, this person they would accept.
 - d. A fourth reason they were blind is that they sought after the glory of men, and not the glory that comes from the Father (5:44).
 - 1) It is generally the case that men do not obtain the glory of men by serving God.
 - a) They must serve men and measure up to their standards and jump through their hoops to receive their praise.
 - 2) Who was Jesus that he should come spoil their party?!
 - e. They did not believe Moses.
 - 1) That must have come as a shock to them.
 - 2) "Not believe Moses?!"
 - a) They set their hope in Moses (5:45).
 - b) They didn't set their hope in God and His righteousness.
 - c) They set it on their ability to keep the law.
 2. So, for these five reasons, the Jews rejected and persecuted and sought to murder Jesus.
- C. One final point of interest:
1. When Jesus approached the invalid man, He asked him a question: "Wouldest thou be made whole?"
 - a. At first we may react by saying, "Well, that was an odd thing to ask. Who wouldn't want to be made well? Why else was the man at the pool?"
 - b. It's possible that Jesus was stirring up anticipation in the man before He healed him, but I don't think so.

2. I am persuaded that Jesus was asking Him if he was really willing to face the challenge of a normal life.
 - a. This man had learned various survival skills as an invalid and most likely survived by the mercy and goodness of others.
 - b. Being healed would have required of him learning how to live all over again.
 - c. Now, you may think that sounds funny, but let me parallel it with two illustrations:
 - 1) Overweight people; lose weight; don't know how to act.
 - a) Some regret having lost the weight.
 - 2) A.C.A. learn certain survival techniques and fear change because they have lived with their survival skills for so long, change becomes difficult.
 - a) And it is only when they find out that the survival skills they used at home do not work in the world but rather bring them pain that they are motivated to change.
 - d. Permit me to use this text as a springboard to the subject of salvation.
 - 1) "Wouldest thou be saved?" Are you really willing to face the challenges of being Christ's?
 - 2) Are you willing to sacrifice what it takes to live?
 - 3) Many would answer, "Yes, I want to be saved!" but do not want to change their worldly lifestyle.
 - a) They may be afraid that it will not bring them the pleasure worldliness brings them.
 - b) Jesus is asking, "Wouldest thou be saved?"

JESUS' DEFENSE..... 5:19-47

INTRODUCTION:

- A. If you'll remember our last lesson, Jesus was found once again in Jerusalem for one of the feasts of the Jews.
 - 1. He went to a pool called Bethesda where people would leave the sick, blind, halt and withered.
 - 2. At that pool Jesus approached a man who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years and asked him, "Wouldest thou be made whole?" He heals the man.
- B. When the Jewish leaders found out, they were uninterested in the means by which the man had been made whole.
 - 1. They were incensed that anyone would counsel the man to break their traditions concerning the Sabbath.
 - 2. Once they found out it was Jesus who counseled the man to take up his bed and walk, they persecuted the Lord.
 - 3. Jesus' response to them was, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work" (5:17).
 - a. For this cause they sought the more to kill Him.
 - 1) He broke the Sabbath, and
 - 2) He made Himself equal with God, calling Him Father.
- C. Verses 19-47 contains Jesus' defense against these hateful men.
 - 1. That defense centers around His inseparable relationship with the Father.
 - a. You see, if Jesus is the Son of God and it is God working through Him, they wouldn't have a leg to stand on.
 - 2. But Jesus clearly argues that His works, His judgments and His witnesses are all of the Father.
 - a. Consequently their attack against Him is shown to be unfounded in reason.
 - 3. Let's look at Jesus' three basic points.

THE WORKS OF JESUS:

- A. The whole issue with Jesus was centered around what the Jewish leaders viewed as a "breaking of the sabbath."

1. The fourth commandment under the Old Law was, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex 20:8).
 - a. The Israelites were to work six days, but the seventh was a “sabbath unto Jehovah.”
 - b. This work-week was patterned after the creation work.
 2. Later in history, the Jews began to develop additional stipulations to ignore against violating the law concerning the Sabbath.
 - a. In a nutshell, they began to bind more than God bound.
 - b. These additional stipulations were handed down from generation to generation and later compiled in a book known as the Talmud, which was viewed as binding on all Jews.
 3. What the man who was healed did was take up his bed, which amounted to rolling up a mat and carrying it home.
 - a. Do you think Jesus would have instructed the man to do anything that violated the Law of God? His Law?
- B. Jesus began His defense by an appeal to the very nature of His work.
1. He introduces it with the solemn, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner” (5:19).
 - a. What Jesus is claiming about His works is that you cannot draw a line of distinction between what the Father does and what the Son does.
 - b. Jesus was not/did not act independently of the Father.
 - c. When someone was healed the credit went to God - Father and Son and, we can add here, the Holy Spirit.
 2. “And,” Jesus continued, “greater works than these will he show him, that ye may marvel” (5:20).
 - a. The greater works here may refer to God working salvation through His Son, or
 - b. It may refer to greater miracles like the raising of the dead (which is referred to in the verses that follow).
- C. These men were really left defenseless at this point.
1. Jesus, being the Son of God, was working alongside His Father, whom they could not nor would not criticize or condemn.

2. Nicodemus spoke the truth when he said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him" (3:2).
3. But there were some too hard-hearted to see what was so evident in the signs Jesus performed.
 - a. The scribes and Pharisees, on another occasion, attributed the power by which Jesus cast out a demon, to Beelzebub, prince of demons (Mt 12; Mk 3).
 - 1) Jesus said they were guilty of an eternal sin; one for which they would not find forgiveness in this age or the one to come.
4. Jesus argues in His first point that His works are the works of the Father.

THE JUDGEMENT OF JESUS:

- A. The second line of defense Jesus turns to is that of His judgments.
 1. He said, the Father "hath given all judgment unto the Son" (5:22).
 - a. PURPOSE: "That all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."
 - b. But, He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him."
 2. Then Jesus makes another solemn statement: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (5:24).
 - a. Those who believe the Father concerning the Son will be resurrected to life.
 - b. Those who do not believe the Father will be resurrected to judgment.
 - c. This will take place in the hour when all that are in the tombs hear His voice and come forth.
- B. Jesus' judgments are righteous judgments because He sought not His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him.
 1. As long as His judgments were in accordance with the will of God, His judgments were righteous.
 2. Just as His works were of the Father, so were His judgments.

- a. If they did not respect the Son in this matter, they were demonstrating contempt for the Father.
- b. Leon Morris: "When people do dishonor to Jesus they are not simply dishonoring a peasant from Nazareth; they are dishonoring God" (p. 184, *Reflections*).

THE WITNESSES OF JESUS:

- A. The final leg of defense is found in Jesus' appeal to those who are bearing witness of who He is.
 - 1. Throughout the entire book is to be found the significant phrase, "bears witness." It is as though John were bringing to a witness stand various people and recording their testimony about Jesus for us, the jury, to make a wise decision about Him.
 - 2. Thus far,
 - a. John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" (1:29).
 - b. Andrew reported, "We have found the Messiah" (1:41).
 - c. Philip declared, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (1:45).
 - d. Nathaniel confessed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel" (1:49).
 - e. Nicodemus concluded, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him" (3:2).
 - f. The Samaritans, "We...know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."
 - 3. Added to that witness is the Father and Moses.
- B. They sent to John and he bore witness to the truth.
 - 1. John was the lamp that burned and shined and they rejoiced in his light for a short while.
 - 2. But an even greater witness than John was present.
 - a. He turns their attention back to His works and says, "For the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."
 - 1) Remember Nicodemus' statement.

- 2) And add to it Heb 2:3,4. The word spoken through the Lord was confirmed before those who heard, "God also bearing witness with them both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will.
 - 3) So the Father not only bore witness through the signs that Jesus performed, but also through the signs that the saints of the 1st century performed.
 - a) All of it pointed to the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was/is the Son of God.
- b. 5:37 "And the Father that sent me, he hath bore witness of me."
- 1) Now note this line of reasoning.
 - a) Jesus said,
 - (1) That the Father had already borne witness of Jesus (5:37).
 - (2) That they did not have the word of God dwelling in them (5:38).
 - (3) That they search the Scriptures that also bear witness of Jesus being the Son of God, but they would not accept Him.
 - b) If the Word had truly been dwelling in them, they would have believed in the Son whom God sent.
 - c) Just because they had never heard the Father's voice, or seen Him, does not mean that He was without voice concerning His Son.
 - d) He spoke...
 - (1) At the baptism of His Son.
 - (2) Through John the baptizer.
 - (3) Through John the apostle.
 - (4) Through the works of Jesus.
 - (5) Through the scriptures of Old.
 - (6) Through Moses.
3. From vv 31-47 there are four who bore witness.

- a. John.
 - b. The Father.
 - c. The Scriptures.
 - d. Moses.
- 4. And John 1:18.
- C. Why did they reject Him?
 - 1. They were blinded by their tradition.
 - 2. God's word did not live in them.
 - 3. They sought the glory that comes from men and not the glory that comes from God (5:44).
 - 4. They trusted in Moses and the Scriptures (5:39,45, 46).
 - a. And yet both acted as a chopping block for their heads.

SUMMARY:

- A. The works, the judgments and the witness of Christ all come from the Father.
 - 1. Jesus' defense centered around His inseparable relationship with the Father.
- B. In the Jews we have a religious group of people who claimed Jehovah for their God, who were entrusted with the oracles of God. who kept the Sabbath and the feasts, but...
 - 1. Who did not love God.
 - 2. Who did not know the Word.
 - 3. Who made void the Word by their traditions which superceded God's law.
 - 4. And who rejected the Christ.
- C. Man today, as back then, is without excuse in deciding for the evidence which points to Jesus of Nazareth as being the Son of God.
 - 1. What decision have you made?
- D. In 5:25 Jesus also said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

1. When an individual is not a Christian, they are “dead through ...trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1).
 - a. To hear His voice simply means that with an honest and good heart, you have the teachings of Christ and comply with them.
- E. The Jews in our text didn’t give Jesus a chance.
 1. Even in their stern opposition He said, “I say these things that ye may be saved” (5:34).
 2. And His words have been preserved that you maybe saved too.
 - a. God “would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4).
 - b. He “is long suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9).

THIS IS A TEST..... John 6:1-27

INTRODUCTION:

- A. On scheduled times throughout the year, television and radio broadcasters will announce that they are going to test their emergency broadcasting systems.
 - 1. They will usually say, "This is a test"
 - a. Then they let us know that if it had been an actual emergency, we would be told where to tune in.
- B. After having considered John 6 throughout this past week, I am convinced that, overall, Jesus is testing the faith of those following Him.
 - 1. The general subject matter is centered around Him being the bread of life.
 - a. Unless one accept and partake of the bread come down from heaven, he will not live.
 - 2. Surrounding the discussion various tests are given.
- C. Chapter Six.
 - 1. It opens with two signs being performed.
 - a. Jesus feeds the five thousand - plus (6:1-15).
 - 1) In the process He asks one of His disciples, Philip, "Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" (6:5)
 - 2) John writes, "And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what He would do" (6:6).
 - b. The second sign is Jesus walking on water (6:15-21).
 - 1) The disciples had already set sail without Him, but later beheld Him walking on the sea, coming close to the boat.
 - 2) John says, "...and they were afraid" (6:19).
 - a) Jesus said "It is I; be not afraid," and
 - b) They received Him in the boat.
 - 3) Various works that place Matthew - John in parallel columns indicate that it was on this occasion Peter asked the Lord to invite him to walk on water, too.
 - a) At first they were all afraid.

- (1) Mt: "they were troubled, saying, 'It is a ghost,' and they cried out for fear" (14: 26).
 - (2) Mk: they "...supposed that it was a ghost" (6:49).
 - b) Our Lord bid Peter to join Him, but when he saw the wind, he was afraid and cried out, "Lord save me."
 - (1) Jesus rescued Him saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"
 - 4) In walking on water He was testing the faith of the twelve; specifically, Peter.
- 2. After the two signs are performed, Jesus engages in conversation with the Jews who had followed the disciples across the sea of Galilee to Capernaum.
 - a. Here is where His discussion on the bread of life is given.
 - b. It begins with the Jews asking Him, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?"
 - 1) Jesus answered them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate loaves, and were filled" (6:26).
- 3. At the end of the chapter John writes, "...many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."
 - a. They had failed the test.
 - b. When Jesus asked the twelve "Would ye also go away?" Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (6:68).
 - 1) Yet even one of them would fail the test in betraying Him.
- D. Hopefully, this overview will help provide the ingredient that ties together what we find in chapter 6.

THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000:

- A. Earlier, I said that the topic of discussion in John 6 was Jesus' discussion on the bread of life.
 - 1. It is initially provoked by His feeding of the five thousand.
 - 2. John records, "...a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick."

- a. Matthew and Mark point to these signs as evidence of the compassion our Lord had on them.
 - b. The size of this great multitude can be sensed by virtue of the fact that John tells us there were about five thousand men (6:10).
 - 1) Matthew says their number was five thousand besides women and children (14:13-21).
 - c. When Jesus tested Philip concerning, the means by which they would feed the crowd, he said, "Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little" (6:7).
 - 1) NIV interpretively translates this verse, "Eight month's wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite."
- B. All they had at their disposal were five barley loaves and two fishes, and these belonged to a lad.
 - 1. Andrew asked, "But what are these among so many?"
 - a. It is not as if they could stretch a few more plates out of what five loaves and two fishes would normally serve.
 - b. McGarvey says that the loaves referred to in our text were thin and small like good-size crackers, and the fish were probably the size of sardines.
 - 1) Just enough to feed one hungry boy.
 - 2. Jesus said, "Make the people sit down."
 - a. Luke and Mark inform us that they were instructed to sit in companies of hundreds and fifties each (Lk 9:14; Mk 6:40).
 - b. After our Lord had given thanks for the bread and for the fish they were distributed until everyone had enough to eat (6:12).
 - c. Twelve baskets were filled with the broken pieces of bread that were left over.
- C. Now let that soak in!
 - 1. John says that when the people saw the sign, they said, "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world" (6:14).
 - 2. In fact, they were so impressed that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king (6:15).
 - a. He withdrew into the mountain to be alone.

JESUS WALKS ON WATER:

- A. The second sign recorded in this chapter helps to explain why the people pursued Him.
 - 1. When evening came the disciples of Jesus went over the sea of Galilee to Capernaum.
 - 2. It was dark. Jesus had not yet come and a great wind blew causing the sea to become troubled.
 - 3. When they had traveled three to three and a half miles out, they beheld Jesus walking on the sea and coming close to the boat.
 - a. Now the disciples were afraid because what they believed they saw was a ghost.
 - b. But Jesus assured them that it was He and encouraged them not to be afraid.
 - c. It was on this occasion that Peter was invited to step out of the boat and to join the Lord on the water.
- B. The next day the multitudes that were fed on the opposite side of the shore were absent.
 - 1. They were overwhelmed by the miracle of feeding them all.
 - 2. They confessed, "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world."
 - 3. They were going to take Him by force and make Him king, but He withdrew into the mountain alone.
 - 4. The next morning He was nowhere to be found. WHERE WAS HE?
 - a. When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they asked, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" (6:25, NIV).
 - b. That question wasn't important; but their motives for following Him were.
 - 1) He said solemnly, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled. Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him the Father, even God, hath sealed" (6:26,27).
 - a) They had missed the significance of the sign He had performed.

- (1) The sign was designed to point them to His deity - His identity.
- (2) They simply saw in Him a constant source of free food.
- (3) “Ye seek me not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate the loaves and were filled.”
- (4) If you’ll remember, the woman at the well possessed the same mentality.
 - (a) She saw in Jesus the potential answer to having to run to the well every time she needed water.
 - b) Instead of working for food that perishes, Jesus exhorts them to work for the food that does not perish - “the food which abideth unto eternal life.”
- (1) Just as He is the source of living water (Jn 4) He is also the source of the spiritual food.

C. This raises the question of motive:

- 1. Why do people follow Jesus Christ?
 - a. The Jews of our text followed Him for the food they believed he would provide.
 - b. In fact, notice the commentary John provides us concerning the multitude.
 - 1) A great multitude followed because they saw the signs Jesus did on those who were sick (6:2).
 - 2) When He feed the multitude they said, “This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world” (6:14).
 - 3) When they followed Him to the other side of the sea Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled” (6:26).
 - 4) Then comes the bread of life discourse after which the multitude said, “This is a hard saying; who can hear it?”
 - 5) And many of the disciples went back and walked no more with Him (6:26).
 - a) Earlier Jesus said, “This is the work of God, that believe on him whom he hath sent” (6:26).

- b) But they did not!
- c) They failed the test.
- d) McGarvey: "They did not seek Jesus because they saw in him a divine Friend who could satisfy the deep needs, of the soul, but as a wonder-worker who could fill their bodies with food when occasion required" (*Fourfold Gospel*, p. 383).

JESUS: THE BREAD OF LIFE. 6:25-71

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Jesus had supernaturally fed the five thousand (plus) with the five loaves of bread and two fish.
 - 1. The ones He fed followed Him because they beheld the sign He had performed on the sick.
 - a. Notice the text does not say they believed Him to be the Son of God.
 - 2. The following day, many of them followed Him across the sea, not because of the signs, but because of the food He provided for them.
 - a. They did not see the sign in the bread, but the bread in the sign.
 - b. Leon Morris: "They came because their hunger had been satisfied. They were moved not by full hearts, but by full bellies" (*NIC.*, p. 358).
 - c. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled" (6:26).
 - 3. He exhorts them to work for the food that abides unto eternal life.
 - a. They asked, "What must we do?"
 - b. Jesus said, "This is the word of God, that ye believe on him whom He hath sent (6:29).
 - 4. They then demanded of Him a sign that they may see and believe. They reminded Him of the miraculous provision of manna in the wilderness for the children of Israel.
 - a. This highlights even more their motives for following Jesus for food.
 - b. They said. "What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee? What workest thou?" (6:31).
 - 1) They had already seen Him heal the sick (6:2).
 - 2) They were even recipients of His signs in that they were part of the five thousand He fed on the other shore.
 - 3) And they had confessed, "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world" (6:14).
 - c. Show us a sign that we may see and believe?

- 1) Seeing is not always believing.
 - 2) Jesus said to them, "...ye have seen me, and yet believe not" (6:36).
5. He was not about to comply with their request for a sign. (To my knowledge, He never did.)
- a. He tells them that the source of the manna in the wilderness for the children of Israel was God, and
 - b. That God is also the source of the bread which gives life to the world.
 - c. They responded by saying, "Lord, evermore give us this bread" (6:34), or (NIV) "Sir...from now on give us this bread."
 - d. Jesus said unto them, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."
- 1) They came seeking a constant and free supply of food from Jesus.
 - 2) He advised them not to seek for the bread that pleases, but for the more important food that abides unto eternal life.
 - a) Woods: "Literal life is sustained by material bread, spiritual life by the bread which cometh down from heaven" (p. 131).

THE PROBLEM:

- A. The obvious problem with the Jews in our text is that they were seeking something the Lord was not giving.
1. Each had their own agenda.
 - a. The agenda of the Jews was to tap in to Jesus as their food supplier.
 - b. Jesus' agenda was to provide the necessary evidence for them to believe He was the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they may have life in His name.
 - 1) "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (6:29).
 - 2) "For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (6:40).
 2. At first they followed Him because of the signs.

- a. Then they followed Him because of the food.
- b. They were even prepared to take Him by force and make Him king, confessing Him to be the prophet.
- c. They went home and walked no more with Him because they weren't willing to make Him Lord and Saviour.

B. Three fascinating statements point to the problem.

"All that which the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (6:37).

"No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him and I will raise him up in the last day" (6:44).

"For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father" (6:65).

1. How does the Father draw men to Christ?

- a. In the context, Jesus said, "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God.' Everyone that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (6:45).
 - 1) Men are drawn to Christ through the teaching of God.
 - 2) And where does one go to be taught of God?
 - a) To His Word!
 - b) With reference to the Jews Paul wrote, "So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal 3:24).
 - c) Rom 10:17.
- b. God draws all men to Himself through Christ.
 - 1) Jesus invited the people of His day, by saying, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28).
- c. He draws men by an appeal to the love He manifested through His Son on the cross.
 - 1) "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (Jn 12:32).
 - a) "...this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die" (12:33).

2. Verse 65 says that no one can come to Jesus except it be given to him of the Father.
 - a. How does the Father enable a person to come to Jesus?
 - 1) Verse 44 says the Father draws them.
 - b. How does the Father draw them?
 - 1) Through the instruction of His Word.
 - 2) By the love He demonstrated in the giving of His Son to die in our stead.
 - 3) We are drawn to Him because He first loved us (1 Jn 4:19).

THE LESSON:

- A. The lesson Jesus was teaching is how to obtain eternal life.
 1. It was a simple one; "...believe on him whom he (the Father) hath sent."
 2. But they wanted a sign in order to see and believe.
 - a. They referred to the manna provided the children of Israel in the wilderness.
 3. Jesus had already tried to direct their attention away from the physical food and toward the food that abides unto eternal life.
 - a. But they referred back to the bread that sustained Israel in the wilderness.
 - b. Jesus again sought to direct their attention from bread to spiritual matters by saying in essence, "Ok, you want bread, I am the bread of life..."
 - c. Notice the emphasis on belief in Jesus' message.
 - 1) "For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (6:40).
 - 2) "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life" (6:47).
 - a) Again He repeats, "I am the bread of life" (6:48).
 - b) Do not worry about eating the bread that fills your belly; pursue the bread that provides eternal life.

- c) “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mt 4.4).
 - d) The bread which He would give was His flesh, for the life of the world (6:45).
- d. He also contrasts the manna provided in the wilderness with Himself as the bread of life.
 - 1) Jehovah told Moses, “Behold, I will raise bread from heaven for you” (Ex 16:4).
 - a) “And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another MANHU” - “What is it?”
 - b) Jesus said, “Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness, and they died” (6:49).
 - 2) Then He contrasted that with Himself:
 - a) 6:48-51.
 - b) 6:58.
 - 3) I am not convinced that Jesus is here referring to what He later instituted as the Lord’s Supper.

B. What is Jesus saying?

- 1. He is the bread of life.
 - a. He said, “...the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world” (6:51).
 - b. This can be none other than a reference to His death on the cross.
 - c. For by that means the world is offered eternal life through the Son.
- 2. It should also be noted that Jesus’ statement, “I am the bread of life”, is very emphatic in the Greek language.
 - a. Lit: “I am the bread of the life.”
 - 1) “I, and not somebody else, am...”
 - 2) The bread of the life.”
 - a) Eternal life as opposed to the mere sustainer of physical life - though He is that, too.

3. When He spoke of eating His flesh which is meat indeed, and drinking His blood which is drink indeed (6:55), He is telling us to take in everything that He is.
 - a. Johnny Ramsey: "Imbibe my spirit, imitate my thinking."
 - b. Make my ways your ways.
 - c. Or simply put, "Believe."
 - 1) This obviously rids us of the notion of mere mental assent.
 - 2) He is asking for the kind of belief or faith that compels us to imitate Him.

REWARD:

- A. What is the reward?
 1. Life - for He is the bread of life.
 2. Four times (for emphasis) He says, "I will raise you up."
 - a. 6:39,40.
 - b. 6:44.
 - c. 6:54.
 3. F. F. Bruce "...the resurrection of the believer is emphasized as the final and crowning state of the saving work which Christ undertakes to accomplish in everyone who comes to him" (p. 156, *The Gospel of John*).
 4. "Eternal life is the present possession of every believer (3:36) and it is also the future hope of every believer to be completely realized when the believer is raised up at the last day" (Pack).

RESPONSE:

- A. There were two reactions to what Jesus had to say.
 1. The Jews still didn't have the heart to understand.
 - a. They responded by asking,
 - 1) "How can this man give us flesh to eat? (6:52).
 - 2) "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" (6:60).
 - b. And "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (6:66).

- c. "He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not" (1:11).
- 2. At this reaction He turned to the twelve and said, "Would ye also go away?"
 - a. Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."
 - b. Peter got the message.
 - 1) Jesus earlier said, "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing,: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life."

JESUS' TRUE IDENTITY..... Chapter Seven

INTRODUCTION:

- A. At this point in John's account the multitudes were no longer persuaded to follow Jesus.
 - 1. Understanding more what would be required of them they "...went back and walked no more with him" (6:66).
 - 2. The tension that exists between belief and unbelief begins to intensify.
- B. John's account is working its way up to the climax of the story - where Jesus is crucified.
 - 1. Scattered along the way are hints that His time to die is not yet come.
 - a. In chapter 7, even though the time of the crucifixion is not far off, it can be detected in the mounting opposition.
 - 2. At one point in the narrative John tells us that His antagonists sought to take Him but were unsuccessful.
 - a. Why? "...because his hour was not yet come" (7:30).
 - b. But later we'll read, "The hour is come..." (12:23).

BACKGROUND:

- A. Chapter 7 begins by telling us that Jesus was cautious to walk in Galilee as opposed to Judaea, "...because the Jews sought to kill him" (7:1).
 - 1. Because He announced to the Jews on a previous trip to Jerusalem that He and the Father were equal, they sought the more to kill Him (5:18)
 - a. That's when He left for Galilee and fed the five thousand.
 - 2. Chapter 7 is filled with tension and danger for Jesus.
 - a. It opens with the statement that the Jews seek to kill Him.
 - b. Later we find apprehension to talk about Him in Jerusalem; "No man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews" (7:13).
 - c. Jesus asks some of them, "Why seek ye to kill me?"
 - d. Others, beginning to recognize Him ask, "Is not this he whom they seek to kill?" (7:25).
 - e. Later John writes, "They sought therefore to take him; and no man laid his hand on him, because his hour was not yet come" (7:30).

- f. In another attempt “the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to take him” (7:32).
 - g. When the officers returned empty-handed, their excuse was “Never man so spake” (7:44).
 - 3. Leland Ryken (*Words of Life: A Literary Introduction to the N.T.*), “The sheer danger and adventure of the story should not escape us as we read the Gospels” (p. 50).
- B. The time was the Feast of Tabernacle. His brothers mockingly counseled Jesus to openly walk into Jerusalem to show forth His power so as to convince all that He was the Christ. His brothers’ names were James, Joseph, Simon and Judas (Mt. 13:55).
 - 1. Their advice was given tongue and cheek because they did not believe on him (7:5).
 - 2. Jesus responded by saying, “My time is not yet come” (7:6).
 - a. He knew what trouble such an open display would have created.
 - b. He knew the Jews sought to kill him.
 - c. He knew the world hated Him because He testified that its works were evil (7:6,7).
 - 3. He also said to them, “The world cannot hate you.”
 - a. This is true because the world doesn’t hate its own.
 - b. Jesus wasn’t of the world. He was from above.
 - 1) He spoke the truth concerning the corruption that was in the world.
 - 2) Since the world hates the light (or truth about its condition) it hated/hates the One who exposes their evil deeds of darkness with the light of truth.
- C. His brothers go to Jerusalem.
 - 1. When they had come up to the feast then Jesus went also, but not publicly.
 - 2. His antagonists, “the Jews,” expected to see Him return so they kept an eye out for Him.
 - 3. The rest of what we find in John 7 is a host of voices expressing their opinion as to who they thought Jesus was.

THE DEBATE:

- A. John tells us there was much murmuring among the multitudes concerning Him:
 - 1. Some said, "He is a good man."
 - 2. Others said, "Not so, but he leadeth the multitude astray."
 - 3. Yet no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.
- B. Jesus knew that His presence in Jerusalem would mean trouble; yet He went anyway.
 - 1. It should be remembered that this was one of the three feasts all male Jews were to attend.
 - 2. Jesus is there, in the temple and teaching.
 - a. The Jews marveled saying, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"
 - 1) What amazed them was the fact that Jesus was so well versed in the Scriptures, not even having had formal training by one of the Rabbis of that day.
 - b. Jesus responded by telling them that His teaching belonged to Him that sent Him - it belonged to the Father.
 - 1) If they wanted to know whether His teachings were of God, they would know if they had the right attitude.
 - 2) "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (7:17).
- C. He then turned their attention to the law of Moses.
 - 1. "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law?"
 - a. The law said, "Thou shalt not murder," and yet they sought to murder Him.
 - 2. They accused Him of having a demon. "You're mad!"
 - 3. He moved closer to the issue.
 - a. First He reminds them of the fact that circumcision was to be administered to a child on the eighth day from birth.
 - 1) If that day were to fall on the Sabbath they would circumcise the child.

- 2) They would circumcise on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses would not be broken.
- b. Yet, they were upset with Him for making a man whole on the Sabbath.
 - 1) Implied is the question, "Aren't you being inconsistent and hypocritical in your judging?"
 - 2) Their's wasn't an intellectual problem with Jesus but rather a problem of prejudice.
 - 3) As they were concerned there was not anything Jesus could do that was right.
- c. He finally said, "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (7:24).
- D. Apparently some had not yet detected that Jesus, the One causing all the controversy, was the One doing the speaking.
 1. When they put 2 and 2 together some of the Jerusalemites said, "Is not this he whom they seek to kill? And he speaketh openly, and they say nothing unto him. Can it be that the rulers know that this is the Christ?"
 2. Why didn't they move quicker in their arrest?
 - a. They sent officers to arrest him but they came back empty-handed.
 - b. I see in this particular time of our Lord's ministry a tentativeness and reluctance to move too hastily against Him.
 - c. Why?
 - 1) They had heard the rumors.
 - a) They had heard how He turned the water to wine,
 - b) How He healed the sick,
 - c) How He had fed the five thousand,
 - d) How He had healed the invalid.
 - e) They were also impressed with His Words.
 - 2) He had power they were not sure of.
 - 3) Summed up, this produced a very tentative feeling about Him.

- E. Many of those in the multitude believed on him and said, "When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?"
1. They too believed Him to be someone special. But who, they weren't sure.
 2. They said, "When the Christ shall come...".
 - a. What did they mean? This was the Christ.
 - 1) Nicodemus believed He was from God, "...for no man can do these things that thou doest except God be with Him." Yet Nicodemus never confessed Him as the Christ.
 - 2) The multitude confessed, "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world" and yet they never confessed Him as Lord, but rather turned back and walked with Him no more.
 3. Having the multitude entertaining ideas about Jesus made them nervous, so they sent officers to take him.
 - a. Jesus said, "Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, ye cannot come."
 - b. The Jews wondered where in the world could He go that they couldn't follow, and thought perhaps He was going to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks.
 - 1) That was certainly a place they would not go.
- F. On the last day of the feast Jesus cried this invitation:
1. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water."
 2. Some of the multitude said, "This is of a truth the prophet."
 - a. Others said, "This is the Christ."
 - b. Some rejected the idea that He was the Christ saying, "What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee?"
 - c. There arose a division in the multitude.
 3. The Pharisees argued that only an uneducated person would believe that Jesus was the Christ.
 - a. The officers apparently weren't so sure.
 - 1) They came back saying, "Never man so spake."

- b. The Pharisees said, "Surely you are not being led astray also are you?" (Paraphrase)
- c. Then they used the language of intimidation by saying - none of the rulers or Pharisees believe.
 - 1) Those who were persuaded to believe were ignorant of the law.
- d. This was a fine illustration of the power of intimidation but a poor example of sound reasoning.
 - 1) Again let me say that their problem was not one of intellect, but of prejudice against Christ.
- 4. Then Nicodemus spoke up: "Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself, and know what he doeth?"
 - a. They silenced him by saying, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

CONSIDERATIONS:

- A. It is as though Jesus went to Jerusalem to purposely engage in conflict so as to move people to make a decision about Him.
 - 1. It was already being said of Him that He was a good man while others called Him trouble.
 - 2. After all the talk some concluded:
 - a. This is of a truth the prophet.
 - b. This is the Christ.
 - c. Never man so spake.
- B. John's purpose is to get the reader to draw the right conclusions about Jesus as he listens in on the debate that occurred in Jerusalem.
 - 1. The two primary ways John used to characterize our Lord was first of all an appeal to His deeds and His words; secondly, the response of others to Jesus' claims about Himself.
 - 2. John 7 demonstrates the interplay between these two methods.
 - a. In essence this chapter is bringing to a head the identity of Jesus.
 - 1) It is forcing us to decide who we will side with.
 - 2) The opinions concerning who He was were varied.

- b. The message is this: if we would settle in our own minds who Jesus is (what His true identity and nature is) it would also settle the issue of what we should do with Him.

OUR OPTIONS:

- A. It's a fact that some will still walk away after hearing all the evidence, believing that He was just a good man.
 - 1. It only stands to reason that He could not have been just a good man because He claimed to be the Son of God.
 - 2. Homer Hailey comments: "Unless He was who He claimed to be, He was an impostor, a blasphemer, a hypocrite, a deceiver, and a liar. He could not falsely claim what He claimed for Himself and at the same time be a good man" (*That Ye May Believe*, p. 25).
- B. Some will walk away saying that His purpose was to lead people astray.
 - 1. If that were so, how do we account for the many good works that He performed?
 - a. Nicodemus rightly said, "No one can do these signs that thou doest except God be with him" (3:2).
- C. When Jesus confronted them with the fact that they were out to kill Him, some said, "Thou hast a demon: who seeketh to kill thee?"
 - 1. This wasn't the first time He was accused of having a demon (Mt 12; Mk 3).
 - 2. He masterfully responded by saying, "If Satan hath risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end" (Mk 3:26).
 - a. This is based on the principle He identified which states that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.
- D. When He invited them to believe on HIM and promised that from within them would flow rivers of living water, some said, "This is of a truth the prophet."
 - 1. This was true (Deut 18).
 - 2. He was not just a prophet.
- E. Others entertained the idea that He was the Christ. But, due to their preconceived notions about where He would come from and how He would appear, dismissed the idea.
- F. The officers observed, "Never man so spake."
 - 1. Homer Hailey, "He had so completely amazed them that they were unable to allow themselves to take Him" (p. 96).

2. Leon Morris: "The words of Jesus were such that they are not to be thought of as the teaching of a mere man. They are more than that. They are words that come from God" (p. 286, *Reflections*, XV).

THE ADULTERESS..... 8:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

- A. A certain group of Jews in Jesus' day had their hearts set on murdering the Savior of the world.
 - 1. John seems to set the pace for us at the beginning of his work.
 - a. "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not" (1:11).
 - 1) Many would reject Him.
 - b. "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name" (1:12).
 - 2. At first the Jews got upset because He encouraged the invalid He'd healed to take up his bed and walk, which violated their tradition concerning the Sabbath.
 - a. Jesus told them that He and the Father were equal, which incensed them even more, and they sought to kill Him (5:18).
 - b. When He was found once again in Jerusalem the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to take Him.
 - 1) The officers were so impressed with what they heard from Him they returned empty-handed saying, "Never man so spake" (7:46).
 - 2) They weren't the only ones impressed with His teaching.
 - a) After delivering His sermon on the mount, "...the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (Mt 7:28,29).
 - 3. After this ordeal at the feast of tabernacles John says, "And they went every man unto his own house: but Jesus went unto the mount of Olives" (7:53-8:1).
 - a. The mount of Olives was a small range of four mountains which overlooked Jerusalem from the northeast.
 - 1) It was thickly covered with the olive trees which gave it its name.
 - b. What occurs in Jerusalem when He returns is no less tense than what happened in chapter 7.

- 1) The debate concerning His identity is continued and questioned by the test to which they put Him.

CHARACTERS:

- A. It's early in the morning and Jesus returns again to the temple. All the people come to Him.
 1. He takes the posture of one who is about to teach. (He sits down.)
- B. While He is teaching, the scribes and Pharisees bring in a woman taken in adultery and set her before the group.
 1. They say, "Teacher, this woman hath been taken in adultery, in the very act. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such: what they sayest thou of her?"
 2. If these men did not know what to do, this would have been the natural thing to do - go to the Teacher and let him answer this difficulty.
 - a. But that wasn't their motive.
 - b. John says, "This they said, trying him, that they might have whereof to accuse him" (8:6).
 3. These conniving religious leaders thought they had placed Jesus on the horns of a dilemma.
 - a. The only time a person is truly placed on the horns of a dilemma is if the two options suggested are the only options available and both alternatives are unpleasant or difficult.
 - b. These Jews felt they had offered Jesus the only two unpleasant alternatives.
 - 1) If He said "stone her," He would have been usurping the authority the Roman government claimed for itself.
 - a) Only they claimed the right to execute.
 - 2) If He said, "Let her go" He would have been accused of being soft on sexual immorality and rejecting the law of Moses.
 - 3) The burden of choice was now placed squarely on Jesus' shoulders.
 - c. The problem for these Jews was that they had not really tripped Jesus by two alternatives.
 - 1) At first He said nothing.

- a) He simply stooped down and wrote something on the ground with His finger.
 - b) They persisted, seeking an answer.
 - 2) He then placed the role of judge and jury back on their shoulders by saying, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (8:7).
 - a) He stooped to the ground again and wrote something with His finger.
- 4. John said, one by one, from the oldest to the last, her accusers left.
- C. When they all left Jesus lifted Himself up and said, "Woman, where are they? did no man condemn thee?"
 - 1. She said, "No man, Lord."
 - 2. Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; from henceforth sin no more."

OBSERVATIONS:

- A. First of all, remember this was meant to be a mock trial in that the scribes and Pharisees were not looking to Jesus for His wisdom concerning a difficult matter.
 - 1. Their purpose was to test Him with a difficult circumstance in order to have some grounds for accusing Him of evil.
 - 2. When men pit their intellect with the infinite knowledge of God they are entering unarmed into an arena of battle.
 - 3. They thought they had set before our Lord the only two unpleasant alternatives available.
 - a. A good example of a dilemma is found in Mt 21:23-27.
- B. A question which may arise from a reading of this text is this: "If the death sentence was the penalty for adultery according to the law of Moses, why then wasn't the woman stoned?"
 - 1. What actually did the law teach?
 - a. Lev 20:10 "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."
 - b. Deut 22:22 "If a man be found lying with a woman married to a husband, then they shall both of them die, the man that lay with the woman and the woman: so shalt thou put away the evil from Israel."

2. Where was the man?
 - a. Why was only the woman brought before Jesus?
 - b. Was this a plot the woman's husband wanted to use to get rid of her?
 - 1) Were her accusers involved in the conspiracy?
 - c. If this had been a lawful and legitimate case why did her accusers leave?
3. Notice that Jesus did not say, "Let her go just this once."
 - a. T. M. Cummings, "...such deceitful, hypocritical witnesses were not morally qualified to throw stones at the woman -- though he did not forbid them to do such. He wanted to make them ashamed of their own sins, and He did."
4. If her accusers were unwilling to cast a stone at her because they were morally disqualified, why then didn't Jesus put her to death?
 - a. The reason is, He was following the proper procedures.
 - 1) Deut 17:7 "The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people."
 - b. Jesus was not the proper legal judge or court to whom the Jews should bring offenders.
 - 1) The Sanhedrin, or Jewish high council, was the proper one.

WHAT THIS TEXT DOES NOT TEACH:

- A. This text does not teach us that Jesus condoned the sin of adultery.
 1. He told the woman, "...go thy way; from henceforth sin no more" (8:11).
 - a. Implying that she had sinned.
 2. Other passages clearly teach us that adultery is a transgression of God's will.
 - a. Paul wrote that adulterers shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-11; Gal 5:19-21).
 - b. John wrote that adulteresses will be outside the gates of heaven (Rev 22:15).
 - c. The writer of Hebrews states that fornicators and adulterers will God judge (Heb 13).

- B. This passage is not teaching us that all judging is wrong.
1. Other passages instruct us to make judgments.
 - a. Jn 7:24 "Judge not according to appearances but judge righteous judgment."
 2. So many have referred to Matthew 7:1 as a blanket condemnation against all judging: "Judge not, that ye be not judged."
 - a. Verse 6 demands that a judgment be made: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you."
 3. What Jesus was condemning is hypocritical, unfair judging - not all judgment.
- C. This passage does not militate against church discipline so long as it is for the prescribed purpose and in the prescribed manner.
1. 1 Cor 5.
 2. 1 Tim 1:20 Alexander and Hymenaeus.
- D. This passage does not argue against reproving and rebuking.
1. In a very real sense, Jesus reproved the woman when He said "from henceforth sin no more."
 2. Paul, by inspiration, said, "Preach the word. Reprove, rebuke, exhort..." (2 Tim 4:2).
 3. To the Ephesians He wrote, "...have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."
- E. A final Note on Adultery:
1. There are a number of odd definitions floating around concerning the meaning of adultery.
 2. This passage ought to put many of them to rest.
 - a. When the scribes and Pharisees brought the woman to Jesus, John wrote that they "bring a woman taken in adultery" (inspired commentary).
 - b. They said, "Teacher, this woman hath been taken in adultery, in the very act."
 - c. Adultery is a sexual crime not only against God, but also the one with whom it is committed.

3. Another passage which should put a lot of the nonsense on the subject to rest is Hebrews 13:4f.
 - a. “Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”
4. Much of the foolishness which circulates in the religious world today stems from people who are uninformed about what the Scriptures teach.
 - a. Men and women do not spend the kind of time they ought with the Word themselves, but rather leave the studying up to the preacher and/or teachers.
 - b. The rest of the foolishness comes from men and women with evil hearts of unbelief in all that God has said.

SUMMATION:

- A. What is found in this particular narrative is one more evidence of the conniving means by which Jesus antagonists sought to trick Him to violate the Law (or at least their notion of it) so they could arrest Him.
 1. Remember, they were out for blood.
 2. Such an attitude toward Jesus Christ can only come from hardhearted, rebellious men and women.
 3. Jesus proved Himself to be more than a match for their sneaky ways.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD (Or The Debate Continues). 8:12-20

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In John 7 we focused on the debate in which various individuals engaged concerning the identity and character of Jesus.
 - 1. Some were saying, "He is a good man."
 - 2. Others said, "Not so, but he leadeth the multitude astray."
 - 3. Some even accused Him of being under the influence of a demon (7:20).
 - 4. Later some said, "This is of a truth the prophet."
 - 5. Others, "This is the Christ."
 - 6. All of this occurred during the Feast of Tabernacles.
- B. Shortly after the feast had come to an end and the crowds had left for home we still find our Lord's antagonists trying to trip Him up in word.
 - 1. Remember they wanted to kill Jesus and the tension is mounting.
 - a. Because of this claiming to be equal with the Father they sought to kill Him (5:18).
 - b. At the feast of tabernacles people were afraid to speak openly concerning Him for fear of the Jews (7:13).
 - c. The officers that who sent by the Pharisees to take Him returned empty-handed saying, "Never man so spake" (7:46).
- C. In chapter 8 we have four scenes.
 - 1. Scene one opens in Jerusalem early in the morning with Jesus teaching the people.
 - a. A woman taken in adultery is set before Him for judgment.
 - b. Jesus said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."
 - c. From the oldest to the last, Jesus' opponents left.
 - 2. We then find Jesus at the temple treasury saying, "I am the light of the world."
 - a. After which we are told that "...no man took him."
 - 3. Then Jesus tells them that He is leaving, speaking with reference to His departure from this life, and that

- a. He is from above, after which many believed in Him.
- 4. This narrative ends with a discussion of the Father of Jesus and the actual father of the Jews.
 - a. The chapter begins with the Pharisees placing a woman caught in adultery at His feet to test Him in order to bring a charge against Him.
 - b. It ends with them taking up stones to throw at Him.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD:

- A. The Feast of Tabernacles was designed to remind the Jews of their wandering in the wilderness.
 - 1. Tents or booths were constructed out of leaves and they would live in them as a reminder of their ancestors' wandering in the wilderness.
- B. On the temple grounds there was a section called the "Court of Women."
 - 1. It was in this court that thirteen trumpet-shaped collection boxes were placed for the Jews' contributions.
 - a. Jesus' teaching in John 8 take place in these same grounds.
 - 2. During the feast of tabernacles, there were two significant and symbolic events.
 - a. Each morning priests brought water from the fountain of Siloam and poured it out as an offering on the altar.
 - 1) On the first day of the feasts the priests would circle the altar seven times and pray for rain.
 - 2) Perhaps there is a correlation between this practice and Jesus' statement during the feast that, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink" (7:37).
 - b. Another custom of the feast was the lighting of four candelabras.
 - 1) According to Leon Morris' research, these lamps were fifty cubits high. (A cubit equaling eighteen inches - that would equal seventy-five feet.)
 - 2) "There was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that did not reflect the light" (p. 301, quoting from the Mishnah).
- B. Jesus' opening remark the day after the feast was, "I am the light of the world."
 - 1. He said it "in the treasury" where the giant candelabra stood unlit.

2. His words were emphatic:
 - a. His statement, "I am the light of the world," is like the statement He made earlier claiming to be the bread of life. (The emphasis is lost in modern translations.)
 - 1) The construction of His declaration, "I am" is like saying "I, and not somebody else, am...".
 - a) The personal pronoun is included at the end of each verb. Consequently a personal pronoun is not necessary.
 - b) When a personal pronoun accompanies the verb, as in this case, the statement is intensified or emphatic.
 - b. He declared of Himself, "I, and not somebody else, am the light of the world."
 - 1) Because this was the day following the end of the feast, the giant candelabras would not be lit.
 - a) Consequently Jerusalem would again be dark at night, not receiving the glaring light from the candelabra until feast time came again.
 - b) It would be like the day after the closing ceremonies of the Olympics - the Olympic torch would no longer burn.
 - c) Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (8:12).
 - d) The citizens of Jerusalem enjoyed the light of the feast for seven days out of the year. Then there was darkness.
 - (1) But with Jesus, their lives would be lit with the perennial light of life.
 - 2) Not only was He "the light," He is the light of the world.
 - a) His light extends beyond the city of Jerusalem to light the whole world - Jews and Gentiles alike.

C. What can be said about such a wonderful declaration?

1. The Pharisees dismissed it with a proverbial wave of the hand saying, "Thou bearest witness of thyself; thy witness is not true."
 - a. Technically they were correct.

- b. Even Jesus acknowledged what they were saying as true.
 - 1) Earlier, He said, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true" (5:31).
 - 2) But He had others who bore harmonious witness with Him.
 - a) He had already told them that John, God, the Scriptures and Moses bore witness of Him (Jn 5:31-47).
 - 3) Had his audience willfully forgotten these truths?
 - 2. Have you noticed how good the Pharisees were at ignoring what they could not explain?
 - a. After Jesus healed the invalid of thirty-eight years, the Jews wanted to know who told the man to take up his bed and walk.
 - 1) They never once acknowledged the fact that he had been healed.
 - b. At the incident in John 8:12ff, they never once tried dealing with the claim Jesus made of Himself.
 - 1) They changed their approach again saying that His testimony was invalid.
- D. Was it invalid?
 - 1. Not at all! In fact, Jesus reminds them that in the law it was written "that the witness of two men is true" (8:17).
 - 2. His witness was true...
 - a. First of all, because He knew where He came from and where He was going.
 - 1) We all have to be told where we came from.
 - a) I relied on my mom and dad to tell me that I was born in San Diego, while my father was stationed in San Diego and living in El Centro during his Navy days.
 - 2) McGarvey: "No man can bear testimony of his own nature, for he knows neither its origin nor its end. The Jews could not judge as to Christ's nature - that he was the source of light and life, because of their ignorance as to him. But Jesus, having complete knowledge as to his eternal existence, was qualified to testify. There are truths about Deity to which Deity alone can testify, and as to the truth of which Deity alone is fully competent to judge" (*Fourfold Gospel*, p. 453, 454).

- b. Secondly, His testimony was true because His Father bore witness, thus providing the second witness required by the law.
 - 1) Jesus said, "I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me" (8:18).
 - 3. The Pharisees pursued that lead by asking, "Where is thy Father?"
 - a. He said, "Ye know neither me, nor my Father: if ye knew me, would know my Father also" (8:19).
 - 1) This was true because; "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (1:18).

SUMMARY:

- A. Jesus claimed to be the light of the world.
 - 1. The Pharisees dismissed His testimony as true because He bore witness of Himself.
 - 2. Jesus then identified the credentials that allowed Him to bear witness of Himself and said that His Father also bore witness of Him.
 - 3. They asked, "Where is thy Father?"
- B. With the illumination of Jerusalem by the giant candelabra during the feast as the backdrop for Jesus' teaching, He claims, "I am the light of the world."
 - 1. In making this claim, He was telling His opponents that He is the source of guidance not only for Jerusalem, but for the whole world - Jews and Gentiles alike.
 - a. His message was not restricted to any one ethnic group of people like some messages and religions are.
 - b. Notice also in these "I am" declarations this difference.
 - 1) I may say that I can shed light on something, but Jesus is the light.
 - 2) I may break unto you the bread of life, but Jesus is the bread of life.
 - 3) I may know the way, the truth and the life, but Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.
 - 4) He is the source of every good thing.
 - 2. In the opening chapter of this book John writes, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men" (1:4).

- a. He leads men to a knowledge of grace and truth.
 - 1) "...the law came through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (1:17)
- 3. Many people are afraid of the dark and, in one sense, we all ought to be.
 - a. But Jesus said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."
 - b. The reason we will not walk in darkness is because Jesus will not lead us into darkness.
- 4. John began his account by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God."
 - a. Jesus was the Word, so Jesus was God.
 - b. John later wrote, "And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn 1:5).
- 5. John wants to convince us that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
 - a. During the feast some could be overheard saying, "He is a good man."
 - b. But Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."
 - c. A. T. Robertson - "It will not do to praise Jesus and deny His deity. Only as the Son of God can we justify and accept this language which otherwise is mere conceit and froth" (p. 141).

WHO ART THOU?..... 8:21-30

INTRODUCTION:

- A. A number of years ago I was selected to be a juror on a case involving drunken driving.
1. The man on trial was being charged with two counts:
 - a. Driving under the influence of alcohol and
 - b. Having more than the lawful amount of alcoholic content in his blood.
 2. When all of the evidence had been presented we, the jurors, were escorted into a room where we evaluated the evidence.
 - a. I was nervous knowing that what we decided concerning the evidence would affect the one on trial.
- B. As I have said before, every accountable person has been called for jury duty on the case, "Jesus versus the Jews."
1. But the circumstances surrounding you have been changed.
 2. What we decide does not affect the one on trial, but rather it affects us - the jurors.
 - a. Jesus said, "...except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (8:24).
 3. If we found the man in the drunken driving case guilty, his licence would be suspended and there was a possible jail sentence involved.
 4. But in our decision concerning the identity of Jesus, if we reject the evidence, or reason incorrectly concerning it, we will be the ones put and kept in prison, shackled by our sins, until sentence is pronounced.
 - a. "To die in sin is the ultimate disaster." (Leon Morris, *Reflections...*, p. 309).
 - 1) Cancer is not the ultimate disaster.
 - 2) Dying prematurely is not.
 - 3) Death itself is not the ultimate disaster.
 - 4) "To die in sin is the ultimate disaster because it affects our condition not for a short season but in eternity."
- C. This lesson is a continuation of the debate that has been raging concerning the identity of Jesus.

1. Jesus declared, "I am the light of the world."
 - a. The essence of this statement is that Jesus, and not somebody else, is the light of the world.
 - 1) Siddharta Guatama (Buddah) was not the light.
 - 2) Socrates was not.
 - 3) Plato was not.
 - 4) Aristotle was not.
 - 5) Mohammed was not.
 - 6) Leo Busacalia is not the light either.
 - 7) Christians are lights in the world, but we are not the light of the world.
 - 8) Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the light of the world.
 - b. This all occurred in scene two of John 8.
2. In scene three, Jesus tells them that He is going away. They will seek Him and will die in their sins but where He is going they can not come.
 - a. Later, in John's account, He informs His disciples that where He is, there they may be also (Jn 14:1ff).
 - 1) Thomas said, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, how know we the way?"
 - 2) He said, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - b. However, in our text, Jesus told the Pharisees, "I go away..." and "...whither I go, ye cannot come."
 - 1) Why is it that a group of people can see the same evidence and hear the same testimony and yet walk away drawing different conclusions?
 - a) The Pharisees wanted to arrest Him.
 - b) At the end of our text we are told, "Many believed on Him."
 - c) The same question can be asked with reference to the Bible.

- d) Answer: (Thomas Warren, *When Is an Example Binding?*)
 - (1) They have not gathered all the evidence.
 - (2) They have reasoned incorrectly concerning that evidence.
 - (a) What may motivate incorrect reasoning is a bad heart.
- c. I think most of us would have responded to Jesus' statement more like Thomas. "Lord, where are you going that we cannot follow?"
 - 1) But the Jews said to themselves, "Will he kill himself?"
 - a) They thought that Jesus was contemplating suicide, which was viewed upon as a crime deserving punishment in hell.
 - 2) Here Jesus responds by saying, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world."
 - a) Now the tables have been turned.
 - b) They did not give a moment's thought to the fact that Jesus was going away.
 - (1) What they focused on was the fact that they could not follow Him, so they assumed He was going to murder Himself.
 - (2) Certainly they who were Abraham's seed would not follow Him there!
 - c) But Jesus said they were "from beneath" and "of the world."
 - (1) Contrary to their thoughts. He was "from above" and "not of this world" (Jn 1:1).
 - (2) Again He says, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am (he), ye shall die in your sins" (8:24).
- d. In the remainder of the text He answers their question, "Who art thou?"

WHO ART THOU?:

- A. What a question!

1. Jesus said, "Even that which I have spoken unto you from the beginning."
 - a. What He spoke was nothing more than the One who sent Him told Him to say.
 - b. Jesus said:
 - 1) "He that sent me is true, and"
 - 2) The things which I heard from Him, these speak I unto the world."
 - c. But they did not perceive that He spoke to them of the Father.
- B. There are four things Jesus says about Himself (8:28,29).
 1. When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am (he)..."
 - a. They actually entertained the notion that Jesus would kill Himself, but here He speaks of His death by crucifixion saying, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man..."
 - 1) He would not die at His own hands but, rather, at their hands.
 - b. Also notice that our Lord' statement concerning His death is evidential in nature.
 - 1) The cross was designed not only for the salvation of man and the manifestation of God's love,
 - 2) It was also designed to prove who Jesus was.
 - a) "Then shall ye know that I am He."
 - (1) Rom 1:4.
 - b) Your Bibles will italicize the word "he" because it is not in the original text. This would make it read, "...then shall ye know that I AM."
 - (1) Almost every commentator suggests that this wording may very well be pointing to the "I AM" of Ex 3:14 and Jn 8:58.
 - c) If this is the case, then Jesus is identifying Himself as God.
 - (1) The same wording is found in 8:24, "I say therefore, unto you, that ye shall die in your

sins: for except ye believe that I am he: ye shall die in your sins.”

- c. He equates Himself with God.
- 2. The second thing He says about Himself is this, “I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things.”
 - a. He has already established this fact in earlier conversations with the Jews.
 - 1) 5:19 “Verily, verily, I say unto you the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner.”
 - 2) 12:44 “He that believeth on me, believeth not on me. but on him that sent me.”
 - a) This is because of Jesus’ statement, “I can of myself do nothing” (5:30).
 - b. Jesus is here saying that He did not act independently of the Father.
- 3. Thirdly He says, “He that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone.”
 - a. The One who sent Jesus is the Father.
 - 1) The Father loveth the Son (5:20).
 - 2) He is with the Son (8:29).
 - a) He has not left Him alone.
 - b. Jesus is identifying the fact that He has fellowship with the Father.
 - 1) Jesus’ mission on earth was to reconcile man back to God so that man could be in fellowship with God also.
 - 2) John wrote his first epistle, “...that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn 1:4).
- 4. His last statement grows out of the truth of the third one, “...for I do always the things that are pleasing to him.”
 - a. The Father loves the Son and is ever with Him because the Son always does those things which are pleasing to Him.
 - b. “Though he was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb 5:8).

- 1) His obedience pleases the Father.
- C. Even though we are not the Son of God, we are sons of God and can learn important truths from the Son.
1. He never acted independently of the Father.
 - a. We do, but when we do it only brings us trouble.
 - b. Acting independently of God is sin.
 - 1) Acting contrary to His will is punishable by death (Rom 6:23).
 - c. From the Son we can learn obedience.
 2. Our obedience to the Father runs correspondingly with our fellowship with the Father.
 - a. “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn 1:7).
 3. Walking in the light pleases the Father.
 - a. Jesus always did “the things that are pleasing to Him.”
 - b. John, later writing to a sister in Christ, said, “I rejoice greatly that I have found certain of thy children walking in truth, even as we received commandment from the Father” (2 Jn 4).
 - c. Would it not be great for such an epitaph as this to characterize our lives: “He did always the things that are pleasing to Him?”

INTRODUCTION:

- A. What we have just read in this Scripture is one of the many debates in which our Lord engaged.
 - 1. Earlier Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (8:12).
 - a. This launched an exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees concerning His relationship with God as His Father.
 - b. In it Jesus says, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (8:24).
 - 1) They said, "Who art thou?"
 - 2) He replied, "Even that which I have also spoken unto you from the beginning" (8:25).
 - c. 8:30 "As he spake these things, many believed on Him."
- B. Now notice verse 31: Jesus makes a statement "to those Jews that had believed him..."
 - 1. Verse 30 speaks of those who "believed on Him" - put their trust in Him, but verse 31 of those who "believed Him."
 - a. Those in v 31 believed Him but did not commit themselves to Him, which is made clear in the debate that follows.
- C. Purpose: What I hope to do is review the debate Jesus had with certain Jews that believed Him without commitment.
 - 1. And in so doing so bring out some points of interest.

THE DEBATE:

- A. Jesus knew that not all who believed Him were committed so He says, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 1. They responded by saying, "We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"
 - a. Their own history proves how reckless a statement this was.
 - 1) They had been in Egyptian bondage from which God delivered them through Moses.

- 2) They had also been held as captives by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medes and the Persians.
2. Jesus was not referring to national bondage by His statement. Even in their misunderstanding, they demonstrated a reckless sense about them.
 - a. Jesus was referring to the bondage of sin. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin" (8:34).
 - b. "If therefore the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed" (8:36).
 3. He knew they were descendants of Abraham physically. He also knew that they sought to murder Him because His word did not have free course in them (8:37).
 - a. They were not willing to let truth shape their ideas and actions.
 - b. Earlier He said. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching whither it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (7:17).
 - c. What hindered them from committing themselves to Him was that they could not hear His word (8:43).
 - 1) They could not hear His word because they were not of God, but were of their father the devil.
- B. What holds this entire text together are the ten references to Abraham.
1. They trusted in their physical tie to Abraham for their salvation, and not in Jesus Christ.
 - a. That's why He said, "...except a man believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."
 2. Jesus repeatedly told His audience that the things He spoke were the things He had received from His Father. His Father was in heaven; their father was in the abyss.
 - a. 8:38 "I speak the things which I have seen with my Father and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father."
 - b. They said, "Our father is Abraham."
 - 1) Now if that were true, they would have done the works of Abraham, like believe God.
 - c. But Jesus said, "You do the works of your father."
 - d. They said, "We have one Father, even God."

- 1) If God were truly their Father they would have loved Jesus.
 - 2) Their not loving Jesus implies that God was not their Father.
- e. Jesus said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar. and the father thereof" (8:44,45).
3. Jesus shot both barrels.
- a. Not only did He show them that God was not their Father, He identified their father as the devil.
 - b. He knew they were of the devil because they rejected Him and called God their Father when in reality He was not, thus, making them out to be liars.
- C. At this point the Jews resorted to name calling. (Men usually do this when they have run out of arguments.)
1. They thought, "We have said well that you are a Samaritan and have a demon."
 2. They thought that Jesus had to be mad to say, "If a man keep my word, he shall never see death."
- a. They said, "Abraham died, and the prophets, and thou sayest, If man keep my word, he shall never taste of death."
 - 1) Abraham and the prophets were faithful men who kept God's word and they died.
 - 2) But Jesus was speaking of spiritual matters, not physical.
 - b. They asked Him, "Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who died? and the prophets died: who do you make yourself out to be?"
 - 1) He was the Son of God. To have said anything else, would have made Him out to be a liar, thus of the devil.
- D. Here is the way Jesus settled it.
1. Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad."
 - a. Now Abraham lived some two thousand years prior to this debate, and the Jews are scratching their heads saying, "Thou are not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?"

- b. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was born, I am."
- 2. They took up stones to cast at Him, but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.

I AM:

- A. What did it mean when He said, "Before Abraham was born, I am."?
 - 1. How could He say this? F. F. Bruce: "Only if He spoke as the Word that had been with God in the beginning, and was man incarnate on earth" (p. 205, *The Gospel of John*).
 - 2. He didn't say, "Before Abraham was born, 'I was', but 'I am.'"
 - a. McGarvey: "'I was' would simply have expressed priority, but 'I am' marks timeless existence. It draws the contrast between the created and the uncreated, the temporal and the eternal" (p. 461, *Fourfold Gospel*).
 - b. Guy N. Woods: "There was a point in history when Abraham came into existence; before this, he was not but of Christ it is affirmed that he always existed" (G.A., p. 181).
 - c. A. T. Robertson: "Undoubtedly here Jesus claims eternal existence with the absolute phrase used of God" (p. 159, Vol 5).
- B. The reason the Jews, at this statement, took up stones was that in their minds Jesus had committed blasphemy by equating Himself with God.
 - 1. Abraham "came into being," but of Himself Jesus said "I am."
 - 2. The expression "I am" was recognized by the Jews as a title of deity.
 - a. When God commissioned Moses to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage, He said, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you" (Ex 3:14).
 - 1) The voice at the bush also said, "...this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (3:15).
 - 3. At His trial before the Sanhedrin, the high priest asked Him, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mk 14:61).
 - a. And Jesus said, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (14:62).
 - b. Apparently the high priest understood Jesus' answer as a claim to deity just as in John 8:58. He tore his clothes and accused Him of blasphemy, and they condemned Him as being worthy of death.

- C. All throughout the debate Jesus corrected their faulty notions and accusations.
 - 1. But they unmistakably understood His words here and immediately prepared to stone Him.
 - 2. He did not protest their actions as a mistake of judgment. He simply withdrew.
 - a. “He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not” (Jn 1:11).

SUMMARY:

- A. Out text began by identifying Jesus’ audience as “those that had believed him.”
 - 1. But in order for their belief to become conviction they must abide in His word.
 - a. Unfortunately, they that “believed him” did not believe on Him, but were rather children of Satan.
 - 2. The promise is ours though.
 - a. If we abide in His word we shall know the truth and the truth shall make us free.
 - b. He also said, “If a man keeps my word, he shall never see death” (8:51).
- B. Jesus is the Great I AM. He is the Christ, the Son of the living God and John’s purpose for having written this account was that “believing ye may have life in his name” (Jn 20:31).
 - 1. Jn 8:24
 - 2. Jn 12:48
- C. Another issue around which this debate was centered was that of sonship to Abraham.
 - 1. Yes! They were physical descendants of Abraham, but that would not save them.
 - 2. Listen to what Paul had to say: “There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, heirs according to promise” (Gal 3:28,29).

BLIND MAN HEALED. 9:1-41

BACKGROUND:

- A. If there had been a Jerusalem Times newspaper or Today's Jew magazine in the first century, I can see displayed on the front page in bold print the title "Blind man Healed."
1. And there would have been a picture of the man, formerly blind from birth, looking right into the eye of the camera.
 - a. There would have been no dead look in the man's eyes.
 2. Why would such a story have been such hot news?
 - a. The man who was blind tells us: "Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind" (9:32).
 - b. One of the striking characteristics of the Messiah's entrance into this world would be that He would heal the blind .
 - 1) When John the baptizer was in prison, his faith apparently needed strengthening.
 - a) So he sent some of his followers to Jesus asking, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" (Mt 11 :3).
 - b) Jesus identified Himself as "He that cometh" by saying, "Go and tell John the things which ye heard and see: the blind received their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear and the dead are raised up and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me" (Mt 11:4-6).
 - 2) Opening the eyes of the blind was one of the traits associated with the coming Christ of the Old Testament
 - a) (See Isa.29:18; 35:5; 42:6,7; Ps.146:8)

THE MIRACLE:

- A. The text opens with Jesus and His disciples passing a man blind from his birth.
1. His disciples ask Him a question which identifies a particular perspective they had on life.
 - a. They asked, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?"

- 1) Their question revealed a notion they held that such maladies were associated with sin.
- 2) This is the same notion that Job's "friends" subscribed to when they reasoned with Job in his affliction.
 - a) But Job "was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and turned away from evil" (Job 1:1).
 - b. Jesus corrected them by saying, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (9:3).
2. After correcting them He spit on the ground, making clay of the spittle and applying it to the blind mans' eyes. Jesus tells him to go wash in the pool of Siloam.
 - a. The man went away and washed, and came seeing.
- B. The people around him didn't know what to think.
 1. Some said, "Is not this he that sat and begged?"
 - a. All a blind man could do was beg.
 2. Others said, "It is he."
 3. Some argued, "No but he is like him."
 - a. They thought they had mistaken him for someone who looked like him.
 - b. But the blind man said, "I am he."
 4. They asked, "How then were thine eyes opened?"
 - a. He explained to them what had happened.
 5. At this they asked, "Where is he?"
 6. And he said, "I know not."

THE INTERROGATION:

- A. They didn't know what else to do so they brought him to the Pharisees.
 1. Why did they think it necessary to bring him to them?
 - a. As you might have guessed, Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath. We learned in earlier episodes in the Gospel accounts that these went against the traditions of the Jews.

B. Their investigation can be broken down into three scenes.

* First, they interrogated the man who was formerly blind,

* Then they brought in his parents,

* And finally, again, they interrogated the man born blind.

1. The Pharisees first asked him how he received his sight.

a. He rehearsed with them what the miracle-worker had done.

b. The Pharisees concluded that Jesus could not have been from God because He didn't keep the Sabbath.

c. Some among their own group asked, "How can a man that is a sinner do such a thing?" GOOD QUESTION !!

1) Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee, thought this same thing when he said to Jesus, "We know that thou art come from God, for no man can do these signs that thou doest except God be with him."

d. Because a division arose between the Pharisees they turned to the beggar and asked him, "What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes?"

e. He said, "He is a prophet".

1) He didn't know who he was but he concluded that Jesus must have been a prophet, though he did not even know His name.

2. These Jews now doubted that the man was ever blind to begin with; that this was all a big conspiracy so they called in the man's parents.

a. For the parents this was like a kid getting a pink-slip from the head counselor at school - it wasn't good .

1) Because they(the Pharisees) feared the Jews, they knew they had to guard their words carefully.

2) It had already been determined that if any man should confess Jesus to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue - and they didn't want that.

b. The Pharisees asked if this indeed was their son and if he was born blind, to which they said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was blind: but how he seeth, we know not; or who opened his eyes, we know not."

1) Then they said, "He is of age, he shall speak for himself."

- c. Well, calling the parents in did nothing to support their theory. In fact, it hurt them.
- 3. They called the man who was born blind in a second time .
 - a. They said to him, "Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner."
 - 1) They could no longer operate on the grounds that he was never blind so they are telling him to give the glory to God and not to the miracle-worker, who they "knew" was a sinner.
 - 2) I have often wondered how someone can "know" something that is not true - that does not correspond with reality?
 - a) The Jews said, "We know that this man is a sinner."
 - b) They wouldn't stop to think for even a moment that they were on the wrong trail.
 - b. But the man born blind said, "Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that where I was blind, now I see."
 - c. Then they asked him to repeat his story.
 - 1) This time he refused, telling them that they didn't hear it the first time. Why would they want to hear it again?
 - 2) And he said, "Would ye also become his disciples?"
 - 3) That's the last thing they would become! They reviled him saying, "Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses."
- C. Their investigation ended with a defense from the man once blind.
 - 1. For a man born blind who knew nothing but begging for a living, this man demonstrated a marked degree of intelligence in his argumentation.
 - 2. READ 9:30-33.
 - a. He calls the gain of his sight a "miracle" and argues:
 - 1) He opened mine eyes,
 - 2) God hears not sinners,
 - 3) God hears the devout who do his will,
 - 4) In all the history of the world no one has opened the eyes of a blind man.

- 5) If Jesus were not from God he could do nothing (would be powerless).
 - b. CASE CLOSED!
3. There was nothing these religious snobs could say in response but pridefully said, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" (NIV).
 - a. They threw him out.

BELIEF:

- A. When we remember that John's purpose for writing is to marshal evidence whereby men and women could believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, the reason for including this account is obvious.
 1. It centers around the healing of a man born blind.
 2. What it causes us to consider is the fact that God doesn't empower sinners to perform miracles.
 - a. But Jesus performed miracles.
 - 1) Therefore, Jesus was not a sinner.
 - b. And yet He claims to be the Son of God, which would have been blasphemy if not true.
 - 1) Thus, what Jesus claimed for Himself is true, otherwise God would not have performed such miracles through Him.
- B. John's Gospel also depicts the conflict between belief and disbelief.
 1. The text ends with the Pharisees overhearing what Jesus said to the man concerning Himself.
 - a. They said, "Are we also blind?"
 - b. And Jesus said, "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin."
 - 1) McGarvey puts it in these words: "If you were conscious of your spiritual darkness, and sought light, you would either find it or not be blamed for your failure to do so. They could see if they would, and were responsible for their blindness" (p. 467, *Fourfold...*).
 - c. Jesus continued, "...but now ye say, 'We see' your sin remaineth."
 - 1) They said, "We see," when in reality they were blind.

- 2) They were like the church at Laodicea. Unknowingly they were the “wretched ones and miserable and poor and blind, and naked.”
 - a) They were counseled to buy eye salve from the Lord “that they mayest see.”
- 3) There are a lot of people today who need their eye salve that they may see.
 - a) That they may see Jesus in a true light

C. The logic of John 9 is inescapable - Jesus can only be the Son of God.

1. What think ye?

SUMMARY:

A. The blind man said, “All I know is that where I once was blind, now I see.”

1. Jesus made a play on the words “blind” and “see” at the end of this narrative.
 - a. They were blind spiritually, and responsible for it.
 - b. But they thought they were seeing.
 - 1) They were unaware of their blindness.
 - 2) That’s why Jesus said “If ye were blind, ye would have no sin.”
 - 3) But, because they would not admit to their spiritual blindness, their sin remained.
2. Man needs to ask himself today, “Am I blind or do I think I see?”
 - a. If you are blind, remember Jesus is the light of the world (Jn 8:12).
 - b. He can, and does, give sight to the blind.
 - c. But to the blind who think they see, their sin remains.

THE DOOR..... 10.7-10

INTRODUCTION:

- A. One of the many signs Jesus performed was that of healing a blind man.
 - 1. The miracle caused no small stir with the Pharisees because it was performed on the Sabbath.
 - 2. When the once-blind man was brought to them, they did not believe that he had ever been blind, so they called for the man's parents.
 - a. When questioned, his parents said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but how he now seeth, we know not; or who opened his eyes, we know not: ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for himself" (9:20,21).
 - b. His parents were afraid to say what they apparently knew because they feared the Jews.
 - 1) The Jews had already agreed that if any man were to confess faith in Jesus to be the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.
 - 2) That's just what they did to the man who was healed.
- B. When Jesus heard that the Pharisees had cast him out, He found him and asked, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"
 - 1. The man said, "...who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?"
 - a. Jesus said, "Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee" (9:37).
 - b. The man healed of blindness said, "Lord, I believe", and he worshipped Jesus.
 - c. Jesus said, "For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind."
 - 2. The Pharisees must have had their ears to the wall listening in on the conversation and asked, "Are we also blind?"
 - a. Jesus said, "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, 'We see': your sin remaineth."
 - b. It's at this point that Jesus says something about the sheepfold and makes the next "I am..." statement.
 - 1) "I am the door of the sheep."

THE PARABLE:

A. READ John 10:1-6.

1. Drawing an analogy between God with His people and a shepherd with his sheep is not an uncommon one in Scripture.
 - a. “Jehovah is my shepherd I shall not want” (Ps 23:1).
 - b. “Thou leddest thy people like a flock, By the hand of Moses and Aaron” (Ps 77:20).
 - c. “He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom and will gently lead those that have their young” (Isa 40:11).
 - d. “Woe unto the shepherds that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith Jehovah” (Jer 23:1).
2. The concept beautifully extends into the New Testament.
 - a. Jesus is depicted as the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine safe sheep to find the one stray (Mt 18:12).
 - b. Peter calls Him the chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4).

B. In the parable Jesus draws from the Palestine countryside where shepherds tend to their flocks.

1. The imagery is based on the concept of the “sheep pen.”
 - a. A sheep pen was usually made of a rough stone or mud brick structure. It had only one opening through which the sheep could pass.
 - b. The pen served as a wall of protection from the flock against thieves and wild beasts.
 - 1) Thus, the reference to thieves and robbers climbing up some other way.
 - a) “Thief” implies subtlety and trickery.
 - b) “Robbers” imply violence and plundering.
 - 2) Neither one being concerned for the sheep.
2. The Shepherd, on the other hand, enters by the gate, thus contrasting Himself with thieves, robbers and false Messiah’s that had gone on before who posed as Him.
 - a. But the sheep weren’t stupid!

- b. Notice v 3, "...and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."
 - c. What happens if an imposter calls them?
 - 1) "A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him for they know not the voice of strangers" (10:5).
 - 2) Sheep become familiar with the voice of the shepherd and will not follow another.
 - a) The only known exceptions to this is if the sheep is sick.
- 3. McGarvey: "Jesus, the true Shepherd, came in the proper and appointed way, thus indicating his office as shepherd."
 - a. The Pharisees' leadership was like that of the thieves and robbers, and the sheep were fleeing from them.
 - b. During Jesus' ministry, when He saw the multitudes, "...he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd" (Mt 9:36).
- C. Jesus spoke this to the Pharisees, "...but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them."

I AM THE DOOR:

- A. So He says, "I am the door of the sheep."
 - 1. At first the shift of imagery from shepherd to door may seem an odd one - that is, until we learn of what the door consisted.
 - 2. When the sheep returned to their pen after a day of grazing, the shepherd stood in the doorway of the pen and inspected each one of his sheep as it entered.
 - a. If they were wounded the shepherd anointed them with oil to help them in the healing process.
 - 3. After all the sheep were counted the shepherd would lie down across the opening so that no intruders could enter without his knowledge.
 - a. Thus, the shepherd actually functioned as a door.
- B. Jesus is thus teaching some very important spiritual truths.
 - 1. In application He said, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and shall find pasture." (10:9)

2. Thieves and robbers have gone on before Him, "...but the sheep did not hear them" (10:8).
 - a. Their purpose was to steal, kill and destroy.
3. Jesus, on the other hand, cares that "...they may have life, and have it abundantly" (10:10).

THE ABUNDANT LIFE:

- A. Literally He said, "I came that life you may keep on having, and abundance (surplus) you may keep on having."
 1. He came to provide men with overflowing life.
 - a. NIV: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (10:10).
 2. In the text Jesus, the door, provides full and free access to pasture land.
 - a. "... by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture" (10:9).

DETOUR:

- B. A man named Philip Keller has written several devotional type books, one of which is titled, *A Shepherd Looks At Psalm 23*.
 1. Mr. Keller is well equipped, experience-wise, to speak on the subject, having been a shepherd himself.
 2. In the book he says that it is impossible for sheep to be made to lie down unless four requirements are met.
 - a. They must be free from fear.
 - b. They must be free from friction with other sheep.
 - c. They must be free from pests like parasites and flies .
 - d. They must be free from hunger.
 3. Now notice:
 - a. With Jesus as our Shepherd, we are free from fear.
 - 1) "...ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom 8:15).
 - 2) Jesus delivered all them "...who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb 2:15).

- b. With Jesus as our Shepherd we can be free from unnecessary friction with one another because love rules the day.
- c. With Him as our Shepherd we are free from pests and parasites.
 - 1) As the door, I have already mentioned the procedure of sheep passing the shepherd into the sheepfold.
 - 2) If the shepherd sees anything, that sheep is cared for.
- d. With Him as our Shepherd, we are free from hunger.
 - 1) We have access in and out of the sheepfold.
 - 2) "Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures He leadeth me beside still waters..."

"Thou anointest my head with oil" (Ps 23).
 - 3) The Lord prophesied through Ezekiel, "I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord" (Ezek 34:15).
 - a) This was said to Judah as they were held in Babylonian captivity by the river Chebar.

C. And what about this abundant life?

- 1. Where sin abounded, Paul writes, "...grace did abound more exceedingly" (Rom 5:20).
 - a. Paul knew that the grace of God abounded exceedingly toward him with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (1 Tim 1:14).
 - b. His grace is multiplied toward us (2 Pet 1:3).
- 2. Those who give diligence to make their calling and election sure, "... shall be richly supplied... the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet 1:11).
- 3. He "...is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us..." (Eph 3:20).

THE GOOD SHEPHERD. IO:11-18

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The fifth of the “I am...” statements made by Jesus Christ is to be found in John 10:11 and repeated in 10:14.
 - 1. The subject material surrounding the statement is that of Jesus’ relationship with His true disciples.
 - a. He parallels that relationship with sheep to their shepherd.
 - 2. Prior to it He said, “I am the door of the sheep.”
 - a. If you’ll remember Jesus painted the picture of a sheep pen, which in those days was built of rocks or hardened clay.
 - b. It was circular-like in shape with one opening being enough for the shepherd of the sheep to lie down, covering the opening.
 - 3. After contrasting Himself as “the door of the sheep” with thieves and robbers He declares, “I am the good Shepherd.”
 - a. What makes Him the good Shepherd as opposed to a hireling (hired hand) is now the subject of Jesus’ discourse.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD:

- A. Jesus said, “I am the good Shepherd.”
 - 1. Before we go any further it is important that we take a brief grammar lesson.
 - a. In each of the “I am” statements we’ve studied and will study, Jesus uses an emphatic means of identifying Himself that is not apparent in our English translations.
 - 1) Because of the ending found in Greek verbs, you can know what person and number is being identified along with tense, voice and mode. This is without a personal pronoun accompanying it.
 - 2) When a verb is accompanied with a personal pronoun (I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they), the structure is emphatic.
 - a) “I am the bread of life” (6:41,48, 51).
 - b) “I am the light of the world” (8: 12).
 - c) “I am” (8:58). Here it is used as a title of deity.
 - d) “I am the door” (10:7,9).

- e) "I am the good shepherd" (10:11,14).
 - f) "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25).
 - g) "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14:6).
 - h) "I am the true vine" (15:1,5).
 - i) "I am He" (18:8).
 - 3) We would bring out the sense of it in English by translating each of these statements "I myself am..." and not somebody else.
2. Another grammatical point of interest in these "I am..." statement is the Greeks use of the definite article – "t-h-e."
- a. Dana and Mantey: "The function of the article is to point out an object or to draw attention to it. Its use with a word makes the word stand out distinctly Whenever the article occurs the subject is certainly definite. When it is not used the object may or may not be" (®. 756)
 - b. When Jesus said, "I am the bread of life", "I am the light of the world", "I am the door", "I am the good Shepherd", He was emphasizing His distinct characteristic as expressed by these figures.
 - 1) He is not just *a* bread, or *some* bread, but *The* bread.
 - c. In our text the emphasis is even greater.
 - 1) Literally Jesus said, "I myself am the Shepherd, the good one" (Predicate Articular Adjective).
3. The Greeks also had two words which we translate with the word "good."
- a. When Jesus said, "I myself am the shepherd, the good one," He was saying more than just, "I am a morally good shepherd."
 - b. The word He used to describe Himself was used to call attention to the beauty in character and service.
 - 1) He is not just good but lovely.
 - 2) It is a perceived goodness (Guy N. Woods).
- B. "The measure of how good He is as a shepherd is the fact that He will make the supreme sacrifice on behalf of his sheep" (Pack, L. W. C.).
- 1. "...the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep" (10:11).
 - a. Only this kind of dedication will insure the welfare of sheep.

2. Some assume that sheep can care for themselves but, according to these who know, nothing is farther from the truth.
 - a. Sheep are creatures of habit and, if left to themselves, became victims of their own destruction.
 - 1) They do not have the ability to survive on their own.
 - 2) They must feed in pastures that are prepared for them.
 - 3) They must be protected while they eat.
 - b. For these reasons and many others sheep need a shepherd.
 - 1) Philip Feller, author and one-time shepherd, learned when he bought his first sheep that "...they require more than any other class of livestock, endless attention and meticulous care" (p. 20,21).
 - 2) The care sheep get depends on the type of man who owns them.
 - a) Some men are gentle, kind, intelligent and selfless in their devotion to their flock.
 - b) Under another, sheep would starve and suffer endless hardship.
 - c) READ Keller, *A Shepherd Looks At Psalm 23*, p. 21, last paragraph.
2. King David, as a young man, was a good shepherd.
 - a. In accepting Goliath's challenge and presenting himself before King Saul with his credentials he said, "Thy servant was keeping his father's sheep; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him and slew him. Thy servant smote both the lion and the bear."
 - b. Then he argued, "...and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defiled the armies of the holy God" (1 Sam 17:34-36).

C. What makes Jesus the good Shepherd?

1. The first quality is the greatest; He laid down His life for His sheep.
 - a. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13).

- b. “Lay down his life” is unique to John’s writings and refers to a voluntary sacrificial death.
 - 1) At the foretelling of Peter’s denial of Christ Peter said, “I will lay down my life for thee” (13:37).
 - 2) Jn 15:13.
 - 3) “Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us” (1 Jn 3:16).
 - c. Not only was His death sacrificial, it was given in substitution for ours. “The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep.”
 - 1) We had all committed sin. The wages of sin is death.
 - 2) But rather than dying ourselves, Christ died for us.
 - 3) “...God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8).
 - 4) He acted on our behalf, and when one acts on behalf of another he takes his place (*Minister & His Greek N.T.*, A.T.R., p. 37).
 - 2. He is also identified as the shepherd, the good one, because He knows His own, and His own know Him.
 - a. He is the Word (1:1).
 - b. He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (1:29).
 - c. He is the Son of God; King of Israel (1:49).
 - 3. He is the good Shepherd because He does not treat His own as would a hired hand or a thief.
 - a. Thieves come that they might steal, kill and destroy.
 - b. Hired hands who see a wolf coming leave the sheep and flee. The wolf snatches them and scatters them.
 - 1) He runs away because he is a hired hand and does not really care for the sheep.
 - a) He is only interested in putting in his time for the money.
 - b) The shepherd owns his sheep. The hireling serves only for the money.
 - 1) The shepherd has a vested interest in His sheep.

- a) He has paid for them and knows them by name.
 - 2) The hired hand will run away when trouble arises - he is not the shepherd.
 - 3) But in the Shepherd's hands "no one shall snatch them..." away (10:28).
- D. Jesus went on to say, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice, and they shall become one flock, one shepherd" (10:16).
 - 1. It seems clear that what Jesus is referring to is the Gentiles.
 - 2. Remember when Jesus is teaching these things and to whom.
 - a. This whole discussion came about due to the antagonism which developed over His healing the blind man.
 - 1) The Pharisees were stirred to confront Him about it so He discusses the relationship He sustains with His own as Shepherd and sheep.
 - b. He was speaking to a Jewish audience.
 - 1) Jews would not be the only ones responding to the voice of the good Shepherd.
 - 2) He had other sheep that He must bring into the one flock.
 - a) Who else could that be but the Gentiles?
 - 3. Then He affirms again the relationship that He sustains with the Father.
 - a. Jesus' life was not taken from Him any sooner or later than was planned.
 - b. He laid it down Himself.
 - 1) "No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again" (10:18).
- E. REACTION.
 - 1. READ John 10:19-21.

CONCLUSION:

- A. The great affirmation of this text is that Jesus, not somebody else, is the Shepherd, the good One.

HIS SHEEP. Chapter 10:22-42

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Our text can be summarized in this way:
 - 1. The Jews surrounded Jesus like a gang of bullies wanting to know who He was.
 - 2. He tells them.
 - 3. And they want to stone Him for telling them.
 - 4. He defends Himself by arguing His case.
 - 5. And they seek to take Him again.
 - 6. But Jesus gets away and goes beyond the Jordan where John was at the first baptizing.
 - 7. And many believed on Him when they realized that all John said concerning Jesus was true.
- B. We see again the reoccurring theme of belief and unbelief.
 - 1. Some (the Jews) wanted to stone Him.
 - 2. Others believed on Him.

SETTING:

- A. This all occurs at the feast of dedication at Jerusalem in the winter in the temple in Solomon's porch.
 - 1. The feast of dedication was celebrated in honor of expelling Antiochus Epiphanies from Jerusalem.
 - a. Antiochus was King of Syria and conquered Palestine during the period of silence between the Testaments.
 - b. He forbade...
 - 1) Circumcision,
 - 2) Observance of the Sabbath and
 - 3) Other things highly valued in the Jews' religion.
 - c. And he required sacrifice to heathen gods.
 - d. Morris: "...it was a time in indescribable horror for those who took their religion seriously" (p. 385, *Reflections...*).

- e. This all led to the Macabean revolt which liberated the Jews from their captors.
 - f. Thus, the feast of dedication commemorated Israel's deliverance from Antiochus Epiphanes.
- B. Apparently the Jews thought this was a good setting to ask the question "How long dost thou keep us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly."
 - 1. The Jews were looking for a political leader who would lead the revolt against the Roman dominion.
 - 2. The problem Jesus created for them was that He was the Christ of the Old Testament; not the Christ of Pharisaic hope (McGarvey, p. 485).

JESUS' RESPONSE:

- A. Jesus answered, "I told you, and ye believed me not."
 - 1. When did He tell them?
 - 2. Jesus said, "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me" (10:25).
 - a. The signs Jesus performed pointed to who He was/is:
 - 1) Turning water to wine,
 - 2) Healing the nobleman's son,
 - 3) Healing the invalid of thirty-eight years,
 - 4) Feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fishes,
 - 5) Walking on water,
 - 6) Healing the blind man.
 - b. These signs were the sufficient cause of belief for many. Why not the Pharisees?
- B. The reason the Pharisees did not believe is that they were not of Jesus' fold (or His sheep).
 - 1. Here are the predominant characteristics of Jesus' sheep.
 - a. "My sheep hear my voice."
 - 1) Hearing His voice includes the idea of understanding.
 - 2) The Pharisees had ears to hear, but did not hear.

- a) They heard the words but did not perceive the message.
 - b) They didn't hear his voice because: they did not hear Moses and the prophets, in whom they claimed to trust.
 - 3) Their problem was the same as Israel of old: "the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard" (Heb 4:2).
 - 4) The Jews were not of Jesus' sheep, consequently they did not hear His voice.
 - b. "...and I know them."
 - 1) The Shepherd knows His own.
 - a) In the "Good Shepherd" discourse, He said, "I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me" (10:14).
 - b) "He calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out" (19:3).
 - 2) He is so intimately familiar with us that the very hairs of our head are all numbered (Mt 10:30).
 - c. "...and they follow me."
 - 1) Implied in hearing Him is understanding Him and obeying Him as is implied in the fact that they follow Him.
 - 2) Also to be noted is the continuous action of the present tense.
 - a) Jesus' sheep don't hear Him on one occasion and call it quits.
 - (1) They keep on hearing Him, and
 - (2) He keeps on knowing them,
 - (3) And they keep on following Him.
2. But so far as the Pharisees and unbelieving Jews are concerned, they will hear the words, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Mt 7:23).
- a. Also to all those whose righteousness does not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, these words will be spoken.

3. Then He defines the benefits of having Jesus as a Shepherd.
 - a. "I will give unto them eternal life,
 - b. "And they shall never perish,
 - c. "And no one shall snatch them out of my hand."
- C. They wanted Jesus to tell them plainly whether or not He was the Christ.
 1. He reminds them that they were told but did not believe because they did not "hear" Him.
 2. Then He says, "My Father, who hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."
 - a. First, He said, "No one shall snatch them out of my hand."
 - b. Then, "No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."
 - c. And then, "I and the Father are one."
 - 1) If the Father is greater than all,
 - 2) And Jesus and the Father are one,
 - 3) then Jesus is greater than all, being equal with the Father.
 3. I do not know how much plainer Jesus could be.
 - a. The Jews did not know how much plainer He could be either.
 - 1) "...And they took up stones to stone Him."
- D. But Jesus asks them a question now.
 1. "Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?"
 2. And they said, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."
 - a. They wanted to divorce His works from His claims because they didn't like His claims
 - b. And, because they didn't like His claims, they ignored His works or "signs"
 - 1) Did they acknowledge the miracle that was performed on the invalid of thirty-eight years?
 - a) No! They focused on the Sabbath being "broken"

- 2) And how did they react when the blind man was healed?
 - a) First they thought he was lying about ever being blind.
 - b) Then they kicked him out of the synagogue.
 - c. They shut their eyes to the confirming signs He presented them with but kept their ears open for what they wanted to hear.
- E. Jesus' response:
 - 1. First of all he reminds them that the Psalmist referred to the judges of his day as "gods"
 - a. And he reminds them that the scriptures cannot be broken (undone or set aside).
 - b. Then He reasons from the greater to the lesser: "If he called them gods (which you acknowledge), why are you jumping all over me for saying, 'I am the Son of God?'"
 - 2. And even though they wanted to divorce Jesus' works from His claims, Jesus ties them together again by asking them to believe Him for His works' sake.
 - a. This forces them to ask themselves by what power He could perform such wonders.
 - b. Their problem was not one of insufficient evidence - it was a heart problem - a hardening of the arteries.
 - 3. They wouldn't hear Him and sought again to take Him.
 - a. But He escaped and went to the region where John first baptized.
 - 1) And, we're told many believed on him.

LESSONS:

- A. The Pharisees claimed for themselves to be the elite "separated ones" of God (which is what the word "Pharisees" means).
 - 1. But merely claiming to be God's own does not make one God's own.
 - 2. Jesus said those who are His
 - a. Continually hear Him,
 - b. And that He continually knows them,
 - c. And they continually follow Him.

3. Which does not depict the Pharisees.
 4. Men can deceive themselves into believing that they are “in the faith” when in reality they are not.
 - a. Thus, Paul’s admonition, “Try your own selves, whether ye are in the faith; prove your own selves” (13:5).
 5. Their condition of unbelief is even more culpable in light of the great signs Jesus set before them
- B. Related to the Pharisees rejection of Christ is the fact that even though the evidence may be incontestable, it may never be “enough” to convince some...
1. Because the problem isn’t with the evidence, it is with the heart of the one before whom the evidence is presented.
- C. This text teaches us concerning the security that is in Christ for those who do believe.
1. To them he gives eternal life and they shall never perish.
 2. And no one shall snatch them out of His hand.
 3. This does not rule out the fact that people can walk away from Him.
 - a. But that’s not the point of His teaching.
 - b. And simply because some teach “once saved always saved” it should not rob us of the actual truth of Scripture concerning the security we do have in Him.
- D. One other lesson I want to include is the fact that the Scriptures cannot be broken
1. They cannot be undone or set aside.
 2. The Pharisees would have gladly done so for their own convenience, but Jesus held to the point.
 - a. It was uncomfortable and there was no way of getting around it.

SUMMARY:

- A. John 10 first introduces the good Shepherd (10:10-21).
1. His sheep.
 - a. Hear his voice,
 - b. He knows them,

- c. They follow Him.
- 2. Do you fit into this category?
 - a. Or are you not of His sheep?

JESUS: THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE..... JOHN 11

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Because Jesus had equated Himself with the Father, thus making Himself God, the Jews took up stones to stone Him (10:30,31).
 - 1. And because they would not listen to the voice of reason, He escaped to the east side of the Jordan (the Trans-Jordan) (10:32-42).
- B. But in Bethany, which is back in Judaea, a man whom Jesus loved was sick.
 - 1. The sick man's sisters sent word to Jesus concerning their brother Lazarus.
 - 2. The message was, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick" (11:3).
 - a. The message did not include a request for Him to come.
 - 1) Apparently, Mary and Martha knew how dangerous it was for Jesus to show His face in Judaea.
 - a) Much earlier John wrote, "He would not walk in Judaea, because the Jews sought to kill him" (7:1).
 - b) The reason Jesus crossed the Jordan from Jerusalem is because the Jews had just attempted to stone Him.
 - (1) Stoning was a form of execution in that day.
 - b. These women probably felt that all they had to do was inform Jesus of their brother's sad condition and He would take care of the rest.
 - 3. By the time the message had reached Jesus, Lazarus was dead.
 - a. Some believe Jesus waited for Lazarus to die in order to demonstrate the glory of God.
 - b. But note the calculation of days:
 - 1) From the day Jesus received word from Mary and Martha, He waited two days before traveling to Bethany.
 - a) Bethany was fewer than two miles distance from Jerusalem (11:18) and perhaps a day's distance from where Jesus was.
 - 2) When Jesus arrived at Bethany Lazarus had been dead four days (11:39).

- 3) Word concerning Lazarus' sickness did not reach Jesus until a day after Lazarus' death.
 - a) He did not wait for Lazarus to die before He left for Bethany.
 - b) But He, knowing that Lazarus was already dead, waited two days so that there would be no doubt he was dead.
 - c) That would have had him in the tomb four days.

C. Jesus' disciples, on the other hand, cautioned Him about returning to Judaea.

1. Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep."
2. The disciples said, "Lord, if he is fallen asleep, he will recover."
 - a. They thought Jesus meant that Lazarus was resting.
3. The Lord said plainly, "Lazarus is dead."
 - a. This is another evidence of the supernatural knowledge of Jesus.
 - 1) The message He'd received had only said that Lazarus was sick.
 - b. And he added, "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him."
4. Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (11:16).
 - a. He knew what dangers there were in Jesus returning to Judaea.

D. When they finally arrived at Bethany, they found many Jews at the household of Mary and Martha trying to console them.

1. Martha was the first to greet Him saying, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (11:21).
2. Jesus said, "Thy brother shall rise again."
3. Martha said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."
4. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?"
5. Here we find Martha making one of the great confessions found in the book.

- a. She said, "Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world" (11:27).
 - b. But, like so many of us, she did not know fully the implications of her own confession or the declaration made by Jesus that He is the resurrection and the life.
- E. Mary greeted Him in the same fashion as her sister, telling Him how things would have been different if He had been there before her brother died.
 - 1. And when He saw the Jews and Mary weeping, He groaned in his spirit and was troubled and said, "Where have ye laid him?"
 - 2. And they said, "Lord, come and see."
 - 3. Then John writes, "Jesus wept" (11:35).
 - a. It was not the loud wailing of one with no hope.
 - 1) These were quiet tears.
 - b. There is no doubt that half of these tears were shed in compassion for the mourning sisters and friends of Lazarus.
 - 1) He was probably weeping with those who wept.
 - c. We see something deeper in the tears of our Lord.
 - 1) We see sorrow produced by the unbelief that surrounded Him.
 - a) Earlier Jesus expressed His gladness for Lazarus' death to the intent that His disciples would believe.
 - (1) Thus, implying a lack of it.
 - b) Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life."
 - (1) That didn't instill in her confidence, much less the idea that Jesus would raise her brother from the dead.
 - c) In fact, Jesus told those standing by to take away the stone that sealed the tomb of His friend. Martha said, "Lord, by this time the body decayeth; for he hath been dead four days" (11:39).
 - d. When the Jews saw Him weeping, they said, "Behold how he loved him!"

1) But others said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?" (11:37).

2) And Jesus, again groaning in himself, went to the tomb.

F. Now, if Hollywood and Steven Spielberg or George Lucas had been in charge of this scene, we can see what they would have done.

1. Picture this...

- a. Jesus sweeps His arm in front of Him as if to say, "Be gone!" and the stone at the mouth of the tomb would mystically defy gravity and launch across the sky to another place.
- b. Dark clouds and thunder roll over the land.
- c. Lightening darts from His fingertips into the cave where rests His friend Lazarus.
- d. And breathless moments later Lazarus hovers above the ground out of the tomb and is set upright as if maneuvered by invisible wires.
- e. After which nature calms itself down and all stand paralyzed at the sight.

2. What actually took place?

- a. Jesus said, "Take away the stone."
- b. He lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I know that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that thy may believe that thou didst send me."
- c. And then with a loud voice He cried, "Lazarus, come forth."
- d. John then records, "He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin" (11:44).

G. You can imagine the stir this got out of the people.

- 1. Many of the Jews believed on Him.
- 2. But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.
READ 11:47
- 3. Consequently, Jesus decided to no longer walk openly among the Jews.

MEANING:

- A. This account fits in like many others that have preceded it in the Gospel according to John.
1. The signs written were designed to produce belief.
 - a. In this chapter the sign consisted of raising Lazarus from the dead.
 - 1) He did "...to the intent ye (the disciples) may believe" (11:15).
 - 2) And for the multitude that stood around, "...that they may believe that thou didst send me" (11:42).
 - b. John tells us that many of the Jews who beheld what He did believed on Him (11:45).
- B. John has brought a host of witnesses before us and has also brought seven convincing and incontestable signs to us.
1. These signs are so wonderful that many have concluded them to be incredible (unbelievable).
 - a. Consequently they have written them off as mythical stories and have attached allegorical meanings to them.
 - b. William Barclay spends an entire chapter in his *Daily Study Bible Series* to discredit the sign that was given in Bethany.
 - 1) After creating suspicion over the text he says, "It does not really matter whether or not Jesus literally raised a corpse to life in A.D. 30, but it matters intensely that Jesus is the Resurrection and the life for every man who is dead in sin and dead to God in A.D. 1955."
 - c. The very thing Jesus did to demonstrate the fact that He was/is the Resurrection and the Life was raise Lazarus from the dead.
 - 1) In fact, today Bethany's Aramaic name is Azariyeh, which is derived from the name Lazarus.
- C. The message for us today is that Jesus is the resurrection and the life.
1. He said, "...he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (11:25, 26).
 - a. The kind of life Jesus offers is the kind that death cannot cancel out.
 - b. Though you die, yet shall you live.
 2. The means by which this is all made possible is hinted at in Caiaphas' unwitting prophecy.

- a. “Ye know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish” (11:49,50).
- b. READ 11:51,52

FINAL PUBLIC DISCOURSE..... Chapter 12:1-13

INTRODUCTION:

- A. God is love (1 Jn 4:8) and He loves the world (Jn 3:16).
 - 1. He doesn't love the world due to any goodness that He sees in man.
 - 2. He loves us in spite of ourselves.
 - a. He commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Rom 5:8).
 - b. Jesus didn't die for the strong, but for the weak (Rom 5:6).
 - c. He didn't die for the godly, but for the ungodly (5:6).
 - d. He didn't die for the righteous, but for the unrighteous (Rom 3:10).
 - e. He did not die for friends, but for his enemies (Rom 5).
 - 3. Peter referred to his day as a "crooked generation" (Acts 2:40).
- B. The evidence of this perverseness is found in the way in which our Lord was treated while on this earth.
 - 1. John writes, that "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received Him not" (Jn 1:11).
 - 2. He had wrought an abundant number of signs and wonders to prove who He was.
 - a. And, of course, some believed.
 - b. But many did not.
 - 1) In fact, among those who believed not were many of those in high places with official capacities to govern.
 - 3. Some of the signs He performed were more private than others.
 - a. Such as...
 - 1) Turning water to wine,
 - 2) Healing the nobleman's son,
 - 3) Healing the invalid of thirty-eight years and
 - 4) Walking on water.
 - b. But some were not so private, and were given a lot more publicity.

- 1) Feeding the five thousand,
- 2) Healing the blind man,
- 3) Raising Lazarus from the dead.

C. In our last study we rehearsed what happened in John 11 when Jesus raised His friend Lazarus from the dead.

1. In John 12 we learned how this seventh sign was received by others.
 - a. Jews flocked to see Jesus and Lazarus (12:9).
 - b. The chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus to death (12:10).
 - c. The multitude bore witness of Jesus when He entered Jerusalem because He had done this sign (12:18f).
 - d. Even Greeks came to see Him (12:20).

D. John 12 also sounds the death knell foreshadowing His death on the cross.

SCENE I:

A. John 12 begins with Jesus in Bethany, six days before the passover, eating with Mary, Martha, Lazarus and His disciples.

1. Lazarus is described by John as the one "...whom Jesus raised from the dead" (12:1).
 - a. He was reclining at meat with Jesus.
2. Martha was busy preparing supper.
3. Mary took a "pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair" (12:3).
 - a. What she applied to Jesus' feet was like perfume, but more likely in an oil form.
 - 1) John estimated it's worth as "very precious."
 - 2) She used so much of it that the odor filled the house.
 - a) She wasn't stingy with the amount.
 - b. Then she applied it to Jesus' feet.
 - 1) When Jesus was in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Lk 7:36-60), He said, "...you gave me no water for my feet...you

gave me no kiss...My head with oil thou didst not anoint" (Lk 7:44-46).

- 2) Precious and costly ointment was for the dead, while water was for the feet.
 - a Yet Mary applied the perfume to His feet.
- 3) Washing feet was an act of humble service, but to apply precious oil to the feet was to acknowledge the greatness of Jesus and, at the same time, her lowly position.

B. Judas had a problem with this.

1. John gives us an eye opening glimpse into the character of Judas.
 - a. One of his disciples,
 - b. The one who would betray Jesus,
 - c. and he helped himself to the contents of the treasury bag of the apostles because he was a thief.
2. He wanted to know why Mary didn't sell her expensive perfume and give the proceeds to the poor.
 - a. John tells us he said this "...not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief..."
3. Jesus responded by saying, "Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying. For the poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always."

C. Why did Mary anoint the feet of Jesus?

1. It's very likely that she was sensitive to the fact that Jesus' time to depart was at hand.
2. She probably knew that Jesus' death was approaching and sympathized with Him.
3. She anointed His feet with the oil to demonstrate her devotion to Him and to acknowledge His worth to her.

D. Her anointing Jesus' feet also occasioned the remark that He would not be with them always.

1. John clearly seems to be hinting at the fact that the time of Jesus' death is approaching.

2. In earlier chapters John has informed us of a number of meetings that have already taken place whose sole purpose was to plot against the life of our Lord.
3. Here Jesus foreshadows His death by saying, "...me ye have not always."

SCENE II:

- A. In scene II we find the common people flocking to see Jesus and Lazarus.
 1. But in dark and hidden corners of Jerusalem we find the chief priests plotting to murder Lazarus.
 2. Their reason: "...many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus because of him."

SCENE III:

- A. Scene III of chapter 12 marks a change in Jesus' attitude toward being seen.
 1. In 7:1 Jesus determined to not walk openly in Judaea "because the Jews sought to kill him."
 2. In planing their trip to Bethany (chapter 11) His disciples warned Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" (11:8).
 3. But in scene three Jesus is found entering Jerusalem like a King.
 - a. The multitude heard He was coming, so they took branches of the palm trees and went forth to meet Him.
 - 1) The palm branch was symbolic of triumph and victory.
 - a) That's why this particular visit to Jerusalem is called by many the "Triumphal entry."
 - b. Notice what the crowds are crying:
 - 1) "Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel."
 - a) "Hosanna" means "Save! we pray thee!"
- B. Jesus' response to all of this was to find a donkey and sit on it - which was in accord with Old Testament prophecy.
 1. Zechariah 9:9 predicted, "Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on a young donkey" (12:15).
 2. His coming to Jerusalem on a donkey told the observer something about the nature of His reign as King.

- a. Usually a king would parade his military forces before the people as a manifest display of his power and might.
 - 1) He would not lead them on a donkey.
- b. A donkey was an animal used by peaceful citizens.
 - 1) Leon Morris: "...the choice of animal not only fulfilled the prophecy but told the perceptive observer something about Jesus' way of being king. He was not to be a royal ruler like the kings with whom the people of Jerusalem were familiar. He would indeed be a royal ruler but not one who saw glory in war and conquest. He would be "king of peace" (cf. Heb 7:2). Paul brings out powerfully the way Jesus made peace between heaven and earth, a peace that meant peace between people of groups that were naturally hostile to one another (Eph 2). We are to see, then both the fact of Jesus' kingship and its distinctive nature as concerned with peace" (*Reflections*, p. 438, Vol III).

C. And as He rode, the multitude bore witness of Him.

- 1. The multitude went after Him because of the signs that they heard he had done.

D. The Pharisees responded, probably with a scowl on their face and with arms folded, "Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him."

SCENE IV:

A. John 12 contains the last public discourse of our Lord - and in it the foreshadowing of Jesus' death is continued.

B. It begins with some Greeks saying, to Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus."

- 1. Philip tells Andrew, and Andrew with Philip tells the Lord that some "Gentiles" want to see Him.

C. Jesus responds by saying, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."

- 1. Back at the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus said, "...mine hour is not yet come" (2:4).
- 2. He told the woman at the well that "...thou hour cometh" (4:21).
- 3. He told the Jews, that the "...hour cometh" ...when... 'they that hear shall live" (5:25).
- 4. He told His disciples before the feast of tabernacles, "My time is not yet come" (7:6,8).

5. When the Jews sought to take Him no man laid hands on Him, "...because his hour was not yet come" (7:30).
6. And when He spoke in the treasury no man took him, "...because his hour was not yet come" (8:20).
7. But now, in His triumphal entry, He says, "The hour is come."
 - a. What hour? The hour that the "Son of man should be glorified."
 - b. But what did He mean by that?
 - 1) He explains it with another of His solemn statements, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone, but if it die, it beareth much fruit.'"
 - 2) Like the grain of wheat, Jesus must die in order to bear much fruit.
 - a) The fruit He would bear is the salvation of lost souls by His blood.
2. He went on to say, "He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life" (12:25).
 - a. If you love your life in the world then no death (baptism) takes place, the fruit of which (death-baptism) is righteousness.
 - b. "...to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rom 6:16).
 - c. Jesus continues, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honor" (12:26).
3. Some of this discussion must have centered around the implied question His disciples had concerning these Greeks who went up to worship and who said, "Sir, we would see Jesus."
 - a. There was still some question in their minds about the place of Gentiles in God's scheme of things.
 - b. Jesus is saying, "If any man serve me, let him follow me."
4. Jesus' soul is very troubled now, knowing that the hour is come.
 - a. What shall He say? "Father, save me from this hour?" No!
 - b. Jesus said, "But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name."

- c. And there came a voice out of heaven saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (12:28).
 - 1) The crowds thought it had thundered.
 - 2) Others said, "An angel hath spoken to him."
- d. Jesus explained that the voice of God came thundering from heaven for their sakes.
 - 1) Continuing the foreshadowing, He said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."
 - 2) He said this signifying by what manner of death he should die.
 - 3) The multitude did not understand.

D. Isn't it odd!

- 1. The Jews "believed on Him" (12:11).
- 2. They called Him "King of Israel" (12:13).
- 3. They even bore witness of His raising Lazarus from the dead (12:17).
- 4. But because they did not understand the nature of His kingdom or rule, they asked, "How sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?"
 - a. He had let the air out of their Hosannas.
- 5. READ 12:35,36.

SUMMATION:

- A. Throughout all four scenes there is the foreboding message of Jesus' death being at hand.
 - 1. When Mary anointed His feet with costly oil, He said, "...ye have not always" (12:8).
 - 2. There is the plot to murder Lazarus added to the several attempts to stone Jesus.
 - 3. In His triumphal entry the crowds cried "Hosanna," - "Save us!"
 - a. And because no remission of sins is acquired independent from shedding of blood (Heb 9:22), their cries foreshadowed His death on the cross.

4. And our Lord Himself said, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (12:23).
 - a. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (Greeks included, 12:32).
 5. What we have in John 12 is...
 - a. The preparation for His death.
 - b. The instruments of His death (the Jews).
 - c. The foretelling of the imminence of His death.
- B. John's message is designed to provide evidence for the proposition that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and in believing you may have life in His name.
1. Evidence?
 - a. Mary viewed Him worthy enough to anoint His feet.
 - b. The common people came and saw Lazarus, "...whom He raised from the dead,"
 - 1) And they believed on Him.
 - c. The multitude called Him "the King of Israel,"
 - d. And Jesus is fulfilling Old Testament prophecy concerning the Messiah.
 2. Is it not interesting that when people try to sell a product today they amass nothing but positive testimony from the users of that product.
 - a. They certainly would not want to use a disgruntled customer.
 - b. We most likely would have done the same if we were John.
 - 1) We would record only the positive and favorable reactions of people to Jesus in order to persuade them to believe.
 - 2) But, considering what John did, I am persuaded that his way was ideal. (Of course! He was inspired!)
 - c. In identifying those who rejected our Lord and their reactions toward Him, he also explains why they rejected Him.
 - 1) They were bad men with evil hearts of unbelief.
 - 2) Conclusion: only people with evil hearts of unbelief would reject Him in light of all the evidence.

“YET THEY BELIEVED NOT”..... John 12:36-50

INTRODUCTION:

A. Consider:

1. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn 1:1).
2. “No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (Jn 1:18).
3. “God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these day spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through who also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they” (Heb 1:1-4).
4. He is both “God and Savior” (2 Pet 1:1).

B. And what proof was given that such was/is the case?

1. He turned water to wine (Jn 2).
2. He healed the nobleman’s son (Jn 4).
3. He healed the invalid (Jn 5).
4. He fed the five thousand (plus) people with two fishes and five loaves (Jn 6).
5. He walked on water (Jn 6).
6. He gave sight to a man born blind (Jn 9).
7. He raised His friend, Lazarus, from the dead (11).
8. And He performed other signs; this was just a sampling.
9. But these were written that you may believe (Jn 20:30-31).
10. Leon Morris: “They were not simply works of power; they are full of meaning” (p. 456).
 - a. That’s why they are called “signs.”

C. Our text begins on this sad note:

1. "But though he had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him" (12:37).
 - a. Jesus spoke the message of His Father and demonstrated the factualness of that message by the signs He had performed and yet they believed not on Him.
 - 1) He saying this, John reports the supreme tragedy of this book, for it led to His crucifixion.
 - b. The weakness wasn't in His message and it wasn't in the ability of the signs He performed to convince.
 - c. The problem was in the hearts of men.
 - d. And I would like to add that when we are bringing God's message to this community or any other, and they reject it, we should not frustrate ourselves with trying to conjure up some new "gimmick" to reach them.
 - 1) It is the gospel message that we are to present.
 - 2) And if the gospel message doesn't touch them, we've done our part.
 - 3) BUT WE MUST DO OUR PART.
2. Because the tension was mounting and the desire of wicked men for the blood of Jesus was approaching its fevered peak, Jesus departed and hid himself from them (12:36b).

UNBELIEF:

- A. Throughout John's account of the life of Christ, there is the two-fold response of belief and unbelief from the people who come in contact with the new phenomenon called Jesus.
 1. John informs us that many believed not on Him, "...that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled."
 - a. Isaiah said, "Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (Isa 53:1).
 - b. John comments, "For this cause they could not believe, for that Isaiah said again,

"He hath blinded their eyes,
and he hardeneth their heart;
Lest they should see with their eyes,
and perceive with their heart,
And should turn,
And I should heal them."

- c. The question John poses through Isaiah is one men still ask today, “Lord, who hath believed our report?”
- d. How is it that God blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts?
 - 1) Listen carefully: God blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts by the same means that others believed and lived.
 - a) It was through the message He preached and the signs He performed that He hardened their hearts.
 - b) Those with honest and good hearts received the word and lived.
 - (1) But those who despised Jesus rejected Him by closing their eyes to the signs He performed and hardened their hearts to the message He preached.
 - c) “Faith comes by hearing the Word of God” (Rom 10:17).
 - (1) If the word of hearing is not united by trust then it profits the hearer nothing (Heb 4:2).
 - (2) The message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not combine it with faith.
 - 2) So as it was in Isaiah’s day, so it was in Jesus’ day.
- 2. But of fascinating significance is what John says about Isaiah, “These thing said Isaiah, because he saw his glory, and he spoke of him.”
 - a. Isaiah saw whose glory?
 - b. Our context speaks of the unbelief that hindered people from seeing Jesus as the Christ.
 - c. When Isaiah wrote of blind eyes and hard hearts, it was in the context of his being commissioned as a prophet; a time in which he saw the glory of the Lord filling the temple (Isa 6).
 - d. John says Isaiah spoke of hard hearts and blind eyes “because he saw his glory, and he spoke of him” = Christ.
- B. But there were some who did believe, but were without the courage to live by their convictions.
 - 1. John says, “Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue” (12:42).

- a. The Jews, long before this incident, had determined “that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue” (Jn 9:22).
 - 1) To talk to anyone about Jesus was to walk on egg shells.
 - 2) John also records, “Yet no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews” (7:13).
 - 2. Why weren’t these believers willing to commit themselves to Christ?
 - a. “...for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God” (12:43).
- C. John 12 ends with a message from Jesus to those unbelievers and to those who believed on Him, but chose the glory that is of men over the glory that is of God.

JESUS’ SPEECH:

- A. READ 12:44-50.
 - 1. Consistently throughout John’s gospel account Jesus is depicted as the one who obeys the One who sent Him.
 - a. Jesus Himself said, “And he that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him” (8:29).
 - 2. He is also depicted as one who fully represents the Father.
 - a. Jn 5:19 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner.”
 - b. He said, “...I am come forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me” (8:42).
 - 3. In His speech at the end of John 12, Jesus informs those who would not believe, and those who would believe but not openly confess it, that what you do to Jesus, you do to the Father; and how you receive Him, is how you receive the Father.
 - a. He that believes on Jesus, believes on Him that sent Him.
 - b. He that beholds Jesus, beholds Him that sent Him.
 - c. He that hears Jesus, hears Him that sent Him.
 - d. He that rejects Jesus, rejects Him that sent Him.
 - e. And He that sent Him is the Father.

- 1) Jesus said, "For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (12:49).
- 2) His teachings were not human in origin - they were from God.

B. And one's decision concerning Christ is not without its consequences.

1. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (12:48).
2. His purpose in coming was not to condemn or judge, but to offer salvation - to seek and to save that which was lost (Lk 10:10).
 - a. He said, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in darkness" (12:46).
 - 1) Darkness is a common picture John uses to depict the condition of the world.
 - a) Man outside of Christ and without the light of Scripture lives in darkness.
 - 2) In the prologue, John states: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not" (1:4,5).
 - a. McCord: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not put it out."

C. His final words of public discourse were significant ones.

1. What made them significant is that they came from the Father.
2. In them Jesus sums up His claim.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Men today are called upon by God to make a decision about the identity of Jesus just as people of His day were called to decide.
1. And though our eyes did not witness the miracles performed, we can still read about them through the eyewitnesses that saw them and recorded them by inspiration.
 2. These were written that ye may believe.
 3. Unfortunately, there are a countless number of people who won't even begin an investigation into the matter, and as many plus more who have heard of them and yet believe not.

4. What John means when he writes, "...though He had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him" is that in spite of the convincing and incontestable evidence, many rejected Him."
 - a. The signs had the power to convince, but were rendered powerless if not viewed with faith.
- B. Grant R. Osborne, in *The Grace of God, The Will of Man*, wrote, "John is an 'encounter' Gospel, as Jesus forces every person he meets to consider the claims of God and to make a choice" (p. 243, article "Soteriology in the Gospel of John").
 1. Those characters He encounters are our substitutes.
 2. And John calculatedly writes to draw us into their sandals to try to get us to look at their encounter with Jesus through their eyes so as to get us to make a choice.

BETRAYED. John 13

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Up to this point in the gospel according to John,
 - 1. Jesus has delivered His message to the world.
 - 2. He has confirmed the truth of that message through the signs He performed.
 - 3. And He has all but finished His work in preparing His disciples for the task He will set before them.
 - 4. The time of His death is at hand.
 - a. John writes that Jesus knows “that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father” (13:1).
 - b. In the previous chapter He said, “...the hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified” (12:23).
 - 1) And He said, signifying what manner of death he should die, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself” (12:32).
 - 5. John’s arrangement in this book demonstrates the focal point that we have just reached in our study.
 - a. The first twelve chapters chronicle the whole life of Jesus up to the eve of His crucifixion.
 - b. The last nine chapters are given to the last night of his life, including His death and resurrection.
- B. Chapter 13 begins by setting the scene for us:
 - 1. It is before the feast of the Passover.
 - 2. Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world to the Father.
 - 3. The devil had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him.
 - 4. This scene has classically been referred to as the last Supper.
 - 5. “...the focus constricts from Jesus’ ministry in the world to his last days with his loyal disciples” (*Words of Life*, Leland Ryken, p. 5).
- C. The characters, as has already been implied, are Jesus and His chose few disciples, with special emphasis on Judas and Peter.

WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET:

- A. Jesus rises from supper and lays His garments aside and took a towel and girded Himself.
 - 1. He then poured water into a basin and began washing the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel He girded about himself.
 - 2. Imagine what's happening.
 - a. Jesus, the Word, who is God, who will take away the sins of the world, on the eve of His crucifixion is found washing the disciples' feet.
 - b. Because the roads of that day were not paved like ours and because the people of that day wore sandals without socks, their feet got dirty as they traveled from place to place.
 - 1) The custom was to have a slave wash the feet of guests to remove the dirt they had accumulated on their feet.
 - a) Certainly it must have been refreshing.
 - c. Jesus rises from eating to wash His disciples' feet.
 - 1) This should have been done when they first entered the room, and it should have been done by one of them.
 - a) Jesus, rising from supper, must have certainly got their attention.
 - 2) And it should have been done by one of them.
 - a) The reason none of them stooped to do so is revealed in the parallel passages in Mk 10:35-45 and Lk 22:24-30.
 - b) They were too busy arguing who would be greatest in the kingdom - who would be seated at His right hand and who would be seated at His left.
 - (1) They were jockeying for their political position in the kingdom of Christ.
 - d. Contrast the behavior of the disciples with Mary in Jn 12:1ff.
 - B. When He came to Peter, Peter said, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"
 - 1. And Jesus answered, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt understand hereafter" (13:7).
 - 2. But Peter said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet."

- a. I am not convinced that Peter meant any disrespect by what He said.
 - 1) He just could not fathom Jesus, his Master, performing the task of a slave before him.
 - 2) He wouldn't have had to if Peter had been the one to practice the simple task of hospitality beforehand.
- 3. The Lord said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (13:8).
 - a. So Peter responded, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my feet."
- 4. Judas apparently let the Lord wash his feet and yet he had no part with Him.
 - a. Yet Peter at first refused to let the Lord wash his feet, but played an important role in God's scheme of things.
- C. After Jesus had performed His task, took up His garments again, and sat down, He asked them, "Know ye what I have done to you?"
 - 1. What He had done was obligate them to humble service based on the principle stated in 13:16: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him."
 - 2. Now His disciples acknowledged Him as Teacher and Lord.
 - a. Jesus said, "Ye say well" = You speak correctly "for so I am."
 - b. He then said, "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you" (13:14,15).
 - c. And then, "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them" (13:17).
 - 1) You see, the blessing is not in mere knowing.
 - 2) Solomon teaches us that if we diligently pursue wisdom from above then, "wisdom shall enter into thy heart, and knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul" (Prov 2:10).
 - 3) The blessing comes when we act wisely on that which we know.
 - 4) Knowledge is pleasant when it is put to wise use.

- D. This in essence summarizes the action of John 13, but lying behind this action is a step by step revealing of the one who would betray our Lord.
1. As we proceed through John's text, notice the artistry with which he exposes Judas.
 - a. First of all we're told that the devil had already put into the heart of Judas to betray Christ (13:2).
 - b. After washing the disciples' feet, Jesus said, "Ye are clean, but not all" (13:10).
 - 1) John comments, "...he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, 'Ye are not all clean!'" (13:11).
 - c. After explaining what He had done in washing His disciples' feet, Jesus said. (Read 13:18-20.)
 - d. And when He had said this He was troubled in His spirit and said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."
 - 1) At this point the disciples were puzzled over who He was speaking about.
 - 2) Peter asked the one leaning next to Jesus, "Tell us who it is of whom he speaketh."
 - a) This one leaned back and asked, "Lord, who is it?"
 - b) Jesus answered, "He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him."
 - c) Jesus gave it to Judas.
 - d) John writes, "After the sop, then entered Satan into him."
 - e) Jesus told him, "What thou doest, do quickly."
 - f) No one at the table knew why Jesus said this to Judas.
 - (1) Some speculated that Judas left to get things needful for the passover.
 - (2) Others thought he left to care for the needs of the poor.
 - (3) Judas surely had them fooled.
 2. The way John constructs his account the reader knows what's going on, but the disciples do not.

- a. This helps to remind us that he was reporting something after the fact.
 - b. In doing so Jesus' prophecy about Judas is all the more convincing.
 - 1) Jesus said, "...I tell you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he."
 - 2) This is precisely the same formula Jehovah used in Isa 40-48 to demonstrate that He was God as opposed to the false gods and idols that the people worshiped.
 - c. Though this is not classified with the previous seven signs because it was not done during His public ministry, it is nevertheless a sign.
3. The departure of Jesus is also hinted at in verses 31-35.
- a. Peter chimed in, "Lord, whither goest thou?"
 - b. And Jesus said, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards."
 - c. Here is where Peter declares that he would lay down his life for Jesus.
 - d. Jesus tells him before the cock crows, that he would deny Him three times.

LESSONS:

- A. "A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one sent greater than he that sent him" (13:16).
 - 1. If Jesus participated in acts of humble service,
 - 2. And we are not greater than our Lord,
 - 3. Then we should participate in acts of humble service.
 - a. We ought not to be so high-minded that we would not take an active role in things that are lowly.
- B. Another evidence that Jesus was/is the Son of God is that He could/did foretell future events with consistent accuracy.
 - 1. This is indeed a striking attribute of deity and works in John's account to prove that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.

THE FAREWELL DISCOURSE..... John 14

INTRODUCTION:

A. Setting:

1. Jesus has just told His chosen eleven that He will only be with them a little while and that where He is going they cannot come, but that they will follow afterward.
 - a. Judas has already left to accomplish the dirty deed of betraying Him.
2. They had been with Him for some three years preparing for the task Jesus would set before them of preaching the gospel to every creature and now He tells them that He's going away.
 - a. Peter wants to know why he can't follow, assuring the Lord that he's ready to lay down his life for Him.
3. If I had been one of the chose apostles of Christ, at this point in time I would have felt somewhat uneasy about the fact that my leader was leaving.
 - a. My whole life would have been devoted to Him and now He is going away - and I can not follow Him.
 - b. Some of what I think I would have felt is evidenced among the apostles.
 - c. Notice the questions they ask Him in our text.
 - 1) Thomas said, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" (14:5).
 - 2) After Jesus makes the connection between Himself and the Father, Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us" (14:8).
 - 3) After promising to make Himself manifest to them after His departure, Judas (not Iscariot) asks Him, "Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (14:22).
 - d. There is a sense of nervous tension in the questions they asked.

B. Ryken: "The discussion in the upper room belongs to the Hebraic literary forms of the farewell address that an important person gives to his children or followers on the eve of his death" (...*Life*, p. 55).

1. Other examples of this kind are found such as,

- a. Jacob (Gen 48,49).
 - b. Moses (Deut).
 - c. Joshua (Josh 23-24).
 - d. David (1 Chron 22).
 - e. Peter (2 Pet).
 - f. Paul (2 Tim).
2. The discussion found in chapter 14 is calculated to comfort troubled hearts.
- a. In it Jesus tells His disciples that He is going away, but that He will one day return.
 - b. But in departing, He elaborates on several things He is leaving with them:
 - 1) Evidence for belief.
 - 2) Promise of return and a place where He is going.
 - 3) Promise to do greater works.
 - 4) Promise of another Comforter.
 - 5) The love of the Father.
 - 6) Promise to make Himself manifest.
 - 7) Peace.

EVIDENCE FOR BELIEF:

- A. He began His message of consolation by saying, "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me."
- 1. He provided them with ample evidence of who He was.
 - a. He'd given them numerous signs that provided evidence for the truthfulness of his claims.
 - 1) Those signs were as much for their benefit as they were for others.
 - b. To borrow from the reasoning of the man born blind, "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing" (9:33).

2. He also told them about Judas' act of betrayal before it happened, so that when it did happen, they would know that He was the "I AM."
3. Later on in this chapter (14:29) He reminds them that He will soon return to the Father, so that when it comes to pass they may believe.

PROMISE TO RETURN AND TO PROVIDE THEM A PLACE WITH HIM:

- A. In telling them that He must leave, their hearts were troubled, no doubt, with anxiety (the fear of future loss).
 1. But, in leaving them, He also promised to return.
 2. "In my Father's house are many mansions (dwelling places); if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you; And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (14:2,3).
- B. Children know what anxieties can fill the heart when parents leave them.
 1. But parents console them by telling them they will return.
 2. Jesus is telling His disciples, "Yes it is necessary that I go, but I will return again, that where I am, there ye may be also."
 - a. Jesus told Peter, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards" (13:36).
 - b. Later in this discussion, He will say, "I will not leave you desolate: I will come to you."
- C. The anxiety that stirred them is evident in the questions and remarks they make about what Jesus is saying.
 1. When Jesus said "I'm going" and "whither I go ye know the way," Thomas said, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest: how know we the way?"
 - a. Can't you just sense the confusion, anxiety and desperation in their question?
 - 1) He told them He was going back to the Father, but where was His Father?
 - 2) He told them that they would eventually follow; but they didn't know the way.
 2. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also, from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him."
 3. We know when confusion sets in we don't hear everything that's said, and we can hardly think straight.

- a. Philip says, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."
- 4. What seems to be traces of discouragement is Jesus response: "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hat seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, 'Show us the Father?" (14:9).

PROMISE OF ACCOMPLISHING GREATER WORKS:

- A. In 14:12 Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father."
 - 1. How were the disciples ever going to convince the world of their Master's message without the MIRACLE-WORKING MASTER at their side to empower them and to prove what they say is true?
 - 2. Here Jesus promises them that they will do works like they have seen Him do, and greater works.
 - a. Now certainly the greatest work Jesus had done was dying for the forgiveness of our sins.
 - 1) They would not do greater works than these.
 - b. Of the signs He had performed in His public ministry, they would do greater.
 - c. He told them, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye ask anything in my name that will I do" (14:13).

PROMISE OF ANOTHER COMFORTER:

- A. In Jesus' presence, there was a certain degree of comfort. That comfort corresponded with their faith in Him.
 - 1. But in Jesus' absence, or at the prospect of His absence, there were troubled hearts.
 - 2. There was no way to reverse this plan or to convince Jesus to stay.
- B. But Jesus promises to send them another Comforter in His absence.
 - 1. "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth" (14:16,17).
 - 2. He would not leave them desolate.
- C. And when the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, would come, He would...

1. Teach them all things and
2. Bring to their remembrance all that Jesus said to them (14:25,26).

THE LOVE OF THE FATHER:

- A. They were stepping out on their faith (trust) in Christ.
 1. Jesus tells them, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him" (14:21).
 2. They would be despised and rejected by men.
 - a. Evil men would reproach them and speak evil of them.
 - b. Men in power would put them to death and make life miserable for them.
 - c. But God would love them.
- B. Judas (not Iscariot) interrupted the Lord, which further indicates the anxiety that these men now felt, and said, "Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?"
 1. Jesus answered, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me."

PROMISE OF PEACE:

- A. Their lives would be disrupted as they were chased from city to city, but there would be peace in their lives - PEACE WITH GOD.
 1. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful."
 2. To fearful hearts, there is the promise of peace.

SUMMARY:

- A. Jesus knows what is in the hearts of men (Jn 2:25). No one needs to tell Him.
 1. This being the case, by looking at what Jesus says to comfort His disciples, He is mirroring what's troubling their hearts.
 - a. For their fear of abandonment, He promises them a place with Him.

- b. For their fear of being unable to convince a hostile world with their Lord's message, He promises them that they will do greater works than He did.
- c. For their fear of being desolate and alone He promises them another Comforter.
- d. For their fear of forgetting anything important, He promises them the Holy Spirit who will bring to their remembrance all that He said to them.
- e. For their fear of rejection, He promises them the love of the Father and His love.
- f. For their fear of intimidation, He promises them peace.

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES..... John 15

INTRODUCTION:

- A. It is the eve of Jesus' crucifixion and John records, in chapters 13-17 some of the action and a great deal of what Jesus said to His disciples in His farewell address.
 - 1. Their hearts are troubled.
 - a. The disciples hearts were troubled because Jesus had told them that He was going away and that where He was going they could not follow yet (14:1).
 - b. Jesus was troubled knowing that He was being betrayed (13:21).
 - 2. Jesus does what He can to help sooth some of their anxieties by promising them...
 - a. That He would return and that where He was going they would follow afterward,
 - b. That they will do greater works,
 - c. Another Comforter,
 - d. The love of the Father,
 - e. That He will make Himself manifest to them,
 - f. Peace.
- B. After these promises He focuses on the connection between Himself and the Father and uses that relationship as the standard for their relationship with Him and their relationship with one another.

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES:

- A. Jesus begins this part of His discourse with the last of His emphatic "I AM" statements in John's book.
 - 1. "I AM" the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman" (15:1).
 - a. Jesus is the vine.
 - b. The Father is the husbandman (NIV: "gardener").
 - c. Disciples make up the branches.
 - 2. Several important parallels exist.
 - a. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away" (15:2).

- 1) In 15:5 Jesus says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches."
- 2) The disciples are the branches.
- 3) Every disciple that does not bear fruit, the Father takes away.
- 4) The job of the gardener, especially in looking after a vine, is pruning.
 - a) Otherwise, the vine would probably produce a great deal of foliage and not as much fruit.
 - b) And branches that He "taketh away" are cast away. They wither, are gathered together, cast into the fire and are burned.

b. Another parallel that exists is "every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit" (15:2).

- 1) In verse 3, Jesus is quoted as saying, "Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you."
- 2) The Word of God is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16).
- 3) G. Woods: "Fruit-bearing branches of the Lord (his disciples) are "cleansed by discipline, teaching, training and growth to produce more fruit" (p. 322).

c. A third parallel closely related to the first two is found in v 4: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me."

- 1) In verse 5 He emphasizes this truth again by saying, "...for apart from me ye can do nothing."
- 2) So, just as the branch depends on the vine for it's nourishment, the Christian is totally dependent upon Christ for his strength.
- 3) Apart from Christ we would wither, be cast into the fire and burn.

B. All of this works beautifully to illustrate the necessity of an inseparable relationship with Christ.

1. Based on the relationship Christ sustains with the Father, He establishes the pattern for our relationship with Him.
2. The rest of John 15 is devoted to expounding on the inner workings of this three-pointed relationship between God, Christ and His disciples.

LOVE:

- A. The first aspect of the relationship identified is love.
 - 1. “Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love” (15:9).
 - a. The way in which Christ loved His disciples, is “even as the Father hath loved me.”
 - b. He then exhorts them to remain in that love.
- B. The apostle Paul expounded on the nature of Christ’s love when he asked and answered the question, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (Rom 8:35).
 - 1. “...Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”
 - 2. And then, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (8:38,39).
 - 3. This text is addressing Christ’s love for us.
 - 4. John 15 is addressing both His love for us and our love for Him and exhorting us to remain faithful to Him.
- C. A key aspect of our love for Christ is that we keep His commandments.
 - 1. “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (15:10).
 - a. In regard to Paul’s question in Romans 8, nothing shall keep Christ from loving us but, if we do not keep His commandments, we may separate ourselves from the salvation He offers.
 - 2. First He tells them to abide in His love.
 - a. He then tells them how to abide in His love.
 - b. “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.”
 - 3. Earlier it was said that the relationship Jesus sustained with the Father set the pattern for our love for Christ.
 - a. We are to keep His commands, thus abiding in His love “even as” He kept His Father’s commandments, and remains in His love.
 - 4. So love and commandment-keeping are connected.

- a. Many have attempted, and still try, to “put asunder” love and commandment-keeping, but consider these texts:
 - 1. Jn 14:15 “If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.”
 - 2. Jn 15:14 “Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.”
 - 3. 1 Jn 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”
- D. One other aspect of the love relationship expounded on is that of the disciples’ love for one another.
 - 1. “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12).
 - 2. Love does not behave itself unseemly or seek it’s own (1 Cor 13:5) and yet the disciples of our Lord were so anxious about what high position they would fill when the Lord came into His kingdom that Jesus arose from supper to teach them about loving service to one another by washing their feet.
 - a. They were too busy jealously jockeying for political position to love one another.
 - 1) They were acting unseemly and pursued their own interests.
- E. Then to add to the several statements that foreshadow His own death, He said, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (15:13).
 - 1. I doubt that the disciples knew how soon Jesus would manifest such a love for them.
 - 2. “...God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8).
- F. Even as the Father loves the Son, so the Son loves His disciples and so ought the disciples to love one another.
 - 1. “These things I command you, that ye may love one another” (15:17).

REACTION FROM THE WORLD:

- A. The remaining remarks of Jesus in John 15 centers around a principles He has already stated: “A servant is not greater than his lord” (15:20).
 - 1. He first said this immediately after washing His disciples feet, thus teaching them that if He, their Teacher and Lord, washed their feet, that they also should participate in loving acts of humble service.

- a. He said, "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."
 - b. Why? "Truly, truly, I say unto you, 'A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one sent greater than he that sent him.'"
- 2. Now, while the principle stated has only one meaning, it has many applications. Some of which Jesus now identifies.
 - a. Those applications relate back to the triangular relationship that exists between the Father, the Son and the disciples.
- B. Jesus tells them, "If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you" (15:17).
 - 1. Now if the disciples had embraced the world's point of view the world would love them.
 - 2. But because they did not embrace the world's standards, the world would hate them, even as they hated Jesus - which is evidenced in their crucifying Him.
 - a. "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not" (1:11).
 - b. "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved" (3:19,20).
 - 3. Peter later told Christians who were suffering from the world's antagonism, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trials among you..." (1 Pet 4:12).
 - 4. Jesus had told them in His sermon on the mount to rejoice in persecution, "and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you" (Mt 5:12).
 - a. The world persecuted the prophets and they persecuted the Christ.
 - b. Thus, the apostles should not think it strange that they too are hated by the world.
- C. It is here that He says, "Remember the word that I said unto you, 'A servant is not greater than his lord.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also" (15:20).
 - 1. Those who rejected the disciples were rejecting Christ and those who reject Christ reject the Father.
 - 2. Why?

- a. Because the message the disciples would deliver to the world was given to Christ by the Father.
 - b. Jesus said, "He that hateth me hateth my Father also" (15:23).
- 3. Those who reject that message would have no excuse for their sin.
 - a. Jesus said, "But this cometh to pass, that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law, 'They hated me without a cause.'"
- D. Jesus concludes this part of His discussion by reminding them that the Comforter will come, whom He will send from the Father, even the Spirit of truth.

SUMMARY:

- A. In this part of Jesus' farewell discourse to His disciples, He establishes the close relationship that exists between the Father, the Son, the disciples and the soon to come Comforter.
 - 1. He compares that relationship to the vine that is attended by the farmer.
 - a. The Father being the farmer.
 - b. He being the vine.
 - c. His disciples being the branches.
 - 2. This comparison is calculated to illustrate the closeness that is to characterize that relationship.
 - 3. Based on that relationship Jesus tells them:
 - a. That He loves them and He encourages them to abide in that love,
 - b. That love and commandment-keeping are connected,
 - c. That they are to love one another,
 - d. That greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
 - 4. He also tells them to expect the same treatment from the world that He received.
 - a. If they hated Jesus, they would hate them.
 - b. If they persecuted Him, they would hate them.
 - c. If they kept His word, they would keep their word.
 - d. "...for a servant is not greater than his lord."

- B. Brethren, there is no reason for us, in the twentieth century, to believe that circumstances should be any different for us.
1. Yes, we are protected by law to worship and to believe as we choose.
 2. And even though the world is restricted in the ways it can carry out it's hatred or persecution it is, nevertheless, present.

FINAL DISCOURSE (Continued). Chapter Sixteen

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The time Jesus spent with His disciples in the upper room was critical.
 - 1. While the previous chapters highlighted the unbelief that characterized the Jews who saw the signs and heard His discourses, the time spent with the twelve in the upper room revealed unbelief among Jesus' disciples.
 - a. Judas had already left to betray Him.
 - b. The self-acclaimed faithful Peter has been told, "...the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice" (Jn 13:38).
 - c. And when they all claim to believe Jesus asks them, "Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone" (16:32).
- B. The air in the upper room was thick with anxiety and confusion.
 - 1. These men had left their homes and jobs to follow Jesus.
 - a. Now, He's telling them that He must leave.
 - 2. They were confused and lacked the understanding that you and I have, in possession of the whole story.
- C. In John 16 Jesus' farewell discourse continues.
 - 1. He pulls no punches about the way things are going to be, but He does not tell them everything - and He tells them so.
 - 2. Chapter 16 contains:
 - a. A forewarning of the persecution that would come their way,
 - b. And discussion on the work of the Holy Spirit,
 - c. The disciples verbalizing their confusion, and
 - d. Jesus' clarification on a point or two.
 - 3. John let's us listen in.

PERSECUTION:

- A. In the previous chapter Jesus reminded them of the word: "A servant is not greater than his lord."
 - 1. Thus "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you" (15:20).

- B. He doesn't want to be the cause of their stumbling from any preconceived notions they might have about their work in the kingdom so He tells them forthrightly what will happen to them.
1. "They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God."
 - a. It had been established, prior to Jesus' healing the man born blind, that if any should confess Him to be the Christ, they should be put out of the synagogue (9:22).
 - 1) Banishment from the synagogue was no light matter.
 - a) In essence it meant banishment from their lifestyle and culture.
 - b) Leon Morris: "...the synagogue was not only a place of worship, but a school and a center of social life for the Jewish community. To be expelled from it meant to be isolated from most of the activities that made up Jewish life" (p. 536, *Reflections...*).
 - b. A prime example of killing Christians and believing it to be service to God is the apostle Paul.
 - 1) He later confessed, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9).
 - 2) He also said, "As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Damascus to bring them also that were there unto Jerusalem in bonds to be punished" (Acts 22:5).
 - 3) He lived before God in all good conscience when he did it (Acts 23:1).
- C. Earlier, that same evening, they were arguing over who would sit at Jesus' right hand and who would sit at His left.
1. They were anticipating being the stars of the show.
 2. Jesus was telling them that the world would hate them, they would be rejected by their brethren, and be killed in the belief that it was a service to God.
- D. Jesus also points out the oddity that none of them had asked where He was going.
1. Peter asked, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now?" (13:37).

2. Thomas asked, "Lord, ...how know we the way?" (14:5).
3. These questions were asked more for the anxiety they were feeling and not with much of an interest in where He was going.
4. And Jesus said, "But because I have spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart" (16:6).
5. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth."
 - a. And that truth was that it was expedient for them that He go away.
 - b. They could not understand why their leader must now go.
 - 1) They obviously felt it would be better for Him to stay.
 - c. But Jesus is telling them that regardless what they thought was best, it was expedient for Him to go. It was not expedient for Him to stay.

THE HOLY SPIRIT:

- A. In striving to console them, one of the things He promised them was another Comforter, who is referred to as the Spirit of truth.
 1. And that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, would teach them all things and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus taught.
- B. Here He elaborates on the work of the Spirit through them.
 1. As implied by the title Jesus gives the Spirit, they would be comforted by Him.
 - a. The Greek word for Comforter was used of an advocate or helper.
 - b. And in context to the agitation and persecution they would receive from the world, they would find help in the Holy Spirit.
 2. One work of the Holy Spirit through the apostles was that of convicting the world.
 - a. "And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin" (16:8).
 - 1) He would convict the world in respect of sin "because they believe not on me."
 - 2) It is a sin not to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
 - 3) Jesus warned the Jews earlier, "...for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (Jn 8:24).

- 4) The work the Holy Spirit began on Pentecost that's recorded in the Book of Acts, provides an inspired history of that work.
- b. He would convict the world of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged (16:11).
 - 1) The prince of this world is Satan.
 - 2) Earlier in this discussion Jesus said, "...the prince of the world cometh and he hath nothing in me" (14:30).
 - 3) He foretold of Satan's demise when He said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (12:31).
 - 4) So not only would the world be convicted of sin, but the prince of this world would receive His judgment also.
3. There was a lot more Jesus needed to tell them, but they could not bear it at this point in time.
 - a. He assures them that when the Spirit of truth comes, he would guide them into all truth.
 - b. This was yet another work of the Spirit in the lives of these men.
 - c. The Spirit, like the Son, would not speak from Himself, but whatever He hears from the Father.
4. Another work mentioned here is that the Spirit would glorify the Son.

CONFUSION:

- A. The disciples were still very confused about what Jesus meant when He said that in a little while they would not see Him, and yet in a little while they would see Him.
 1. Jesus tells them that they would soon experience grief, while the world rejoiced. They would be sorrowful.
 - a. But their sorrow would be turned into joy.
 2. He compared it to a woman who gives birth because her hour is come.
 - a. When the child is born her anguish is turned to joy, and she forgets the pain for the joy she now has at the birth of her child.
- B. They would grieve the death and supposed demise of their Lord, but when they would see Him after death they would experience the joy and the power of His resurrection.

1. And to comfort them further, He promises them, "If ye shall ask anything of my Father, he will give it you in my name."
2. "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full."

CLARIFICATION:

- A. There was still confusion and trouble in their hearts, so Jesus says, "These things have I spoken unto you in dark sayings: the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in dark sayings, but shall tell you plainly of the Father."
 1. What Jesus meant by "dark sayings" is sayings or statements whose meaning is not immediately evident.
 2. Why did He speak like this to them, of all men, and of all time?
 - a. Perhaps Paul answers that question for us in 1 Corinthians: "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the rulers of this world hath known for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory: but as it is written, "Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him."
- B. So throughout this text Jesus promises them:
 1. That what He tells them will come to pass,
 2. That He will send another comforter,
 3. Joy,
 4. That He will speak clearly to them and no more in dark sayings, and
 5. Peace.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Is it not striking, that on the eve of His violent death, He concludes His final discourse by saying, "I have overcome the world."
 1. To the world, and even briefly to His disciples, it would soon appear to have been the other way around.
 2. Later, when He appears to the eleven, having been resurrected from the dead, he would upbraid them for their unbelief.
 - a. Of the eleven, Mark writes, "he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him after he was raised" (Mk 16:14).

3. Here, He concludes, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (16:33).
- B. Merrill C. Tenney titled his commentary on John, *The Gospel of Belief* and, for good reason.
1. It contains seven signs performed by our Lord, which are designed to provide reasons to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
 2. John's account lacks nothing to convince the whole world of who Jesus was/is.
 3. Could this book be subtitled a study of unbelief because, throughout it, is the record of countless numbers of people rejecting Him in light of the evidence.
 - a. As Jesus said, "...they have no excuse for their sin" (15:22).

THE LORD'S PRAYER. Chapter Seventeen

INTRODUCTION:

- A. John 17 contains our Lord's prayer to the Father on behalf of Himself, His disciples and those who would believe on their message.
 - 1. He has just sought to comfort them over the fact that it was time for Him to return to the Father.
 - a. He did so by promising them...
 - 1) A place with Him,
 - 2) The Holy Spirit, who would
 - a) Bring to their remembrance all things and
 - b) Guide them into all truth,
 - 3) The love of the Father,
 - 4) His peace, and
 - 5) That later He would no more speak to them in dark sayings.
 - 2. After washing His disciples feet, and communing with them, He lifts up His eyes to heaven, and begins His prayer by saying, "Father, the hour is come."
 - a. Throughout this account of Jesus' life and work, John makes reference to "the time" or "the hour" as a way of bringing out the thought that from the beginning, there was something that Jesus had set before him.
 - 1. That "something" set before Him was His death.
 - 2. So, in essence, he is saying, "The time for me to die is come."

GLORIFY THY SON:

- A. "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee" (17:1).
 - 1. The first part of Jesus' prayer is a request for the Father to glorify Him.
 - a. By this He is requesting that the Father exalt Him with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (17:5).
 - b. The process by which this would be accomplished is the whole group of events connected with his death, resurrection and exaltation.

- c. Leon Morris: "...John's great idea is that glory, real glory, is to be seen in lowly service. When someone who is high and powerful chooses to leave that secure and comfortable place in order to engage in a piece of humble service, that in John's eyes is real glory" (p. 568, Vol IV).
 - 1) What more lowly act of service could one perform than to die on the behalf of others?!
 - 2. Perhaps there is another aspect to Jesus' request that the Father glorify Him.
 - a. In the prologue to his book, John tells us that the Word became flesh "(and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth" (1:14).
 - b. After the children of Israel had built the tabernacle according to God's specifications, Moses records, "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle" (Ex 40:34).
 - 1) The glory of Jehovah was the sign of His presence.
 - c. In Jesus, the very presence of God, "dwelt among us" (1:14).
 - 1) And yet, He was rejected.
 - a) "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not" (Jn 1:11).
 - b) "But though He had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him" (12:37).
 - 2. In being glorified, it would prove the world's judgment about Him being a blasphemer and an insane man to be wrong.
- B. In a general way, to glorify someone is to exalt them; to magnify them.
 - 1. Jesus said, "I glorify thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do."
 - 2. That work was to manifest God's name to the disciples.
 - a. The words Jesus received from the Father, He gave to His disciples.
 - b. They received them, and knew of a truth that Jesus came from the Father.

PRAYER FOR THE DISCIPLES:

- A. Jesus then is moved to pray for His disciples; and for them He prays for four things.
1. “Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one” (17:11).
 - a. Look at the ways in which Jesus addresses the Father.
 - 1) 17:1 “Father”
 - 2) 17:3 “the only true God”
 - 3) 17:11 “Holy Father”
 - 4) 17:25 “Righteous Father”
 - b. But He prays that they be kept in His name.
 - 1) Being in His name is the only location where unity can prevail.
 - c. Jesus guarded them, and not one of them perished, but Judas; and that was so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled (17:12).
 2. He also prays that they may have His joy (17:13).
 - a. As men may deem it joy may seem misplaced on the eve of His crucifixion, but not so from heaven’s vantage point.
 - 1) At the end of His discourse with His disciples, He said, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (16:33).
 - a) His was not an attitude of defeat, but one of victory.
 - 2) The writer of Hebrews states that Jesus, “for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (12:2).
 3. He also said, “I pray not that those shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one” (17:15).
 - a. Jesus emphasizes the fact that His disciples are not “of the world” even though they are “in the world.”
 - 1) His disciples do not imbibe of the view this world has of life.
 - 2) Their world-view was different, which leads to His fourth request.
 4. “Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth” (17:17).

- a. By the direction of God's Word, they would be set apart from the world.
- b. John reminds us that all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life (1 Jn 2:15).
 - 1) None of this is of the Father.
- c. Jesus gave them something different: "I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

HE PRAYED FOR US:

- A. Some 2,000 years ago on the eve of His crucifixion, our Lord prayed specifically for us. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word" (17:20).
 - 1. If, indeed, we have believed on Jesus through the words recorded in the New Testament, then Jesus prayed for us.
 - 2. He prayed that we may all be one; even as the Father is in the Son, and as the Son is in the Father - which conveys a profound sense of unity.
 - 3. He also prayed that the world may believe that He was God-sent.
 - a. Many books set forth their characters as heroes.
 - 1) But our belief in their actual existence is of no consequence to us. (Such as Homer's Achilles, Odysseus.)
 - b. Such is not the case with Jesus.
 - 1) We are not permitted the option of error in our judgment concerning His identity.
 - 2) Consider what John has said thus far about the blessings of belief and the consequences of unbelief.
 - a) 1:12 "...as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name."
 - b) 3:16 "...whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."
 - c) 3:18 "He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God."

- d) 3:36 "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."
 - e) 6:35 Jesus said, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."
 - f) 8:24 "...except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."
 - g) 12:46 "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness."
- 3. He prayed that we might all be one in doctrine, purpose, disposition and character so that the world would be convinced that Jesus was/is the Son of God.
 - 4. READ 17:25,26.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. His hour had come, and He spent His time caring for the troubled hearts of His friends.
 - 1. By the majority "He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not" (Isa 53:3).
 - 2. He was about to taste of death on the behalf of every man and every woman - friend and foe alike.
 - a. He would be overwhelmed with the pain of crucifixion, but die of a broken heart.
 - b. "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not" (Jn 1:11).

ARREST AND TRIAL..... Chapter 18

INTRODUCTION:

- A. After having spent some time with His disciples in the upper room on the eve of His death, Jesus and His friends went over the brook Kidron to a garden, the garden of Gethesemane. (John tells us that Jesus went to this garden with His disciples often.)
 - 1. It is here where the soldiers and officers find Him, seize, and bind Him.
 - 2. They then bring Him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas.
 - 3. He was then questioned by the high priest.
 - 4. After this mock Jewish trial, He was bound and escorted to the Praetorium to face Pilate.
 - 5. Pilate saw nothing of significance to waste his time with in the matter, told the Jews so, and offered to let him go on the grounds that there was a custom that would allow him to release Jesus because it was the pass-over.
 - a. The Jewish mob chose to have Barabbas released.
 - 1) ASV "Now Barabbas was a robber."
- B. We may be tempted to believe that things are now out of Jesus' control and that He is now being swept along by the powerful wave of events that bring Him to the cross.
 - 1. But such is not the case.
 - 2. In fact, John beautifully portrays Jesus as the One in control.
 - a. Leon Morris: "The point he makes emphatically throughout the whole passive narrative is that Jesus was supremely master of the situation" (p. 602).
 - b. Jesus was not defeated by people who were too strong for Him.

EVIDENCE:

- A. Jesus made this very point in His discussion on being the good shepherd.
 - 1. He said, "Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (Jn 10:17,18).
- B. In the upper room Jesus told His disciples about events that would happen before they happened, so that when they did come to pass, they would know of

a truth that He was the Son of God. (His foretelling of future events are not restricted to the upper room.)

1. John tells us that Judas met the band of soldiers and officers at the garden.
 - a. He knew that Jesus many times went there to rest with His disciples.
 - b. But notice the way in which John communicates to us the idea that Jesus is in control, even though He is facing all of these armed soldiers and officers.
 - 1) “Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth, and saith unto them, “Whom seek ye?” (18:4).
 - c. The soldiers and officers from the chief priest and Pharisees come to the garden with lanterns and torches and weapons.
 - 1) A host of them came for strategic purposes.
 - 2) They came with lanterns and torches because it was night time.
 - 3) They came with weapons because they “bear not the sword in vain.”
 - a) They expected trouble.
 - b) They probably expected Jesus and His disciples to scatter and attempt to run away.
 - c) They had tried to incarcerate Him before, but to no avail.
 - (1) For example, at the Feast of Dedication, the Jews took up stones to stone Him and after a short debate sought to take Him again, but John writes, “...and he went forth out of their hands” (10:39).
 - (a) On numerous occasions men had been sent to take Jesus, but to no avail.
 - (2) During one of His visits to Jerusalem officers were sent to take Him but returned empty-handed, excusing themselves by saying, “Never man so spake” (7:46).
 - d) They weren’t about to let Him get away this time.

- (1) They thought they were in control.
 - d. Who do you think was in control?
- 2. Another evidence of Jesus' control over the situation is found in 18:6.
 - a. Jesus is the One who initiated the conversation with the mob.
 - 1) "Whom seek ye?"
 - 2) They said, "Jesus of Nazareth."
 - 3) Jesus said, "I am he."
 - b. Now notice how they responded: "When therefore he said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground" (18:6).
 - 1) It seems they are so startled to stand face to face with Jesus that they lost their composure.
 - a) Imagine all of the fantastic stories they'd probably heard about Him!
 - (1) Healing the blind,
 - (2) Raising the dead,
 - (3) Walking on water.
 - (a) No telling what a man with this kind of power might do to resist arrest.
 - 2) These "brave" men with weapons fell all over one another as they were taken back by the realization that it was Jesus to whom they were speaking.
 - c. Who would you say was in control?!
- 3. Jesus twice asked them, "Whom seek ye?"
 - a. When they said "Jesus of Nazareth," He replied, "I told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let them go their way."
 - b. The significance of Jesus' statement here is two-fold.
 - 1) First of all, as a prisoner, He is in no position to bargain.
 - 2) Secondly, He said this "that the word might be fulfilled which he spake, Of those whom thou hast given me I lost not one" (18:9).

- a) This was spoken by our Lord just a few hours ago, in His prayer to the Father.
 - b) On their behalf, He prayed that God “keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are” (17:11). Notice also v 12: “While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”
 - c. Who do you think was in control?
4. When Jesus had told them that it was necessary for Him to go away, Peter wanted to go with him (Jn 13:36-38).
- a. Jesus said, “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterward.”
 - 1) Peter responded, “Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now? I will lay down my life for thee” (13:37).
 - 2) Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, “The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice” (13:38).
 - b. John tells us that Peter and “another disciple” followed Jesus as He was led captive to the court of the high priest.
 - 1) Peter stood outside while the other disciple, who was known by the high priest, entered.
 - 2) This other disciples spake to the maid who kept the door concerning Peter.
 - 3) When the maid asked Him, “Art thou also one of this man’s disciples?” he said, “I am not” (18:17).
 - 4) The scene then shifts to the arresting officers and servants standing by a fire to warm themselves, for it was very cold.
 - a) Peter was with them warming himself.
 - b) The officer asked him, “Art thou also one of his disciples?”
 - (1) But Peter denied it saying, “I am not.”
 - c) But one of the servants of the high priest said, “Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?”
 - (1) But Peter denied again “and straightway the cock crew” (18:27).

- (2) Matthew tells us that at this point Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "And he went out, and wept bitterly" (26:75).
5. When Jesus was before Pilate, Pilate told the Jews, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law."
 - a. But the Jews said, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death" (18:31).
 - b. John relates this incident to prophecy/fulfillment writing, "that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should die" (18:32).
 - c. Jesus spoke concerning His death, as it relates to this passage, in His last public discourse.
 - 1) "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. But this he said signifying by what manner of death he should die" (12: 32,33).
 - d. Who do you think was in control?
6. When Pilate entered the Praetorium, he asked Jesus, "Art thou king of the Jews?" (18:33).
 - a. You see, if He were a King, Jesus would be viewed by the Roman government as a threat to their security.
 - b. But Jesus responded by asking, "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?"
 - c. Pilate said, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?"
 - d. Jesus says nothing about what He has done.
 - 1) In fact He implies that He is a King but that His kingdom is not of this world.
 - 2) Please notice what Jesus says: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (18:36).
 - a) Jesus could have called the host of heaven to come and fight, but He didn't.
 - b) Yes, He stood bound before Pilate in the Praetorium, but who do you think was really in control?
7. Caiaphas is one of the characters identified in John 18.

- a. He is referred to in 18:14: "Now Caiaphas was he that gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people."
 - 1) When Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, the chief priest and the Pharisees gathered a council trying to decide what they were going to do with Jesus.
 - 2) Here is where the plot was formulated.
 - a) Caiaphas said, "Ye know nothing at all, nor do ye take account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." (READ 11:47-53.)
 - b. After a brief discussion with Jesus, Pilate presents himself to the Jews again. (READ 18:38-40.)
 - c. In his brief talk with Jesus, Jesus said, "To this end have I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (18:37,38).
 - 1) Pilate responded in seeming disinterest, "What is truth?"
- C. Here we have seven bits of evidence that demonstrate Jesus to be the one in control no matter how it may have seemed outwardly.
- 1. In magic there is a device called the "force."
 - 2. In essence a force is a manipulative means of getting the audience to believe they are in control - that they have made a completely free selection of a number or card, etc., when in reality the magician has "forced" them to the selection they have made.
 - a. It is really a very clever device.
 - 3. What happens in the arrest and trial of Jesus reminds me of this device only from the standpoint that the officers and soldiers and religious and political leaders thought they were in complete control - that they had overpowered and overcome Jesus.
 - 4. In reality, Jesus was using them in the way they were predisposed to be used as the means by which God's will in this matter would be accomplished.
 - 5. Now, who do you think was in control?

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

- A. Jesus was not defeated by people who were too strong for Him.
 - 1. He is God (Jn 1:1).

2. He knew/knows all men (2:24).
 3. He knew all things that were coming upon Him in the garden of Gethsemane (18:4).
 4. And He did always those things that are pleasing to the Father (8:29).
 - a. That is why He did not leave the garden, hiding Himself again. HIS TIME WAS COME.
 - b. His pleasing the Father included obedience even unto death, yea the death on the cross.
- B. While we may be tempted to believe that Jesus had lost control He was, in fact, supremely master of the situation.

“It is Finished” Chapter 19

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In John 18 seven evidences were given which demonstrated Jesus to be in control of His own fate at His arrest and trial.
 - 1. John 19 continues in the same vein, carrying us through the end of His trial before Pilate, then into His crucifixion, death and burial.

THE PRAETORIUM:

- A. Chapter 19 opens with Jesus before Pilate.
 - 1. Jesus is scourged, which means He was beaten with a multi-tongued whip that had bits of metal and bone attached to it so as to rip into the flesh.
 - 2. The soldiers wove a crown of thorns to place on His head.
 - 3. They mockingly clothed Him with purple garments - purple being the color of royalty.
 - a. And they chanted, “Hail, King of the Jews!” as they struck Him with their hands.
 - b. They were mocking the true King of the Jews.
- B. The reason the Jews contrived to place Him before Pilate for the death sentence was because “He made Himself the Son of God.”
 - 1. In the ears of the Jewish mob, this was blasphemy.
 - 2. The problem the Jews were now confronting was that of convincing Pilate that Jesus deserved the sentence of death.
 - 3. You see, Pilate saw nothing wrong in Jesus and, in his own way, was trying to release Him.
 - a. He tried to dismiss the whole incident by letting Jesus go, as was the custom of releasing one prisoner per passover.
 - 1) But the Jews asked for Barabbas, a robber (18:40).
 - b. The Jews wanted death for Jesus, but Pilate scourged Him and let his men brutalize Him for a while.
 - 1) He then brings the bruised and bloodied Jesus before them again and says, “I find no crime in him.”
 - a) It may be that Pilate had Jesus beaten to stir up the sympathy of the people.

- 2) But the chief priest and the officers cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"
 - a) Their sentiments could not be stirred.
- c. Pilate still wanted to release Him, but the Jews reasoned in this fashion with Pilate, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaks against Caesar" (19:12).
 - 1) Pilate finally sits in his judgment-seat and makes one last attempt to turn the wrath of the Jews away by saying, "Behold, your King!"
 - 2) But they said "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" (19:15).
 - 3) Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your King?"
 - 4) And they said, "We have no King but Caesar."
 - 5) So, Pilate delivered Jesus up to be crucified.

GOLGOTHA:

- A. Jesus is led to Golgotha, which means "the place of the skull," carrying His own cross "where they crucified Him."
 1. These words are used to describe the fateful act. "They crucified Him."
 - a. Volumes have been written as men attempt to describe in detail the horrors of crucifixion.
 - b. But all John writes is, "...they crucified Him"
- B. And on the cross Pilate put the title, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS."
 1. The chief priest wanted Pilate to change the sign to read "He said He is the King of the Jews."
 2. But Pilate said, "What I have written I have written."
- C. Here are some other things John tells us that went on at the foot of the cross.
 1. The soldiers split Jesus' garments among themselves and gambled for His seamless coat.
 2. Mary, Jesus' mother, and Mary, His aunt and wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene were all there.

- a. Jesus entrusts the care of His mother to the disciple whom He loved.
- 3. Those below provided Him with a sponge full of vinegar to quench His thirst
 - a. After He received it, He said, "It is finished" and "...he bowed his head, and gave up His spirit."

THE GARDEN:

- A. After His death is confirmed, Joseph of Arimathaea, a secret disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asks Pilate for Jesus' body.
 - 1. Permission is granted.
 - 2. His body is prepared after the custom of the Jews and bound in linen cloth with spices.
 - 3. He is placed in a tomb, which John is careful to say was "a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid" (19:41).

OBSERVATIONS:

- A. Oozing from this chapter is a wide spectrum of emotions and attitudes concerning Jesus, some of which are left to our imagination.
 - 1. First of all we have Pilate.
 - a. He sees nothing for which to condemn Jesus.
 - b. He tries every avenue he can think of to release Him.
 - c. But, for fear of the Jews, he finally gives them what they want.
 - 2. There are the Jews.
 - a. The scheming plot to have Jesus put to death is now coming to fruition.
 - b. They deliver Him to Pilate without any resistance from Him.
 - 1) Pilate has Him scourged and beaten.
 - 2) The Jews are no less sympathetic toward the brutalized form that now stands before them.
 - 3) Nothing shy of death would satisfy this bloodthirsty mob.
 - 3. At a distance we have the three Mary's - Mary, His mother; Mary, His aunt; and Mary Magdalene.

- a. They behold Him on the cross, and remain silent in John's account.
 - b. We are left with our imaginations to consider what feelings they must have experienced at that moment.
- 4. There is the disciple whom Jesus loved.
 - a. In the previous chapter we're told that "another disciple" followed along with Peter as Jesus was arrested and led to Annas' home.
 - b. This unnamed disciples was apparently present, perhaps at a distance, throughout this whole sordid affair.
 - c. In chapter 19 we are told that standing by Jesus' mother was the disciple "whom he loved" (19:26).
 - 1) "And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home" (19:27).
 - d. When the spear of the soldier pierced Jesus' side, immediately there came out blood and water.
 - 1) John writes, "And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe" (19:35).
 - e. The disciple whom Jesus loved, who goes unnamed throughout the book, is also mentioned in 21:20.
 - 1) The author of the book ends by writing, "This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and write these things and we know that his witness is true" (21:24).
 - f. There would be no conflict for us to believe that this unnamed beloved disciple to whom Jesus entrusted the care of His mother, who was with Peter, who saw the blood and water and wrote the book are all one and the same man - JOHN.
- 5. Is it not striking also to know that one who helped Joseph of Arimathaea was Nicodemus, "...he who at the first came to Him by night."?
 - a. John is silent about Nicodemus' commitment to Jesus, but we are told that he brought one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes for spices to bury Jesus.
- 6. Also there was Joseph of Arimathaea, a disciple; but a secret disciple.
 - a. He could not resist believing the incontestable evidence concerning Him, but he kept his attitude secret "for fear of the Jews."

- B. John continues in chapter 19 what he began in chapter 18, which is to demonstrate that Jesus was supremely master of the circumstance that led to His death and burial.
1. In chapter 19 we find Pilate upset that Jesus wasn't responding to one of his questions.
 - a. Pilate was trying to help Him, and says, "Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?"
 - b. Jesus corrected him by saying, "Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin" (19:11).
 - c. Jesus was delivered up "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23).
 - 1) God used "lawless men" to crucify and slay Him.
 - d. If Pilate had been successful in delivering Jesus from death, where would that put us today?
 - 1) But God is able to use men as they choose to be used to accomplish God's ultimate will - whether they be good or evil.
 2. Among the various incidents which surrounded Jesus' death, John also elected to tell us about the soldiers breaking the legs of the other two men who were crucified alongside of Jesus.
 - a. This is significant because it was the time of the Preparation, which meant that if those on the cross did not die soon, they would have to remain there til after the Sabbath had passed, so they would not be guilty of violating the work ethic of the Sabbath.
 - b. The soldiers broke the legs of the other two men, thus hastening them to their death.
 - 1) When they came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they did not break His legs.
 - c. This came to pass "that the scriptures might be fulfilled" which says, "A bone of him shall not be broken."
 - 1) Even in death He was supremely master of the situation.
 - 2) He knew that through His death men would be drawn to God.
 - a) 12:32 "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto myself."

- (1) "...this he said, signifying what manner of death He would die" (12:33).

- C. Upon even a casual reflection on John's account to this point, we cannot help but be upset at the brutal mistreatment and the gross prejudice of the Jews against Jesus.
1. In some ways He was the least likely man to ever be treated the way He was.
 2. What had He done to deserve the kind of treatment He received?
 - a. He was the Son of God - (blasphemy to the Jews).
 - b. He spoke the truth - (which they did not have ears to hear).
 - c. He owned them by virtue of the fact that He was their Creator - (but they refused to own Him).
- D. This chapter ends with a dead Savior in a tomb "wherein was never man yet laid" (19:41).
1. But this is not where it ends
 2. In chapter 20 we'll learn what Paul says in Romans 1:4 concerning Jesus being "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE RESURRECTED CHRIST. Chapter Twenty

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In the previous two chapter (18-19) we followed Jesus
 - 1. From the upper room to the garden,
 - 2. From the garden to Annas,
 - 3. From Annas to Caiaphas,
 - 4. From Caiaphas to the Praetorium,
 - 5. From the Praetorium to the cross and
 - 6. From the cross to the tomb.
 - 7. John tells us, "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden: and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid. There then because of the Jews' Preparation (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus" (19:41,42).
 - a. Significantly we're told that "never was man yet laid" in the tomb that received the body of our Lord.
 - 1) So, for a brief period of time, Jesus' body rested alone in the cold tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea.
 - 2) When He was raised from the dead, there could be no doubt who was raised.
 - a) His resurrection from the dead could not be mistaken for another.
- B. In John 20 there are five scenes:
 - 1. First, the empty tomb is discovered.
 - 2. Second, Jesus appears to Mary.
 - 3. Third, the disciples - minus Thomas.
 - 4. Fourth, Thomas with the disciples.
 - 5. Fifth, He appears to Thomas.

THE EMPTY TOMB (20:1-10):

- A. John begins by telling us that it was the first day of the week. Early in the morning, while it was yet dark, Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb.

1. She sees the stone has been taken away from the tomb.
2. She runs coming to Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved.
3. She states, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb and we know not where they have laid him."
 - a. She apparently thought that the Jews or the Romans had stolen the body away.
 - b. Notice also, she says, "We know not where they have laid him."
 - 1) Luke informs us that she had with her Joanna, and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them (24:10).
4. Luke also tells us that the majority of the disciples considered their news as idle talk and disbelieved them.
 - a. But Peter and "the other disciple" began running toward the tomb.
 - b. The other disciple outran Peter and when he arrived at the tomb he merely stooped down to look in.
 - 1) What he saw was an orderly arrangement of the grave clothes which once wrapped the body of Jesus.
 - c. When Peter arrived at the tomb he walked in and saw:
 - 1) The linen clothes lying,
 - 2) And the napkin that was upon his head, not lying with the linen clothes but, rolled up in a place by itself.
 - 3) When the other disciple entered, following Peter, "he saw, and believed."
 - 4) But what did he believe?
 - a) It seems clear that what he believed was Mary's message.
 - b) It is doubtful he believed that Jesus was raised from the dead quite yet, because of the very next verse. "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" (20:9).

B. Scene one ends with the disciples going away again to their own homes.

JESUS APPEARS TO MARY (20:11-18):

A. Mary did not go home. She went back to the tomb, weeping.

1. In her grief she looked in the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.
2. They asked her why she was weeping.
3. She responded by saying, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."
4. She then turned around and saw someone else; she didn't know who, but John tells us it's Jesus.
5. He, too, asks her, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?"
6. She thought He was a gardener and told Him the same thing she'd told the angels.
 - a. Jesus said to her, "Mary."
 - 1) Mary is identified by Mark and Luke as the one "from whom he had cast out seven demons."
 - b. When she heard Him speak her name, she know immediately who He was. She replied "Rabboni" ("Teacher").
 - c. She clung to Him as if she would never let go; as if she would never let Him out of her sight again.
 - d. But He said, "Touch me not."
 - 1) NIV: "Do not hold on to me."
 - 2) There wasn't anything mysterious about touching the resurrected body of Christ.
 - 3) Her clinging to Him indicated her dependence on His person.
 - a) He tells her, "I am not yet ascended unto the Father."
 - b) He must leave to go to the Father
 - 4) He tells her to deliver their message to the brethren: "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God."
 - a) She obeys Him.

JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES (20:19-23):

- A. Notice the details John gives us as he sets the stage for scene three.
 1. It was evening.

2. It was still the first day of the week.
3. Where the disciples were gathered together, the doors were shut.
 - a. They were shut for fear of the Jews.
 - b. The disciples knew that the body was no longer in the tomb.
 - 1) They thought the Jews had the body.
 - 2) The disciples knew they didn't have the body, and were perhaps afraid the Jews thought they might have it.
 - 3) So the doors are shut.
4. As casual as the rest of the setting, John says, "Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, "Peace be unto you" (20:19).
 - a. Now remember, all they had believed thus far was that someone had stolen the body of their Teacher. (All but Mary, who is unable to convince her grieving and confused brethren of what she saw.)
 - b. Jesus shows them his hands and his side.
 - c. After the initial fright they were glad when they saw the Lord.
5. He then breathes on them and says, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain they are retained" (20:22,23).
 - a. This was symbolic of what would occur on the day of Pentecost.

B. End of scene three.

THOMAS AND THE DISCIPLES (20:24,25):

- A. Thomas wasn't with the disciples when Jesus first appeared to them in the room with the doors shut.
 1. He didn't see Jesus for himself.
 2. When they informed him of the fact that they had seen the Lord, Thomas said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" (20:25).
- B. For years, I had always thought Thomas did what was right, because he wasn't going to accept their "way-out" story without some evidence. (That's how I thought!)
 1. After all, the Bible says,

- a. 1 Jn 4:1
- b. 1 Thess 5:21
- 2. Brethren, that was nothing but foolish reasoning.
 - a. Thomas did have evidence!
 - 1) The same evidence you and I have - the evidence of eye-witnesses.
- 3. So his declaration of unbelief was unwarranted.

JESUS APPEARS TO THOMAS:

- A. Thomas had to wait eight days for the proof he asked for.
 - 1. Again the disciples were in a room with the doors shut, and Jesus comes and stands in the midst of them saying, "Peace be unto you" (20:26).
 - 2. Thomas says nothing about his demands.
 - a. Jesus was not present when Thomas made them - He didn't need to be.
 - b. Jesus simply says to him, "Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side; And be not faithless, but believing."
 - c. Thomas confessed, "My Lord and my God."
 - 3. Jesus said, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."
 - a. In His prayer in the upper room on the eve of His death, Jesus prayed "for them also that believe on me through their word."
 - b. Prior to seeing the resurrected Christ, the evidence was sufficient but Thomas chose not to believe.

PURPOSE STATEMENT:

- A. John then expresses the purpose for his writing this book.
 - 1. READ 20:30,31.
 - 2. Let's rehearse those signs:
 - a. He turned water to wine at the wedding feast in Cana (Jn 2)
 - b. He healed the nobleman's Son (Jn 4).

- c. He healed the invalid of thirty-eight years (Jn 5)
 - d. He fed five thousand men plus women and children (Jn 6)
 - e. He walked on water (Jn 6)
 - f. He healed a man born blind (Jn 9)
 - g. He raised Lazarus from the dead (Jn 11)
 - h. He foretold the events surrounding His death and resurrection (13-17)
 - i. He was raised from the dead (Jn 20)
 - j. In John 21 there is the huge catch of fish
3. He performed other signs and deeds, the which if they should be written every one, the world itself would not contain the books that should be written (21:25).
- a. But these were selected “that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (20:30,31).

PETER REDEEMS HIMSELF. Chapter 21

INTRODUCTION:

- A. If there had ever been an occasion for the disciples (those closest to Jesus) to walk with Him no more, it would have been at His death.
 - 1. At the cross all hope had temporarily vanished, “For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead” (20:9).
 - 2. What accounts for their zealous proclamation of Jesus as the Christ after their hopes had been prematurely dashed to the ground is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.
 - a. This was totally unexpected by His followers.
 - b. But afterward, much of what Jesus had taught them in “dark sayings” (16:25) would make sense.
 - c. For example, at the beginning of John’s account when Jesus drove the merchants from the temple, the Jews asked, “What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?” (2:18).
 - 1) Jesus said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (2:19).
 - 2) All who heard this thought He was referring to the temple in Jerusalem.
 - 3) John adds, “But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spoke this; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said” (2:21,22).
- B. John ends his account concerning Jesus by focusing on Peter - perhaps as an example of, or to give reasons for belief in, what he states in his theme (20:30, 31).
 - 1. He shares with us the transition from belief to unbelief to belief through the shakiest of times.
 - a. If we can relate to Peter, then perhaps that too will provoke us to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

SETTING/CHARACTERS:

- A. The setting is the sea of Tiberias (the sea of Galilee), but renamed for the emperor Tiberias.
 - 1. It is some time between Jesus’ initial two appearances to His disciples in the room with the doors shut and Pentecost.

- a. John tells us, "This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead" (21:14).
- 2. John pictures for us the disciples going about everyday work and chores as they await further instructions on what they were to do:
 - a. But not all of them were in this scene.
 - b. John tells us that "There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathaniel of Cana of Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of this disciples" (21:2).
 - 1) Seven total.

ACTION:

- A. Peter decided to go fishing. The others said, "We'll go with you."
 - 1. That night they caught nothing.
- B. When day broke Jesus was standing on the beach, but not recognized by His disciples.
 - 1. He asks them, "Children, have ye aught to eat?"
 - 2. They replied, "No."
 - 3. He said, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find."
 - 4. They did so, and their net filled with fish so much so that they could not draw it in.
 - 5. From fishing all night and catching nothing to casting their nets in at the advise of a stranger from the beach and catching 153 fish, it dawned on the disciple whom Jesus loved that it was Jesus, and he said to Peter, "It is the Lord."
 - a. Peter only had some underwear on, so he put on a coat , jumped into the sea and swam to greet the Lord.
 - b. They weren't far from land - only about one hundred yards away. The others steered their boat to shore, dragging in the catch.
- C. Look at Peter: zealous, fervent, honest, earnest, sincere Peter - and impetuous (impulsive).
 - 1. When Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, be killed, and the third day be raised up, Peter rebuked Him saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee" (Mt 16:22).

- a. But Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men" (16:23).
 - b. Peter was permitting his emotions to move him to reject God's plan for His Son.
 - 1) Would any one of us have done anything different?
 - 2) Which one of us would not have been incensed by the brutal and unjust mistreatment of a loved one, much less the Lord Himself?
2. Or what about the time the disciples saw Jesus walking on water? (Mt 14:22,23.)
- a. At first they were afraid, but the Lord called out, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."
 - b. Peter said, "Lord, if it be thee, bid me come unto thee upon the waters."
 - c. Jesus said, "Come."
 - d. Peter went down from the boat, walked upon the water and came to Jesus.
 1. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and began to sink, crying out for help.
 - e. Jesus took hold of him and said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"
3. Do you remember what Peter said in the upper room when the Lord informed them that He must depart? (READ Jn 13:36-38.)
- a. It wasn't but a few hours later that Jesus was arrested. Peter followed with one other disciple, Peter found himself denying Jesus three times and heard the cock crow.
 - b. Whenever I am reminded of this story it makes me cringe.
 - 1) I would not want to deny the Lord, but for fear of the Jews, like Peter, I might.
 - 2) I might see more of myself in Peter than I want to see.
 - c. One point I have not focused on earlier is the fact that Peter and one other followed Jesus at His arrest.
 - 1) The others scattered like sheep without a shepherd (Mt 26:31).

- a) Mark writes, "They all left and fled." (Mk 14:50.)
 - b) But Peter was brave enough to follow.
 - 2) He showed his bravery when he cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest at the arrest (Jn 18:10,11).
 - 3) But, nevertheless, he denied Him - and such denial is not to be viewed lightly.
 - a) Jesus had taught them, "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Mt 10: 32,33).
- D. Toward the end of John's account, we find Peter with the eleven chosen ones, having seen the resurrected Jesus now three times, but also having denied Him three times - and this three-fold denial has not yet been resolved.
- 1. I am not persuaded that Peter denied Jesus because he no longer believed on Him.
 - a. There is too much evidence that teaches us otherwise.
 - b. Peter's trouble was that his fear of the Jews outweighed his faith at that time.
 - 1) Peter was caught at a weak and undoubtedly confused moment.
- E. After they had all eaten, Jesus began a dialogue with Peter by saying, "Simon, Son of John, lovest thou me more than these?"
- 1. I think Jesus means, "more than these other disciples."
 - a. This isn't an odd question to ask in light of the former claims Peter had made.
 - b. Just prior to Jesus foretelling him that he would deny Him three times, Peter said, "If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended" (Mt 26:33).
 - c. He also said, "Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now? I will lay down my life for thee" (Jn 13:37).
 - 1) Jesus, later on that same evening, said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13).
 - d. So, now Peter has the opportunity to confirm the degree of love he has for the Lord.

- 1) He responds, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee."
- e. Jesus replied, "Feed my lambs."
2. To think that the Lord felt the need to ask the question must have hurt Peter, but as if that were not enough, Jesus asks him a second time, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?"
 - a. Peter replied, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee."
 - b. Jesus said, "Tend my sheep."
3. Jesus said a third time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?"
 - a. Peter said, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."
 - b. Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."
4. Why didn't Jesus ask this of His other disciples?
 - a. They didn't make the claims Peter made.
 - b. They hadn't denied Him three times.
5. But, please notice also the play on words that went on in this exchange; the significance of which must be left up to you.
 - a. The first two times Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him, He used the word for a cultivated love - AGAPAO.
 - 1) But Peter responded with, "I PHILEO you."
 - b. The third time Jesus asked him the question, He used the word PHILEO.
 - 1) And Peter answered with PHILEO.
 - c. Is there a significant difference in meaning between these two words, or are they being used synonymously?
 - 1) I would not doubt that in different context these words might be used with little to no difference.
 - 2) But in the discourse of John 21, I cannot help but believe that their use is not synonymous.
 - a) If I am correct, Jesus was in essence asking, "Peter, do you love me?"
 - b) And Peter responded, "Lord, you know that I like you."

- F. After this exchange Jesus said to Peter, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not” (21:18).
 - 1. “Now this he spoke, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God.”
- G. Giving us one more glimpse into the character of Peter, John tells us that when Peter turned around and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them he said, “Lord, and what shall this man do?”
 - 1. The Lord told Peter, “Feed my lambs,” “Tend my sheep,” and “Feed my sheep.”
 - 2. Peter wanted to know what John was going to do.
 - a. And the Lord responded, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.”
 - b. In other words, “Don’t you worry about what I have him do; you be concerned with what I have asked you to do.”
 - 1) YOU KEEP ON FOLLOWING ME.
 - c. Some disciples thought Jesus was implying that John would never die.
 - 1) Jesus did not say he should never die, but, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?”

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

- A. It is a real temptation to want to focus solely on Peter in this last chapter, but I am persuaded that would be a mistake. (It is another episode in the life of Jesus.)
 - 1. The question we need to ask ourselves is, “How does this last chapter fit into John’s theme? How does it help promote the purpose of this book?”
- B. It has rightly been observed as an evidence for the validity of Christianity that no one, like the apostles, would have risked their lives for a false message.

Paul wrote, “If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (1 Cor 15:32).

 - 1. Even in belief Peter denied the Lord three times.
 - 2. But his hope was restored and revitalized in seeing Jesus alive from the dead.

3. And he is reinstated, so to speak, in his three-fold confession of love for the Lord.
- C. These things were written that ye may believe:
1. This account of Peter with the Lord is written in evidence of one whose faith (belief) wavered, but was restored by His resurrected Lord.
 2. Anyone who has gone through what Peter went through and finally dies for preaching his message of salvation in Christ has lived a life worth examining.
 - a. Even more important, the object of his belief should be carefully considered.
- D. John ends by writing: "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are so many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."