

Jesus Dwelt Among Us
The Gospel of John
January 2017
Dr. Richard L. Hamm

Why study the book of John? Why are we going to take several months to carefully exegete the fourth gospel? What I am looking to accomplish? I think A.W. Tozer answers the questions most eloquently. The Gospel of John illustrates what it looks like when God the Son comes to dwell among His people. John's Gospel profoundly shows how God's Son, Jesus, makes it possible for us to have an eternal relationship with God the Father (John 3:16–17).

Those familiar with A. W. Tozer usually regard him as the voice of a prophet. He was that for many years, and through his writings, he still is a prophetic voice to the Church of Jesus Christ. His sermons on the Gospel of John entitled *And He Dwelt Among Us*, we hear a slightly different voice from Tozer. Here he ministers not as a prophet but as a pastor with a passion to reach those who are lost.

For more than a year, Dr. Tozer preached weekly on the Gospel of John, one of his favorite books of the Bible. Although he never laid out the entire series of sermons, week by week the Gospel took possession of his mind and soul. One week, a phrase or even a word would capture his heart, and he would lift his congregation to the heights of Spirit-anointed preaching. The Gospel captured his imagination, and he could not turn away from it.

More people acknowledged new life in Christ during this series of sermons than any series Tozer ever preached in Chicago. Always, no matter where he started, he was the shepherd searching for the lost sheep. Oftentimes after the sermon concluded, the congregation would sit in silence because of the intensity of the truth he had expounded.¹

Such an effort was daunting even to Tozer. In fact, the series was so elevated in spiritual flavor that it stretched his own preaching ability. "It is going to be a pleasure to expound on this book," he told his congregation, "but a sense of inadequacy has come over me so stunning that I am not able now to call it a pleasure. The impossibility of a man like me saying anything worthwhile about the writings of a man like John has me, quite literally after all these years, paralyzed. But perhaps this will be God's way of reducing the flesh to a minimum and giving the Holy Spirit the best possible opportunity to do His eternal work."²

To Tozer, any doctrine that did not rise to the height of identification with the Lord Jesus Christ was either misunderstood or not properly rooted in Scripture. He believed that there were two

¹ Snyder, J. L. (2009). Introduction: *A Passion for the Lost*. In J. L. Snyder (Ed.), *And He Dwelt among Us: Teachings from the Gospel of John* (p. 7). Ventura, CA: Regal.

² Ibid. p 8

sides to doctrine. First, doctrine establishes truth and helps us to recognize developing heresies within the Church and how to deal with them. Second, doctrine is a path to the intimate knowledge of God. All things must point to Him who dwelt among us. Based on a foundation of sound doctrine, the apostle John rises into the rarefied atmosphere of adoration, and Dr. Tozer follows closely in his train.³

With the doctrinal emphasis of the apostle Paul, one could become quite legalistic and cold spiritually. And with the mystical emphasis of the apostle John, one could become so heavenly minded that he was of no earthly good. “Mystical,” as employed in the Gospel of John and in this book, simply refers to the cultivation of a deep appreciation of the unique nature of Christ and our fascination with Him. The combination of these two provided the kind of spiritual experience that was healthy for maturing Christians. Tozer was careful to balance the two.⁴

William Smith stated, “Three results certainly accrue to any Christians who seriously gives themselves to the study of this book.

1. First, you will have a deeper understanding of this inexhaustible book in which the only begotten Son of God is revealed so uniquely and triumphantly.
2. Second, you will be stimulated to further study and will have in your hands keys for unlocking additional treasures deposited in John’s strangely glowing pages.
3. Finally, you will discover in your own heart an increasing love for the Lord Jesus, a deeper appreciation of His divine person, and of the work for which He did.”⁵

The first century Christian has much to teach us in this 21st century.

The Gospel of John is a complex theological work, weaving events from the life of Jesus into a dramatic presentation of Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. The authority and person of Jesus as theological themes are much more important to the writer than historical chronology or his own authority.

Authorship

In the strict sense of the term, the Fourth Gospel is anonymous. No name of its author is given in the text. The writer only identifies himself as an eyewitness (John 19:35) and as the beloved disciple (21:24). This is not surprising because a Gospel differs in literary form from an epistle or letter. The letters of Paul each begin with his name, which was the normal custom of letter writers in the ancient world. None of the human authors of the four Gospels identified himself by name. But that does not mean one cannot know who the authors were. An author may indirectly

³ Ibid p 9

⁴ Ibid p 10

⁵ Smith, William (1976) Foreword: *John: The Gospel of Belief*. Tenney, Merrill C. (1976). *John: The Gospel of Belief*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans

reveal himself within the writing, or his work may be well known in tradition as coming from him.⁶

Although the Gospel of John is anonymous, both internal and external evidence point to John the apostle, the son of Zebedee, as the author of the work.

1. From internal evidence it is clear that the author was a Palestinian Jew, for he quoted the Old Testament (John 6:45; 13:18; 19:37), and had firsthand knowledge of Palestine's geography (1:44; 2:1; 5:2; 9:7; 11:18).
 - A. The author was an eyewitness of the events he recorded (1:29, 35, 43; 2:6; 4:40, 43; 5:5; 12:1, 6, 12).
 - B. John 21:20, 24 indicates that the author was the "disciple Jesus loved," the one who leaned on Jesus' breast at the Passover supper (cf. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7).
 - C. The author was one of the inner circle of Jesus' disciples. This group was comprised of Peter and the brothers James and John, the sons of Zebedee (13:23, 24; 20:2–10; 21:2, 7, 20).
 - D. Since James was martyred not long after Jesus' ascension (Acts 12:1–5), and Peter appears as a different person from the beloved disciple (John 21:7), only John is left to be the beloved disciple and author of the Gospel.
2. External evidence from the time of the church fathers has confirmed the authorship by the Apostle John.
 - A. Irenaeus (AD 120–202) wrote, "Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia" (*Against Heresies*, 3.1.1).
 - B. As for the reliability of Irenaeus, Eusebius said that his authority was Polycarp (AD 70–155/160) who had personally known John the apostle (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, 4.14).
 - C. Theophilus of Antioch (AD 115–188), Clement of Alexandria (AD 190), Origen (AD 220), and Hippolytus (AD 170) all agree that John wrote this Gospel.⁷
3. The author wrote from a position of close and intimate fellowship with his Master.
 - A. He walked where Jesus walked, he saw the miracle or "signs," and he personally witnessed the glory of God's son on the Mount of Transfiguration.
 - B. He saw the crucified Christ on the cross and the risen, triumphant Lord following His resurrection.

⁶ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 266–267). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁷ Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary* (p. 459). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

- C. Late in his life, he wrote down significant events from the life and ministry of Christ so that we, too might “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and . . . and have life in His name” (20:31).

4. John the Apostle

- A. Son of Zebedee and Salome (Mary’s sister)
- B. A first cousin of Jesus (Matt 27:56; John 19:25)
- C. Brother of James (Mark 1:19-20)
- D. A fisherman (Mark 1:19-20)
- E. Possibly a disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35)
- F. One of Jesus’ inner circle, along with Peter and James (Matt 17:1; 26:37)
- G. The “disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23)
- H. Credited with the authorship of the Gospel of John, three Epistles (1, 2, and 3 John). and the book of Revelation (Rev 1:4).

Place of Origin and Date

The external tradition is strong that John came to Ephesus after Paul had founded the church and that he labored in that city for many years (cf. Eusebius *The Ecclesiastical History* 3. 24. 1).

1. Supporting this tradition is the evidence of Revelation 1:9–11.
 - A. When John was in exile on Patmos, an island off the coast of Asia Minor, he wrote to seven Asian churches, the first of which was Ephesus.
 - B. That the Fourth Gospel was originally published at Ephesus is a good probability.⁸
2. The discovery of the Rylands fragment of John’s Gospel in Egypt (dated AD 135) requires that the date of John be sometime in the first century.
 - A. Some scholars suggest that the Gospel was written around AD 85–90.
 - B. They would argue that John’s Gospel was written after the other Gospels as a supplement to them.
 - C. But John’s lack of reference to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 may indicate a date of writing some time before that event.
3. Some scholars conclude that the Gospel should be dated before AD 70.
 - A. They feel that John wrote as if he had not seen Matthew, Mark, or Luke’s Gospels.
 - B. They also note that John referred to the followers of Jesus as “disciples” rather than “apostles” (“apostles” being a later designation).
4. Perhaps the strongest argument for a date before AD 70 is in 5:2 where, in some translations, John wrote “there is . . . a pool” (kjv, niv) not “there was a pool.”

⁸ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 266–267). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- A. This may indicate a composition before the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70).
- B. Later in 18:1 he wrote, “there was a garden” (kjv, niv), probably referring to the King’s Garden that was located just outside the city.
- C. These verb tenses would allow John’s writing before or even during the time Jerusalem was under siege by the Romans, but before the city had actually been destroyed (AD 68–69).
- D. However, precise dating of the book is not necessary to appreciate its many contributions to the Christian’s life of faith.⁹

Purpose

The purpose of the Gospel of John, stated in 20:31, was to record Jesus’ “signs” so that readers would come to believe in Him. Doubtless the author had other purposes as well. The Gospel of John illustrates what it looks like when God the Son comes to dwell among His people. John’s Gospel profoundly shows how God’s Son, Jesus, makes it possible for us to have an eternal relationship with God the Father (John 3:16–17).

The most significant feature of John’s theology is his presentation of Christ. It has already been pointed out that his major purpose was theological, and indeed Christological. The focus of attention is on Jesus’ Messiahship and Sonship.

The Gospel of John was designed to convince those who had not seen Jesus to believe in him (John 20:29–31).

- 1. Believers were to read John’s Gospel to bring about a deepening of their faith.
- 2. Unbelievers were to read it so that they might come to believe in Jesus Christ.
- 3. Both groups were addressed through John’s arrangement of Jesus’ signs, which progressively ascended in importance to the resurrection of Lazarus and then to Jesus’ own resurrection.
- 4. The reader was to receive the spiritual bread, drink, light, and life that Jesus offered.

Introduction to John’s Gospel

All four Gospels begin by placing Jesus within a historical setting, but the Gospel of John is unique in the way it opens.

- 1. The Book of Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus that connects Him to David and Abraham.
- 2. Mark starts with the preaching of John the Baptist.
- 3. Luke has a dedication of his work to Theophilus and follows that with a prediction of the birth of John the Baptist.
- 4. But John begins with a theological prologue. It is almost as if John had said, “I want you to consider Jesus in His teaching and deeds. But you will not understand the good

⁹ Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). *Tyndale concise Bible commentary* (p. 460). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

news of Jesus in its fullest sense unless you view Him from this point of view. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, and His words and deeds are those of the God-Man.”¹⁰

The Gospel of John is predominantly theological. Although all four Gospels presented the person of Jesus from a theological viewpoint, John emphasizes it most strongly. His initial assertion in 1:1, declares that Jesus was no ordinary person. He was the incarnation of God.

The Internal Evidence of Structure

1. Everything done according to a specific plan and composed of parts has structure.
 - A. John wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to achieve God’s purpose.

2. John has a goal in writing this work and a definable method of making the contents very clear. In John 20:30, 31 he does just that:

- A. Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

3. If we were to use the old fashion method of diagraming a sentence we discover the sentence divides naturally into two coordinate clauses, “many other signs did Jesus . . .” and “but these are written . . .”

A. V30 Many other presence of the disciples		signs therefore did Jesus <u>which are not written</u> in this book:	in the
--	--	--	--------

B. V31 But these are written, Christ,		that you may believe <u>that Jesus</u> is the the Son of God, and believing <u>that</u> you may have life in His name.
--	--	---

4. In these two defining and declarative sentences there are three significant words:
signs, believe, and life.

- A. Signs is the English translation of the Greek *semeia*, is the Johannine word for miracle.

¹⁰ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 271). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- i. Signs are most import to John and he highlights seven signs that provide specific characteristics of Jesus' power and person.
 1. Water to Wine in Cana 2:1-11,
 2. Healing of the Nobleman's Son in Capernaum 4:46-54
 3. Healing of the Impotent Man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem 5:1-9
 4. Feeding of the Five Thousand near the Sea of Galilee 6:1-14
 5. Walking on the Water Sea of Galilee 6:16-21
 6. Healing of the Man Born Blind in Jerusalem 9:1-12, 41
 7. Raising of Lazarus in Bethany 11:1-46
- ii. These seven miracles are preeminently *signs* because they point to those aspects of Jesus' ministry in which He demonstrated His transcendent control of the factors of life with which humanity is unable to cope.
- iii. Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name (20:30,31).

B. Believe that, "These signs are written that you may believe."

- i. When signs are manifested there are two reactions: acceptance, or rejection.
- ii. John's writing is an attempt to persuade the reader to acceptance.

C. Life is defined, and possesses various elements.

- i. It implies consciousness, it signifies contact, involves continuity, and assumes development.

5. Eternal life, humanities full destiny, is the objective of the teaching of this Gospel.

- A. When these three statements, centering in the words *signs*, *believe*, and *life*, are put together, John's key to the Gospel appears plainly.¹¹

The Geographical Divisions

The three major geographical divisions in John are the three major units of Palestine in the time of Jesus: Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. In these areas the larger part of the ministry took place. The motion of the narrative alternates between Galilee and Judea.

1. Unit one centers in Galilee around Capernaum and Cana. It was the scene of much of Jesus' ministry.

- A. Cana was located near Nazareth, about four and one half miles to the northeast. Three blocks of text belong to this geographical unit: 2:1-12, 4:43-54, and 6:1 to 7:13.

¹¹ Tenney, Merrill C. (1976) *John the Gospel of Belief* (pages 27-33). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans

- B. In Galilee Jesus' popularity reached its greatest height, culminating in the attempt to make Him King; and in Galilee also the final defection began.
- 2. Unit Two, which relates to Samaria, comprise one block of Johannine text, 4:1-42.
 - A. Its sole content is the interview with the woman of Samaria.
 - B. The sojourn was not of long duration, for Jesus was merely passing through in route from Jerusalem to Galilee.
- 3. Unit Three deals with Jerusalem and Judea.
 - A. In the fourth Gospel Jerusalem is more prominent than the cities of Galilee.
 - B. No less than four visits to Jerusalem are recorded (2:13-3:21, 5:1-47, 7:14 to 10:39), including the visit of the Passion Week (12:2 to 20:29).
 - C. If the two feast mention in 7:14 and 10:22 make separate visits to the city, Jesus must have made five trips to Jerusalem.
 - D. The atmosphere of the city is normally represented as hostile to Him.
 - E. The largest geographical unit, 12:12 to 20:29, concerns action in Jerusalem during the fortnight (two weeks after a date) before and after the Passion
 - F. Only the Fourth Gospel refers to the lake of Galilee as the sea of Tiberias (6:1, 21:1).

Sevens in the Gospel of John

The Seven I Am's

1. "I am the Bread of Life" (6:35).
2. "I am the Light of the world" (8:12).
3. "I am the Gate for the sheep" (10:7; cf. v. 9).
4. "I am the Good Shepherd" (10:11, 14).
5. "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (11:25).
6. "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life" (14:6).
7. "I am the true Vine" (15:1; cf. v. 5).

The Seven Miracles

1. Water to Wine in Cana (2:1-11)
2. Healing of the Nobleman's Son in Capernaum (4:46-54)
3. Healing of the Impotent Man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (5:1-9)
4. Feeding of the Five Thousand near the Sea of Galilee (6:1-14)
5. Walking on the Water Sea of Galilee (6:16-21)
6. Healing of the Man Born Blind in Jerusalem (9:1-12, 41)
7. Raising of Lazarus in Bethany (11:1-46)

The Seven Sermons

1. The New Birth (3:1-21)
2. The Water of Life (4:1-42)
3. Equality With The Father (5:19-47)
4. The Bread of Life (6:22-66)
5. The Life-Giving Spirit (7:1-52)

6. The Light of the Word (8:12-59)
7. The Good Shepherd (10:1-21)

The Seven Resemblances to the Father

1. Similar in Work (5:19)
2. Similar in Knowledge (5:20)
3. Similar in Power To Raise The Dead (5:21, 28, 29)
4. Similar in Judgement Authority (5:23)
5. Similar in Honor (5:23)
6. Similar in Power To Give Eternal Life (5:24)
7. Similar in Divine Self-Existence (5:25)

The Seven Testimonies to the Deity of Jesus

1. Testimony of the Father (5:34,37; 8:18)
2. Jesus' Own Testimony (8:14,18,37; 5:31)
3. The Testimony of the Holy Spirit (15:26; 16:13,14)
4. The Testimony of the Scriptures (5:39-46)
5. The Testimony of the Works (5:36; 10:25, 38; 15:24, 25; 14:11)
6. The Testimony of John the Baptist (1:7,27,36; 5:33,35,36)
7. The Testimony of the Disciples (15:27; 19:35)

The Seven Titles of Christ

1. Son of Man (1:51)
2. Son of God (1:34)
3. Christ/Messiah (4:25)
4. Teacher (13:13-14)
5. Master (17:13)
6. Lord (20:28)
7. Saviour (4:42)

The Seven Sayings From The Cross

1. "Father, forgive them..." (Luke 23:34)
2. "Today you shall be with me..." (Luke 23:43)
3. "Woman, behold your son!" (John 19:26-27)
4. "My God, My God..." (Matt 27:46-47; Mark 15:34-36)
5. "I am thirsty." (John 19:28)
6. "It is finished." (John 19:30)
7. "Father, into your hands..." (Luke 23:46)

The Plot of the Gospel of John

1. The Conflict:	Good	V	Evil
2. The Contest:	Belief	E	Unbelief
3. The Vocabulary:	Light		Darkness
	Love	R	Hate
	Life		Death
	Spirit	S	Flesh
	Liberty		Slavery
4. The Characters:	Believers	U	Unbelievers
5. The Action:	Acceptance	S	Rejection



John 1:1-18

Prologue: The Incarnate Word

The first eighteen verses of John constitute a division technically known as the Prologue. This section sets the action and its interpretation in a framework of thought by means of which the average Christian may gain an understanding of the whole plot and its significance.

The mechanical analysis of this Prologue divides its text into two sections of unequal size which deal with the two persons mentioned in them: the Logos, or Word, and John the Baptist. The former is the name assigned to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the subject of the main discussion. The latter is treated only in relation to the former and is of subordinate importance.

The Gospel of John is unique among the Gospel accounts in this introduction of Jesus Christ. John does not give us genealogies or tell us about the circumstances surrounding the virgin birth of Christ. Rather, he begins with a most profound theological truth: "In the beginning was the Word (the *Logos*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:1, 14). The eternal Word, the Son of God—Himself God—came to earth and became a man so that he could show us what God is like. He is the incarnate Word.

Recognizing Jesus Christ as the Son of God, is the core of Christian doctrine. His attributes are the attributes of God. His words are the words of God. His works are the works of God. He is God come in the flesh to make His home with humanity as a man. He was fully human and full God. This is a theological concept that we cannot fully explain, yet we know that it is true. He was given the name "Immanuel—which means, "God with us" (Matt 1:23).

Purpose of the Prologue

As you compare the Prologue of John to the first chapters of the three Synoptic Gospels, you will notice the Synoptics begin with various aspects of the early, human backgrounds of Jesus, including His genealogy, parentage, and place of birth. John's emphasis is on the theological and identifies Jesus as the eternal *Logos* or Word, an agent of creation and God incarnate.

The prologue contains many of the major themes of the Gospel which are later reintroduced and developed more fully. The key terms include "life" (v. 4), "light" (v. 4), "darkness" (v. 5), "witness" (v. 7), "true" (v. 9), "world" (v. 9), "Son" (v. 14), "Father" (v. 14), "glory" (v. 14), "truth" (v. 14). Two other key theological terms are "the Word" (v. 1) and "grace" (v. 14), but these important words are used in John only in this theological introduction. "Word" (*Logos*) does occur elsewhere in the Gospel but not as a Christological title.¹²

John focuses upon the divine personality of Jesus Christ, the central character of the book. Of all the books of the Bible, none presents Christ as supremely as the Gospel of John. Whereas the apostle Paul presents Christ in a theological setting, John uses the mystical setting. In doing so,

¹² Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 271). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

John does not disregard theology, for there is plenty of theology in his Gospel; rather, he uses theology as a ladder to climb to the heights of Christ's nature. "Mystical," as employed in the Gospel of John, simply refers to the cultivation of a deep appreciation of the unique nature of Christ and our fascination with Him.¹³

The Deity of Christ

V1) In the beginning, before time began, Christ (the Word, *Logos*) was already in existence with God.

A. That is what is meant by the term "the pre-existent Christ." (Gen 1:1; 1 John 1:1).

B. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen1:1).

1. This expression does not refer to a particular moment in time but assumes a timeless eternity.

C. "Word" is the Greek *logos*, which has several meanings.

1. Ordinarily it refers to a spoken word, with emphasis on the meaning conveyed.
2. *Logos*, therefore, is an expression of personality in communication.
3. Scripture also tells us that it is creative in its power: "By the word (*logos*) of the Lord were the heavens made and by the breath of His mouth all their host (Ps 33:6).
 - a. This clearly implies that the expression of God had creative power and called the universe into being.
4. John is asserting that the "Word" is the source of all this is visible and Antedates the totality of the material world.

D. The preposition "with" in the phrase "the Word was with God" indicates both equality and distinction of identity, along with association.

1. The phrase can be rendered "face to face with."
2. The external coexistence and unity of the Word with God is unmistakably asserted.

V2) The Word has always been in a relationship with God the Father.

A. Christ did not at some point in time come into existence or begin a relationship with the Father.

1. He was not created; He is eternal and infinite—without beginning or end.
2. In eternity past the Father (God) and the Son (the Word) have always been in a loving communion with each other.
3. Both Father and Son are God, yet there are not two Gods.

V3) The concept of creation through the divine Word reflects Yahweh's (God) act of speaking the

¹³ Tozer, A. W. (2009). *And He Dwelt among Us: Teachings from the Gospel of John*. (J. L. Snyder, Ed.) (p. 15). Ventura, CA: Regal.

universe into existence in Gen 1:3–26.

A. This is John's fourth statement as to who the Logos is:

1. First he states the Logo's eternality, (2) His equality with God, (3) His deity, (4) and in this verse His creativity.

B. The word "made" (*egeneto*) has the meaning "become" rather than "constructed."

1. The action refers to an event rather than a process.
2. The visible universe with all its complexity owes its origin to the creative mind and power of God.
3. A part from His Word existence is impossible.

C. Jesus' preexistence and role as Creator and sustainer of all things is also seen in Col 1:15–20.

V4) The term "life" (*zoe*) is used throughout the Gospel.

A. Life is our most important asset.

1. Wherever life appears, it refers to the principle life or, most often, to spiritual life.
2. Frequently it is coupled with the adjective "eternal" to denote the quality and power of the believers life.
3. *Zoe* is used 36 times in the original Greek text of John.
4. The life was embodied in Christ, who demonstrated perfectly what eternal life is by his life (John 14:6; 17:3).

B. John affirmed that in the ultimate sense, life is in Christ.

1. Humanities spiritual and physical life come from Him.
2. Jesus, the Source of "life" (11:25), is also the light of men (8:12).
3. Light is commonly used in the Bible as an emblem of God; darkness is commonly used to denote death, ignorance, sin, and separation from God.
4. Isaiah described the coming of salvation as the people living in darkness seeing a great light (Isa. 9:2; Matt. 4:16).

V5) The metaphorical contrast between light and darkness as representing powers of good and evil was common in John's day as it is today.

A. Basic truth is revealed in the terms of light and darkness.

1. Light's nature is to shine and dispel darkness—Darkness is unable to overpower light.
2. By this, John summarized his Gospel record:
 - a. Light will invade the dominion of darkness.
 - b. Satan the ruler and his subjects will resist the light, but they will be unable to overcome its power.
 - c. The Word will be victorious in spite of opposition.

B. The darkness of evil never has nor never will overcome God's glorious light!

C. As followers of Christ we must walk in the illumination of His light to keep us from sin.

1. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Ps 119:105).

The Witness of John

V6) John introduces the man John the Baptist that would introduce Christ to the world.

A. John focuses on the character and not the origin of John the Baptist as Luke does (Luke 1:5-24, 57-80).

1. John takes for granted that his identity was known by his readers.

B. The important thing to remember is that John the Baptist is the one he was “sent.”

1. Tenney states, “The use of the word refers to the authority that commissioned him; the identification by name is incidental.”
2. His function is defined in v. 7.

V7) John the Baptist came as a witness to the light, Christ Jesus.

A. John the Baptist was greatly used by God, but he was not the Light.

1. Jesus said of JTB, “Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he (Matt 11:11).
2. Some evidence suggests that the movement begun by John the Baptist continued after his death and even after the death and resurrection of Jesus (John 4:1; cf. Mark 6:29; Luke 5:33).
3. Twenty years after Jesus’ resurrection (cf. Acts 18:25; 19:1–7) Paul found about 12 disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus.
4. A Mandaean sect still continues south of Baghdad which, though hostile to Christianity, claims an ancestral link to the Baptist.¹⁴

B. John the Baptist was to bear witness to the light of Christ so that humanity would believe that Jesus Christ was/is the light, the Messiah.

V8) JTB was not the light—There is only one light, Jesus Christ and JTB was to bear witness about the light.

V15) The author reverts to the witness of JTB to explain further his position as to Christ.

A. Tenney explains the manifestation of Jesus came after John’s appearance.

1. In importance Jesus took precedence over him.
2. “Surpassed” (*emprosthen*) is the translation of an adverb that denotes positional precedence, whereas “before” (*protos*, lit. “first”) refers to rank of importance.

¹⁴ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 272). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

3. Jesus surpassed John because he was intrinsically greater.¹⁵

V9) The true light (real or genuine), Jesus Christ was coming into the world.

A. With His entrance into the world, He would provide light to everyone.

1. Christ reveals who God is and shows the way to God.

B. Apart from the Light of Christ, there is no other light by which humanity may see the spiritual truth of salvation.

1. Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me (John 14:6).

V10, 11) Christ the Light of the world was in the world (*komos*), yet the world did not know Him.

A. One of the saddest verses in Scripture. How tragic that the world then and now do not realize who He is.

1. He came to His own Jewish people and the vast majority did not receive Him.
a. The people chosen by God to prepare the world for the arrival of the Messiah.

2. The 21st century is equally lost. No room or awareness of the King of Kings.

V12) Just as there is a sharp antithesis in vv. 4-5 between darkness and light, so here is an equally direct contrast between rejection and reception.

A. In spite of the many who rejected the Word, there were some who received Him.

1. This provides the initial definition of "believe" by equating it with "receive."
2. By receiving, Jesus gives to those who receive Him a right to membership in the family of God.

B. "Become" indicates clearly that people are not the spiritual children God by natural birth, for we cannot become what we already are.

1. This verb implies a change of nature.¹⁶

C. All who welcome Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives are reborn spiritually receiving new life from God and become children of God.

1. Being a "child of God" means having an intimate personal relationship with Him.

D. Three aspects of the process:

¹⁵ Tenney, Merrill C. "Acts." In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 31. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.

¹⁶ Ibid p32

1. Did received . . . believed
2. Believed . . . He gave the right
3. The right to become Children of God

V13) Who were born not of the flesh

A. This verse clearly shows that the “new birth” is a spiritual transformation that can only be accomplished by God’s Spirit.

1. The concept of the new birth is elaborated in Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:3-8).

B. This is not accomplished by:

1. The new birth does not come by natural descent (lit., “of bloods”)
2. It is not the result of a human decision (lit., “the will of the flesh,” i.e., the natural human desire for children),
3. Nor is it the result of a husband’s will. The birth of a child of God is not a natural birth; it is a supernatural work of God in regeneration.

C. A person welcomes Jesus and responds in faith and obedience to Him, but the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit is “the cause” of regeneration (3:5–8).¹⁷

The Incarnation of the Word

V 14) A. This verse is the fourth statement about the Word in this introduction of Jesus.

B. Verse 1 states that the Word “was” is referring to its permanent condition or state, while v. 14 states the Word “became” flesh, involving a change in state.

C. Christ, the eternal God, became a human being (Phil 2:5-9; Col 2:9).

1. Humanity and deity were united together in Jesus Christ.
2. The Logos “became” and “dwelt” (tabernacled, camped); as God dwelt with Israel in the tabernacle in the wilderness.

D. John and the disciples saw, observed the Son in manifestation.

E. The glory refers to the revelation of God through the Son. It speaks of the total essence and activities of God.

F. The “only begotten” (only Son) emphasizes he has no equal and is able to fully reveal the Father.

1. God’s attributes and nature belongs to the unique, one-of-a-kind Son of God.
2. God’s personal revelation of himself in Christ has no parallel, nor has it ever

¹⁷ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 272–273). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

been repeated.

G. Truth and grace are the basic qualities of God revealed by what the disciples saw in the glory of the Logos (Word).

V15) Explained after verse 8 on page 15 of the notes.

V16) “And of His fulness” continues the thought of verse 14, “full of grace and truth.”

A. “Grace upon grace” or “blessing after blessing.”

1. When one aspect of grace is exhausted, another is available.

V17) The contrast between law and grace as methods of God’s dealing with humanity is expressed. The mediator-ship of Jesus Christ is contrasted with that of Moses.

A. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ [was faithful] as a Son over His house-- whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. (Heb 3:5-6).

V18) The “fulness” of God as stated in v. 16 could not be known through ordinary people. It must come through the One who possesses the nature of God.

A. The word “God” is stated first and is without the definite article. This indicates first, that the emphasis is on the word “God,” and the second, the nature of God should be the object of our attention.

B. This statement is not referring to the impossibility of a vision of God (a theophany), but rather to His qualities.

1. A theophany is a pre-incarnate appearance of the Messiah.

2. Isaiah said, “My eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty”? (Isa. 6:5)

3. Many others who saw the “angel of the Lord (*Adonai*)”

4. No one has seen God at any time, since God is Spirit (John 4:24), no man has ever seen God in His essence, His Spirit-being.

5. Yet He assumed visible form, which people saw in OT times (Genesis 32:30; Exodus 24:9-10; Judges 13:22; Isaiah 6:1; Daniel 7:9)

6. In Jesus people could see God (John 14:8-9). Christ gives life (John 1:12); He reveals (John 1:14, 18); He gives grace and truth (John 1:16-17).

D. God in His essence is invisible (1 Tim. 1:17).

1. He is One “whom no one has seen or can see” (1 Tim. 6:16).

2. But John 1:18 means, “No one has ever seen God’s essential nature.”

3. God may be seen in a theophany or anthropomorphism but His inner essence or nature is disclosed only in Jesus.¹⁸

Testimony of John the Baptist

V19) The miracle of the Incarnation called for witnesses to substantiate its reality.

- A. The rulers in Jerusalem want John the Baptist to be questioned.
 1. John did not fit into any ecclesiastical category familiar to the Jewish authorities and his unusual success demanded an explanation.
 2. His preaching attracted large crowds that the Jewish hierarchy in Jerusalem were concerned about.
 3. He had stirred the common people to such an extent that many thought he could be the promised Messiah.
- B. Representatives from two groups were sent to investigate.
 1. The priest represented the theological authorities of the nation.
 2. The Levities were concerned with the ritual of the temple.
- C. The priest and the Levities were respected religious leaders in Israel.
 1. These along with the Pharisees were often denounced by John the Baptist and Jesus.
 2. Outwardly they appeared to obey God and looked pious, But inwardly their hearts were filled with pride and greed.
- D. They came to John looking for answers to their questions.
 1. They were guardians of the faith and they had the responsibility of questioning this new teaching (Deut 13:1-5; 18:20-22).
 2. They wanted to ascertain if JTB had the credentials of a prophet.
 3. Perhaps they were motivated by jealousy because John had great crowds and the crowds were steadily increasing.

V20) John was more than willing to answer their inquiries and quickly testifies that he is not the Christ.

- A. “Christ” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “Messiah,” meaning “Anointed.”
- B. JTB wants them to know with certainty that he is not the Messiah.

V21) Their enquiry continues, “Are you then Elijah or the Prophet?”

- A. They questioned him to see if he was one of the people that they were anticipating their arrival.
 1. Elijah was to come before the Messiah— “Behold, I am going to send you

¹⁸ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 273). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.
6 “He will restore the hearts of the fathers to *their* children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse” (Malachi 4:5,6).

- i. John had the same rough exterior and ascetic tendencies that corresponded with Elijah.
2. Are you the Prophet?—I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him (Deut 18:15).
 - i. The identity of “the Prophet” is not clear; and numerous speculations have been offered.
3. The Messiah?—Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ, (Luke 3:15;).

B. His responses is getting shorter. His answer to these three very important questions could not be more pithy. No!

V22) They continue to press him, Who are you then?

- A. The Sanhedrin Council that has sent us and they want an answer.
 1. Tell us what you say about yourself and who you are?

V23) John answers their question quoting from the beloved prophet Isaiah.

- A. “I am the one trying to make a straight path for the arrival of the Lord” (Isa 40:3).
 1. I am the one Isaiah prophesied that would come first.

V24) The Pharisees had sent them.

- A. The Pharisees represented the strict interpreters of the Law and were particularly interested in examining the credentials of any new religious teacher in Judaism.

V25) They were questioning JTB’s authority to be baptizing.

- A. If you are not one of three prophetic people, why are you baptizing?
- B. You have no credentials or authority to be baptizing.

V26) John replied and said “I am baptizing in water.”

- A. The Essenes (a strict monastic sect of Judaism) practiced baptism for purification.
- B. Gentiles converting to Judaism were baptized in water.
- C. These people were Jews, not Gentiles. Therefore, they were asking, “Who gives you the authority to treat chosen people like Gentiles?”
- D. What John is doing is baptizing them in water as a symbolic act of repentance.

E. The real response is “One is standing among you whom you do not know.”

1. He is the one who has power to forgive sin!

V27) JTB informs them that He who is coming after him (and as he stated in the previous verse) He was already among them and that he is not worthy to untie His sandals.

A. In Luke 7:28 Jesus says, “I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John.”

B. If such a great proclaimer of the Messiah as JTB was, felt unworthy to untie the sandals of Christ, how much more should we lay aside our selfishness to serve Him.

V28) These things took place in Bethabara (KJV)

A. Rather, “Bethany” (according to nearly all the best and most ancient manuscripts);

B. Not the Bethany of Lazarus, but another of the same name, and distinguished from it as lying “beyond Jordan,” on the east.

V29) John the Baptist continues his testimony to the next day.

A. The next day as John sees Jesus coming to him, he proclaims, “God’s lamb who takes away the sin of the world!”—What a proclamation!

B. Every morning and evening, a lamb was sacrificed in the temple for the sins of the people (Ex 29:38-42).

1. Isaiah prophesied (53:7) that the Messiah, would be lead to the slaughter like a lamb; to pay the penalty for the sin.

C. When Jesus died on the cross, the sins of the world were removed.

1. Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed (1 Co 5:7).
2. Christ became the Passover Lamb and the Suffering Servant (Isa 53).
3. In the book of Revelation, Jesus is referred to as the Lamb nearly thirty times.

V30) This verse is essentially a restatement of v. 15.

A. Although JTB was well-known and he attracted large crowds, he gladly yielded to the supremacy of Christ.

B. We are again reminded of Christ’s pre-existence from vs. 1, 2, 14.

V31) The identity of the Messiah was unknown to JTB.

A. John knew Him not as the Messiah, but as a friend. After all, they were relatives (Luke 1:36).

B. Somehow John understood that the revelation of the Messiah would take place in conjunction with his baptizing ministry; therefore, he remained faithful to that which

God had called him to do.

C. After Jesus the Messiah had been revealed to Israel at His baptism by JTB in the Jordan River, John continued his ministry.

V32) John continues his testimony to the inquirers

A. He states that he was an eyewitness of the Spirit of God descending from heaven, and that He, the Spirit of God remained upon Him (Jesus).

1. John's testimony authenticates the presence of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus and His mission.

B. John wants them to know that he had nothing to do with the impartation of the Holy Spirit, he could only announce that which Jesus was going to do.

V33) John continues that to this point, he did not know who the Messiah was.

A. I was being obedient to the Heavenly Father, who called me to baptize in water, those who were repenting of their sins.

B. The baptism in the Holy Spirit would be accomplished by Jesus, the one you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon.

C. The manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' case was visible.

1. John's writing records JTB eyewitness account of the event.

D. The phenomena of the descent of the Holy Spirit and the voice from heaven identifies Jesus unmistakably as the predicted Messiah and promoted another aspect of John's witness.¹⁹

E. Cleansing by water is something that everyone was familiar with. The cleansing produced by the Holy Spirit is another matter.

1. Later at Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus' resurrection, the baptism with/in the Holy Spirit brought in a new Age (Acts 1:5; 2:1–3), the Church Age, the "Age of the Spirit" (cf. 1 Cor. 12:13).

F. The Holy Spirit baptism would be a sign of cleansing and empowerment for the followers of Christ.

1. This distinct and dynamic empowering would help set them apart for God's work.

2. The Holy Spirit would be "among them and within them" to enable them to carry the message of spiritual salvation to the world (Acts 1:8).

¹⁹ Tenney, Merrill C. "Acts." In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*: With the New International Version, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 38. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.

3. Obviously, this infilling continues to be available to us today (Acts 2:39) and is one of the ongoing purposes of Jesus.

V34) John comes to the climax of his testimony with a short and powerful statement that is unambiguous in his proclamation!

A. "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

1. The title "Son of God" is recorded in the New Testament over 40 times, in the Gospels nearly 30 times, and in the Gospel of John 10 times.
2. The term emphasized the unique relationship of the Father and the Son.

B. John's testimony was that this "is the Son of God."

1. The prophesied Davidic King was God's Son (2 Sam. 7:13), and the Messianic King is uniquely the Son of God (Ps. 2:7).
2. The title "Son of God" goes beyond the idea of obedience and Messianic King to that of Jesus' essential nature.
3. In the Fourth Gospel this title is not applied to believers. They are called "children" (*tekna*; e.g., John 1:12) while "Son" (*hyios*) is used only of Jesus.²⁰

C. Tenney makes this point:

1. The significance of the title can be best understood in the light of 1:18, which emphasized the revelatory function of sonship.
2. Since Jesus shared the nature of the Father, he was able to reveal him understandably.
3. Jesus is the final word from God, for nobody else has such a close relationship to deity, nor is there any other who has been similarly commissioned.
4. The prophets spoke for God, but none of them could say that he came "from the bosom of the Father" (1:18).
5. John's emphatic declaration was the reason why the disciples left him to follow Jesus.²¹

D. John the Baptist's ministry was to point others to Jesus Christ the Son of God, their long-awaited Messiah.

E. The more time we spend in the presence of Christ, the greater our appreciation for Him will be.

Jesus' Public Ministry, The First Disciples

V35) The next day in this series of events, John the Baptist was standing with two of his disciples.

²⁰ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 275). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²¹ Ibid p38

- A. Perhaps the reason for this chronology is that John had a particular desire in narrating how some disciples of JTB came to faith in Jesus.

V36) JTB looked at Jesus as He walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”

- A. The emphasis and the action is shifting from John’s baptism to Jesus’s baptism.

V37) This new paradigm is now in effect—The transformation has begun.

- A. Two of JTB disciples heard his declaration of Jesus and they followed Him.

- B. Perhaps the word “followed” has a double meaning here.

1. They followed Him in the sense of literally walking with Him
2. Also, as His disciples, they turned their devotion to Jesus that day.

- C. They follow Jesus largely because of JTB influence.

V38) As they followed Him, Jesus turned and said to them, “What do you seek?”

- A. The first words they heard Jesus speak was, “What do you want?”

1. In one sense, Jesus was asking a simple question and the disciples responded with a request for information as to where He lived.
2. But the author seemed to imply more. Perhaps Jesus was also asking, “What are you seeking in life?”

- B. The better question tonight is, “why are you following Jesus and what are you seeking from Him?”

- C. They answered Him and said, “Rabbi (teacher) where are you staying?”

V39) Jesus invited them to come with Him and see.

- A. They followed Him to where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day, because it was the tenth hour.

1. That hour was 4 p.m. or 10 a.m., depending on whether the Fourth Gospel counted days from 6 a.m. (as the Synoptics customarily did) or from midnight or noon. The 10 a.m. times seems better and was the official Roman usage.²²

- B. There was not hesitation on the part of the two disciples of John to follow Him.

1. What about you? How willing are you to truly follow Jesus?

V40) Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother was one of the two disciples that heard JTB call Jesus the Lamb of God and followed him.

- A. The second follower was not identified.

²² Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 275). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

1. However, it is commonly believed to be John the son of Zebedee, a brother of James and author of this Gospel.
2. His great sensitivity is touchingly shown in his representation of this first contact with the Lord; the circumstances are present to him in the minutest details; he still remembers the Very hour.²³
3. In Mark 1:16–20 two pairs of brothers (Simon and Andrew, James and John) who were fishermen were called by Jesus.

V41) Andrew becomes the first proclaimer of Jesus as the long awaited Messiah. He shares with his brother Simon, “We have found the Christ.”

A. Messiah in Hebrew, means “the anointed One,” in Greek it is translated Christ.

B. In bringing his brother Simon Peter to Christ, no man did the church a greater service than Andrew. Peter’s contribution to the Kingdom has been immeasurable.

1. Andrew appeared two more times in John (6:4–9; 12:20–22); both times he was bringing someone to Jesus.

V42) Andrew brings Simon to Jesus.

A. When Jesus looks at Simon, he knew his destiny in the Kingdom of God.

1. Jesus gives him the Aramaic name Cephas (Simon is his Hebrew name).
2. Peter is the translation of Cephas, which means “rock.”

B. No reason is given for changing his name.

1. Many think that the new name indicates what God by His sovereign will and grace would do through him.
2. He would be a rock-like man in the church during it’s early years of development and growth; and indeed he was.

C. God might not have changed your name—but He knows your destiny as well!

V43) The next day Jesus takes them to Galilee and finds Philip. Jesus invites him to follow Him.

A. The disciples were from Galilee, but Jesus called them while in Judea where they were with JTB.

B. While making His way north to Galilee, He calls Philip to join them and be His disciple.

V44) Philip’s hometown was Bethsaida in Galilee (12:21).

A. Andrew and Peter were also born there.

²³ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 129). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

V45) Philip finds Nathanael and tells him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law (Deut. 18:18–19; cf. John 1:21, 25) and the Prophets wrote” (Isa. 52:13–53:12; Dan. 7:13; Micah 5:2; Zech. 9:9)

A. It is interesting that Philip calls Jesus ... the son of Joseph. But that is how they would have known Him at this time.

1. Nathanael would soon recognize that He is “the Son of God (1:49).

V46) Nathanael’s natural response was, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”

A. He was aware of the poor reputation of Nazareth. He surely thought that the Messiah would come from one of the prominent cities, such as Jerusalem.

1. He knew Bethlehem was the Messiah’s predicted birthplace, and Nazareth had no prophetic place at all.

B. Philip did not debate the issue with him. He challenged him to come and see.

1. He knew Nathanael’s questions would be answered.

C. If we can persuade others to just come and see, what a difference it will make for them.

V47) Jesus being omniscient calls Nathanael ... a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile (sly, cunning, nothing false) about him.

A. What a wonderful tribute Jesus gives to Nathanael.

V48) Nathanael was baffled as to how Jesus knew him or anything about him.

A. How could He have known that I was under a fig tree when I encountered Philip?

1. Even more unbelievable, how could He have seen me when He was not there?

V49) Nathanael’s immediate response to Jesus’ supernatural knowledge, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.”

A. Obviously, Nathanael and all of the disciples have a lot of growing to do.

B. We have the need for continued growth in our relationship with Christ as well.

V50) I’m sure Jesus must have chuckled within and replied to him, “Because I saw you under the fig tree, you believe? You will see greater things than these.”

A. I am sure Jesus had his full attention at this time. But Jesus’ statement in the next verse would leave Nathanael and the others speechless and filled with wonder.

V51) He promises them a greater basis for believing that He is the Messiah.

A. “You will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

B. Nathanael was familiar with Jacob’s life. Perhaps he had been reading of Jacob’s

experience at Bethel (Gen 28:10-17).

1. Jacob was filled with guile and had been forced to leave home because he had lied to his father and had cheated his brother out of the first-born blessing.
2. If under those circumstances Jacob received such a revelation and blessing, would not Nathanael (in whom there was no guile) be a candidate for such blessings as well?

C. Particularly on the incident recorded in Genesis 28:12-22, when Jacob saw the angels going up and down a ladder.

1. But Nathanael would see ... the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.
2. Just as Jacob saw angels from heaven communicating with earth, so Nathanael and the others would see Jesus as the divine Communication from heaven to earth.
3. The Son of Man, replacing the ladder, is God's link with earth (cf. Dan. 7:13; Matt. 26:64).
4. Perhaps Jesus was also indicating that He is the new "Bethel," God's dwelling place (Gen. 28:17; John 1:14).
5. As the Son of Man, Jesus left heaven to come to the earth.

D. Jesus used the term "Son of Man" of Himself more than 80 times.

1. It speaks of His humanity and suffering and His work as "the ideal Man."

E. I tell you the truth ("Verily, verily," kjv; lit., "Amen, Amen") occurs 25 times in John and always calls attention to important affirmations: 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24-25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51, 58; 10:1, 7; 12:24; 13:16, 20-21, 38; 14:12; 16:20, 23; 21:18.

1. Interestingly this double "Amen" does not occur in the Synoptic Gospels.²⁴

²⁴ Ibid p276

The Miracle at Cana - John 2:1-12

The first miracle that Jesus performs in the Gospel of John was not a public one. Rather, the miracle took place at a private event, a wedding. The witnesses to this miracle was limited to Jesus' mother, some servants, and the first few disciples that had been chosen by this time. If Matthew had not yet been called to be one of the Twelve, this may explain why the miracle is not recorded in the Synoptics. Of the four Gospel writers, only John was there.

The turning of the water into wine was the first of 35 recorded miracles, recorded in the four Gospels, that Jesus performed.

V1) On the third day, there was a wedding in Cana, and Jesus' mother was present.

A. On the third day probably means after the calling of Philip and Nathanael.

1. It would take a couple of days to reach Cana in Galilee, from Bethany near Jericho.
2. Cana was believed to be about 9 miles north of Nazareth, although its exact location is not known.

B. Jesus' mother was present, but John does not identify her by her name.

1. In his Gospel, John never named himself or the mother of Jesus.
2. Later we learn that at Jesus' death, his mother goes to the home of the disciple whom Jesus loves (19:27).

V2) Jesus and His disciples received an invitation to the wedding.

A. Weddings in Jesus's day were week long festivals, and in a village like Cana, it would be a community celebration.

B. To refuse an invitation would be an insult to the host and families.

1. To accommodate an entire village required careful planning.
2. To run out of wine would be a great embarrassment, and break the culture tradition of hospitality.

V3) In small, close knit communities of Jesus' day, to run out of wine would never be forgotten. Such a social disgrace would remain with the bride and groom for all of their lives.

Something had to be done!

A. Jesus' mother was not going to allow that to happen so she tells Jesus, "They have no wine."

V4) Jesus' response to his mother is not as abrupt as it sounds to us when he says "woman."

A. "Woman" was a polite and kind form of address.

1. Jesus also said, "woman" when he spoke to his mother from the cross (19:26).
2. He used "woman" when He spoke to Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection (20:15)

B. “What does that have to do with me?” or “Why do you involve me?” was a common Greek expression that referred to a difference in realms or relations.

1. Jesus was indicating that He was no longer under her authority but He was living by a new pattern timed by the purpose of God.
2. Mary was being told by her son that He was committed to the will of God the Father and the time for His manifestation would be determined by God.
 - a. She expressed neither surprise or resentment at His words.

C. Demons spoke those words when they were confronted by Christ.

1. “What do You want with us?” (Mark 1:24).
2. “What do You want with me?” (Mark 5:7).

V5) Mary tells the servants, “Do whatever he tells you to do.”

A. By this statement, she is acknowledging that he should act independently, and she confidently tells the servants to follow his instructions.

1. Mary submitted to her son, Jesus.
2. She knew that He was more than just her human son—He was the Son of God.

B. Was Mary expecting Divine intervention and a miracle?

1. Tradition tells us that at this time in their lives, Joseph had died.
2. Was it a request that she has made previously? She just wanted Jesus to take care of the problem as he had been doing since Joseph had died?
3. She did not know what Jesus was going to do but she trusted him to do whatever needed to be done to save these people this great embarrassment.

C. As believers we face the same dilemmas—We do not know how Jesus is going to resolve the situation but we trust Him and we know He will do it right.

V6) These six 20 to 30 gallon water pots were used for the Jewish purification ceremonial washing.

A. Before eating, the guests were expected to wash their hands before eating.

1. This would cleanse them if they had become unclean by touching objects of everyday life.
2. Obviously, large amounts of water was need for this process.

V7) Jesus instructs the servants to fill the water pots with water. So they filled them completely to the brim.

V8) Jesus instructs them to draw out some of the water out and take it to the head waiter (governor, master of the banquet), so they did.

A. For a Jew to be drinking the purification water would be unthinkable.

B. According to Tenney, if the lowest estimate of 120 gallons of water were made into

wine, it would supply approximately two thousand, four-ounce glasses; and if, as was frequently customary, the wine was diluted by three parts water to one of wine, there would have been enough to last for several days.²⁵

C. Was it fermented wine or unfermented wine?

1. See the attached article

V9) When the headwaiter tasted the water that Jesus had turned to wine, he had no idea where it came from. He was so surprised and stunned about the high quality of wine at this late stage of the wedding festival, he called the bridegroom.

V10) He was confused as to why he was serving the best wine after everyone had all had so much to drink.

A. Obviously, most people would serve the highest quality first to make the best impression and then serve the lesser quality as the celebration continued.

B. Jesus turns the water into the finest wine imaginable.

1. Just as the wine Jesus made was the best, so life in Him is better than life on your own without Him.
2. Don't wait until everything else runs out and then try the best for last.
3. O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! (Ps 34:8)

V11) The purpose of Jesus' first miracle after entering Galilee is not stated.

A. For the most part, this private miracle was unknown.

B. The nature of the miracle is obvious. Jesus had come to bring conversion:

1. Water to wine, and sinners to saints.

C. The effect of the miracle is significant:

1. It manifested His glory
2. It marked the beginning of a ministry accompanied by supernatural power
3. It proved so convincing to the new disciples that they "put their faith in Him."
4. It helped confirm to them that Jesus is the Messiah.

V12) Interlude at Capernaum—After this, He went to Capernaum with his mother, brothers, and disciples.

A. Capernaum became Jesus's home base during His ministry.

1. Located on a major trade route, it was an important city in the region, with a Roman garrison and a customs station.

²⁵ Tenney, Merrill C. "Acts." In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 42. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.

2. Matthew was called at Capernaum to be a disciple (Matt 9:9).
3. It was also the home of several other disciples (Matt 4:13-19).
4. It had at least one major synagogue (John 6:59; Mark 1:21; Luke 4:31)
5. There were high ranking government officials (John 4:46)
6. Jesus condemned the city and its people for unbelief (Matt 11:23; Luke 15:10)

First Passover—Cleansing the Temple (2:13-25)

John recorded a cleansing of the temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, whereas the three Synoptics recorded a temple cleansing toward the end of His public ministry (Matt. 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–16; Luke 19:45–46). Probably there were two cleansings, for there are differences in the narrations. John was undoubtedly aware of the Synoptics, and he supplemented them. The first cleansing caught the people by surprise. The second cleansing, about three years later, was one of the immediate causes of His death (cf. Mark 11:15–18).²⁶

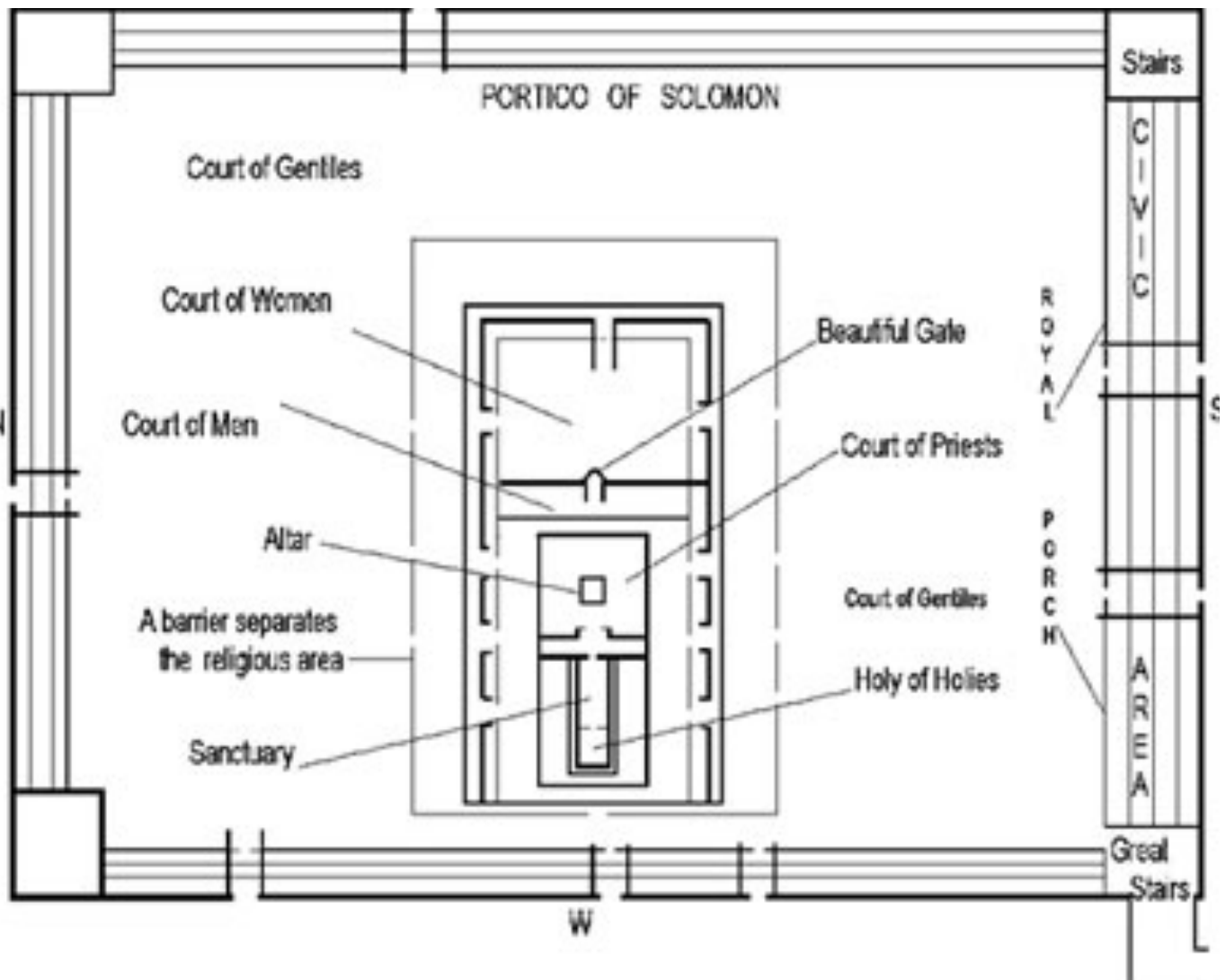
V13) The Jewish Passover was near and Jesus wanted to participate. He and the disciples leave Capernaum and head south to Jerusalem.

- A. Jerusalem was both the religious and the political seat of Israel.
- B. The Temple was located there and many Jewish families from around the world would be in Jerusalem for this key festival.
 1. Passover was a one day event and the Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted the rest of the week.
 2. The week commemorated the freeing of the Jews from their Egyptian slavery (Exodus 12:1-13).
- C. This observance reminded them of God's grace and faithfulness in delivering them.
 1. This would be a great place and fitting occasion for Jesus' to begin His public ministry.
- D. Thank God the delivering ministry of Jesus Christ is still available today!

V14) What Jesus discovers taking place in the temple not only disturbed him, but it angered him greatly as well.

- A. The sale of cattle and doves, and the privilege of exchanging money, were permitted in the temple court as a convenience for pilgrims, who would need animals for sacrifice and temple shekels to pay their temple dues/tax.
 1. Under the chief priests, the concessions had become a means of making money and had degraded God's Temple into a commercial establishment.
- B. The proper use of the temple which was to be a house of worship and prayer was being subjugated to a house of commerce. No wonder Jesus got angry!

²⁶ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 279). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.



V15) Jesus' action is polar opposite of today's culture usual one-liner that, "God is love."

A. He demonstrated His anger to what was taking place in the Temple in a very visible and forcible way; and it wasn't showing love our culture would expect.

B. First, He makes a scourge of cords and drives them, along with the sheep and oxen out of the temple. The whip would have looked similar to photo on the next page.

C. Next He turns over their tables and sends money flying across the Temple.

D. You can imagine the chaos and confusion that ensued.

1. The Animals bawling and running around, the money changers scrambling to pick up their coins in the dust and debris on the floor; the officials arguing with Jesus about His authority to be doing this.
2. I am positive it was a heated and trying moment.



V16) With a strong, powerful and demanding voice He tells those who are selling doves, “To take their things and get out and to stop making His Father’s House a place of business.”

1. KJV says, “Den of Thieves.”

V17) John is writing his account years after the event took place.

A. He inserts that he and the disciples equated Jesus’ actions with the Messianic prophecy of David in Psalm 69:9: “Zeal for Your house will consume me.”

B. Jesus’ vehemence revealed His passion and commitment to and for the Father and His jealous guardianship for the things of His Father.

V18) Immediately the Jews want to know by what signed you will you show us for your authority for doing what you have done?

A. This was their attitude toward Jesus during His entire ministry.

1. At a later occasion when the Pharisees said, “Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.” (Matt 12:38).
2. Knowing their attitude Jesus responded to their question by saying, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given except the sign of the prophet Jonah” (Matt12:39).

V19) Jesus’ answer of “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up” was an unexpected response.

V20) His critics assumed that He was speaking of Herod's Temple.

A. I believe His reply was received with confusion, hatred and laughter.

1. After all this was God's Temple He was talking about.

B. You can hear the sarcasm, seriously, it took forty-six years to build and You will raise it up in three days.

1. You really cannot blame them can you?

2. How do you think you would have reacted if you would have been there?

C. More importantly, how do you respond to what you read in God's Word today? Are you a believer or a doubter?

1. The great and exceeding promises we find in the Bible, are we to really believe them and act on them?

V21) John informs us that Jesus meant the temple of His body, which He would raise up in three days.

A. We understand 2,000 years later that Jesus was speaking of His death and resurrection.

V22) After His resurrection, His disciples remembered that He said He would be raised from the dead.

A. Even Jesus' own disciples did not understand His enigmatic saying at first.

1. It took the radiance of the Resurrection to illuminate His words.

2. They did not see the need for His death, because they did not understand the Scriptures which spoke of the Messiah's suffering and death.

3. Therefore, Jesus' words were somewhat meaningless until after the resurrection.

B. Remembering these words strengthened their belief in both the Scriptures and the words that Jesus had spoken.

V23) Remember, Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

A. Jerusalem would be filled to capacity with people who had come from everywhere to worship and celebrate.

B. Because of the miracles that Christ was doing, many believed in His name.

C. The effect of these miracles (which were probably healings) was to elicit faith on the part of many people.

1. They believed in His name, that is, they trusted in Him.

2. This was not necessarily saving faith as the next verse implies.

3. They believed He was a great Healer, but not necessarily a great Saviour from sin.

D. For whatever reason John chose not to describe these miracles.

V24) Because Jesus knew them, He did not trust them or their supposed belief of who He is.

V25) He did not need anyone to testify for Him because He knows who He is.

A. Again, He knows the heart and intent of everyone.

B. Jesus knew that a temporary excitement or a faith based on signs was not sufficient.

1. Many of the early followers later turned back when He did not take up the role of a political king (cf. 6:15, 60, 66).

C. Until His death and resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the foundation for faith was not fully laid.

D. Having supernatural knowledge, Jesus does not need human help to evaluate men.

1. As God, He sees beyond the superficial to people's hearts (1 Sam. 16:7; Ps. 139; Acts 1:24). John 3 and 4 give illustrations of this truth.
2. He knew Nicodemus' need, and He told the Samaritan woman about her past (4:29).
3. What does He know about you?

E. The connection of chapter 3 to chapter 2 is evident (cf. in a man (2:25), and "Now there was a man" (3:1).

1. We will be introduced to that man Nicodemus next week.
2. It was Nicodemus who asked Jesus that great question, "How can a man be born again?"

F. Jesus will answer his question and begin His teaching on salvation.

Nicodemus and The New Birth (3:1-21)

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and perfectly represents the aristocratic, and the best in the nation of Israel. Being a Pharisee, he was conservative in his beliefs and belonged to the strict religious sect of Judaism in contrast to the Sadducees, who were less rigid in their beliefs and were more politically minded. Jesus and John the Baptist often criticized the Pharisee's for being hypocrites. Most of the Pharisees were intensely jealous of Jesus because He constantly undermined their authority and challenged their views.

Nicodemus held "the office of teacher in Israel." He is called a ruler and is a rabbi and member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish religious court. The Sanhedrin had 70 members who were responsible for religious decisions and also, under the Romans, for civil rule. The Sanhedrin put Jesus on trial (Luke 22:66). Nicodemus later rebuked the Pharisees for condemning Jesus without hearing Him (John 7:50-51), and he helped Joseph of Arimathea bury Jesus (19:39-40). According to the Complete Jewish Study Bible, Nicodemus is mentioned glowingly in the *Talmud* (*Ketubbo* 65a; *Gittin* 56a; *Ta'anit* 19b020a).

He had a keen interest in Jesus' teaching. As a member of the ruling council or Sanhedrin, he would have been sensitive to the prevailing doctrinal trends of the time. His interest in Jesus had been promoted by the miracles he had witnessed, and he came for an interview to obtain more information. His approach shows that he was cautious, open-minded, and ready to receive a new revelation from God if he was sure of his genuineness.

The beginning of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem had attracted a great deal of attention. Because He drove out the animals, over-turned the tables of the money-changers and declared that His Father's House is to be a place of prayer and worship and not a place of commerce, produced both favorable and unfavorable responses.

Jesus begins His first and most thorough explanation of Soteriology (the doctrine of salvation).

V1) Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews

V2) He came to Jesus during the night. Because he came during the night does not necessarily mean that he was timid. Although in the light of the later references to him in this Gospel he does not seem to have been aggressive in his discipleship (7:45-52; 19:38-42). His salutation was courteous, and he showed no sign of hostility.²⁷

A. Why during the night?

1. Perhaps he was fearful of his peers and his fellow Sanhedrin members?
2. Was it the normal time for visits?
3. Maybe he wanted some time with Jesus when they would not be interrupted by the crowd of people that was constantly around Him?

²⁷ Tenney, Merrill C. "Acts." In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 46-47. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.

4. Possibly he wanted answers for himself from Jesus to separate fact from rumor.
- B. Nicodemus said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God.”
1. How did he know that? What evidence did he base his statement and/or belief upon?
 2. More importantly, if you are a believer, a follower of Christ, what evidence do you give for your belief?
- C. He stated, “No one can do these signs unless God is with him.”
1. What signs?
 2. We are not provided with the details, but the signs showed Jesus as God’s Man, (God was with Him).
- D. Nicodemus wanted to talk with Jesus as one Rabbi to another.
- V3) Jesus’ response to Nicodemus was abrupt and left him completely bemused.
- A. “Unless one is born again they cannot see the kingdom of God.”
1. At first the statement seemed almost irrelevant; yet, it really was the expression of Jesus’ discernment because He knew Nicodemus’s heart.
- B. Natural birth is our mode of entrance from our mothers womb into the world and it requires certain types of change and adjustments.
1. An infant, by the very occurrence of their birth, is fitted for a new life in a strange and new realm.
 2. Removed from the perfect environment of the womb into a cold and indifferent world.
- C. To be born again, or “born from above,” means a transformation of a person so he/she is able to enter another world (spiritual) and adapt to its conditions.
1. Humanity must experience a spiritual rebirth preparatory to their entrance into the kingdom of God—Being removed from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.
 2. The new birth is the act of God that gives eternal life to the believer in Christ.
- V4) Nicodemus’s reply, “How can you be born again?” may be interpreted in two ways:
- A. At first sight, he appears to be materialistic in his attitude, thinking that Jesus was advocating the impossibility of a second physical birth period.
- B. On the other hand, he may not have understood Jesus's statement.
1. Perhaps he meant, “How can a man whose habits and ways of thinking have been fixed by age expect to change radically?”

2. Physical rebirth is impossible, but is spiritual change any more feasible?²⁸

V5) In response, Jesus repeated his statement in verse 3, but added content.

A. Various views and opinions have been given to explain Jesus' words.

1. The "water" refers to the natural birth, and the "Spirit" to the birth from above.
2. The "water" refers to the Word of God (Eph. 5:26).
3. The "water" refers to baptism as an essential part of regeneration.
 - a. This view contradicts other Bible verses that make it clear that salvation is by faith alone; e.g., John 3:16, 36; Eph. 2:8–9; Titus 3:5.)
4. The "water" is a symbol of the Holy Spirit (John 7:37–39).
5. The "water" refers to the repentance ministry of John the Baptist, and the "Spirit" refers to the application by the Holy Spirit of Christ to an individual.

B. The fifth view has the merit of historical propriety as well as theological acceptability.

1. John the Baptist had stirred the nation by his ministry and stress on repentance (Matt. 3:1–6). "Water" would remind Nicodemus of the Baptist's emphasis.
2. So Jesus was saying that Nicodemus, in order to enter the kingdom, needed to turn to Him (repent) in order to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit.²⁹

V6) Jesus continues, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit."

A. If all we have is physical birth, we are simply flesh and are limited to what the flesh can perceive. Therefore, the flesh profits nothing toward one's relationship with God.

B. But the second birth by the Spirit makes it possible for us to perceive what the Spirit can perceive (cf 1 Cor 2:14).

C. Jesus asserted that the entrance into the kingdom of God that Nicodemus desired could not be achieved by legalism or outward conformity.

1. It requires an inner change by and through the Holy Spirit.

V7) Nicodemus had stated the absurdity of a second physical birth, so Jesus again put the emphasis on the fact that the new birth from above is the work of the Spirit.

V8) The origin and destination of the wind are unknown to the one who feels it and acknowledges its reality.

A. Also, the new life of one born of the Spirit is unexplainable by ordinary reasoning; and

²⁸ Ibid p47

²⁹ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 281). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

its outcome is unpredictable, though its actuality is undeniable.³⁰

B. The wind, though unseen, is identified by its activity and sound.

1. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit is observed by His activity in and effect on those who are born again.

V9) Nicodemus responds, “How can this be?”

A. There are two ways to interpret his question:

1. An exclamation expressing incredulity or
2. A plea for direction

B. Nicodemus began to show a change here.

1. His worlds no longer indicate amazement or bewilderment.
2. Instead, his questions seems to indicate an earnest, sincere desire to know how this experience could become his.

V10) Jesus answers him, “You are a teacher in Israel and you should understand these things.”

A. Nicodemus’s exact position in the theological circles of Israel is not defined, but the language points to his office and prominence as an outstanding teacher.

1. He would have been very familiar with the teaching of the new birth.
2. Jesus felt that since the OT contained this teaching in principle, those who read the Scriptures should understand.
3. Although he was a Jewish teacher of the Bible and knew the OT thoroughly, but he did not understand what it said about the Messiah.

B. Nowhere else does Jesus speak of the new birth in the way He does here. It is because Jesus felt Nicodemus should have been able to understand.

V11) This is the third time during the interview that Jesus used the authoritative affirmation “verily, verily” or “truly, truly.”

A. “We speak of what we know.”

1. The Pharisees spoke with a human imposed authority.
2. Jesus spoke with an inherent authority that came directly from the Father.

B. Then Jesus says “We” - but we do not know who He is referring to.

1. He and John the Baptist
2. He and his disciples
3. The Trinity

C. Throughout the years the “people” had rejected God’s instructions as proclaimed

³⁰ Tenney, Merrill C. “Acts.” In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: With the New International Version*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 47. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.

through the prophets and the Scriptures—Things were still no different.

V12) The “earthly things” Jesus alluded to were probably the phenomena He used for illustrations, such as the wind.

A. If Nicodemus could not grasp the meaning of spiritual truth as conveyed by earthly analogy, how would he do if heavenly statements were used”

V13) Jesus continued the thought of “heavenly things.”

A. Since man has not ascended into heaven, he cannot know about heavenly things. Only Jesus himself, the Son of Man, who had come from heaven.

1. No one has ever gone to heaven and came back to earth, and been able to give clear teaching about divine matters.
2. The one exception is Jesus—He is the “Ladder” between heaven and earth.

B. Revelation, not discovery, is the basis for faith

1. It is the Spirit that reveals heavenly things (1Cor 2:10).

V14) The reference to the Pentateuch (Numbers 21:4-9) would have been familiar to Nicodemus.

A. Jesus explains how the Son of Man would accomplish “eternal life” for everyone who would believe by using the story of Moses lifting up the bronze serpent.

1. The ancient Israelites were guilty of disobedience and a grumbling and unthankful spirit.
2. They were under the condemnation of God and were being punished for their sin.
3. The object elevated before them was the emblem of their judgment.
4. They were unable to rescue themselves.
5. The poison of the serpents was deadly, and there was no antidote for it.
6. They were urged to look at the serpent in order to receive life.³¹

B. Jesus insisted that He would be “lifted up,” a word used elsewhere for crucifixion (8:28; 12:32-34).

1. The use of the word “must” indicates the necessity of Him being crucified.
2. Christ’s sacrifice on the cross provides spiritual healing for all who look to Him in faith.

V15) In verse 15 and 16, we find the words “That whosoever,” “believes,” and “eternal life” is used to show the process for salvation.

A. If anyone will believe in Christ, they will have eternal life!

³¹ Ibid p48-49

V16) Commentators are divided as to whether vv. 16-21 are a direct continuation of the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus or whether they represent only the author's comment on Jesus' words.

A. Regardless, they express the most important message of the Gospel that salvation is a gift received only by believing God for it.

B. God initiates the action of redemption.

1. The verb "loved" has the prominent position in the sentence. Jesus wanted all to know that it was God's love that was bringing eternal life to the world.

C. The Son of Man who descended from heaven has brought to us the truth of this assertion (3:13; 1:18).

D. Tinney comments that the nature of belief is implied in the illustration of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness (v. 14).

1. Belief consists of accepting something, not doing something.

2. The result of belief is that one receives eternal life.

3. One is freed from condemnation and lives in a relationship of total honesty with God, for one does not fear having their real self exposed.³²

E. The good news of God's love for the world provides only two options: to believe and accept His love or reject His free gift of salvation and perish.

1. Obviously, eternity is the ultimate focus.

V17) God's motivation for sending His Only Begotten Son was not to condemn or judge the world but to save the world.

A. Jesus' mission was redemptive not damnation.

V18) "Those who believe" is a present participle and indicates continuous action.

A. It could be read, For those who keep on believing in Him are not judged.

1. They are under no condemnation (Rom 8:1).

B. Non-believers are already under God's judgment and stand condemned because of their rejection of faith in Christ.

V19) Humanity loves darkness, not for its own sake but because of what it hides.

A. They want to continue undisturbed in their evil deeds.

B. A believer is also a sinner (though a redeemed one), but he confesses his sin and responds to God (cf. 1 John 1:6-7).

³² Ibid p50

C. In the ultimate sense, humanity loves the darkness rather than God, the Light (John 1:5, 10–11; 1 John 1:5).

1. Their love of darkness leads to their rejection of the revelation (light) of God as manifested in the only begotten (unique, one-of-a-kind son).
2. The love humanity has for darkness is a steadfast sort of love. It is a love in which they are completely devoted to.
3. Their conduct is the evidence of their character.
4. The greatest of all deeds of darkness is unbelief—Sin thrives in darkness.

D. To receive Christ is to receive life, and to reject Christ is to remain in darkness.

V20) Jesus clarifies the reason for His statement in v. 19 and gives the reasons why people reject His light.

A. Evil people hate the light because of what it does—Light exposes what is in the darkness.

1. They do not come to Light for fear that their actions will be exposed.

V21) The ones who have made their decision for Christ continue coming to Christ, who is “the light.”

A. They live the truth—and continue to put the truth into practice.

1. They continually compare their conduct with that which is revealed in Christ.
2. They study the Scriptures and pray to be conformed to the image of Christ (James 1:23; 2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:29).
3. The believers motivation is to live their life in such away that their deeds and actions may be manifested as having been accomplished through God.

The Final Testimony of John the Baptist (3:22-36)

Jerusalem was in Judea, but Jesus now goes into the rural area (country side) surrounding Jerusalem rather than urban ministry at this time. His disciples who were close followers and His constant companions were eager to learn from Him and to grow in their new found faith in Jesus the Messiah.

For a short time, the ministry of John the Baptist overlapped Jesus’ ministry. Thus the Judean countryside must have been alive and filled with activity through the teaching of both these great preachers of repentance and God’s kingdom. These events occurred prior to the arrest, imprisonment, and the ultimate execution by beheading of John the Baptist.

The scene was the Jordan River. The Jordan was a natural memorial of God’s past work in behalf of Israel when Joshua led the nation into the new land. Jesus began His ministry at the memorial that brought an end of the old life and initiated a new order—from the Law to Grace.

V22) Both John and Jesus had disciples, large crowds followed both of them, and both baptized.

A. The statement that Jesus “baptized” (vv. 22, 26) probably means He was overseeing

the baptizing being done by His disciples (4:2).

V23) The site of Aenon near Salim is unknown today but a likely location is about midway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea (about three miles east of Shechem).

A. Jesus and John the Baptist were proclaiming repentance and baptism.

1. The two reform movements were popular and both groups were simultaneously baptizing their converts.
2. One, however, would soon be yielded to the other.

V24) This event happened before John was put in prison

A. This statement reveals how the Fourth Gospel supplements the Synoptics.

1. It implies that readers knew about John's imprisonment from reading the other Gospels (Matt. 14:1–12; Mark 6:14–29; Luke 3:19–20).
2. Or perhaps they knew from common church tradition.

V25) John's followers found themselves in a disagreement with a fellow Jewish inquirer about ceremonial purification.

A. The dialogue could have begun one way and ended another.

1. Opening conversation could have been about ceremonial washings already in place.
 - a. Why do the Jews need another washing - John's baptism?
2. Second aspect of the conversation could have been about Jesus.
 - a. Jesus' group had grown larger than John's.
 - b. Jesus' popularity and influence was growing and John's was waning.
 - c. Perhaps the conversation had moved to Jesus' baptism being more important than John's.

V26) John's disciples may have been jealous and angry at the growing popularity of Jesus.

A. They complained to their teacher that Jesus, whom John testified about had now captured the nations attention.

1. They longed for the days when everyone want to hear John (Mark 1:5).
2. They might have been more attached to John's personality than to the message he proclaimed.

V27) John showed no jealousy. On the contrary, he shows his subordinate position and spiritual discernment with his response: "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven."

A. John had spent approximately 30 years in preparation for his ministry and only about 1 year in active ministry—Giving it up most have been difficult.

B. If Jesus' movement was expanding, then it must be the will of God.

1. This principle of God's sovereignty is stressed in John (cf. 6:65; 19:11) as elsewhere in the New Testament (1 Cor 4:7).

- C. Know with certainty that things happen because it is God's will, and things do not happen because it is not God's will.

V28) John reminded his disciples that he had taught them that, "He was not the Christ, but was sent ahead of Him."

- A. He was not the final authority but had been sent in preparation for the arrival of the Messiah.

V29) In Jesus' growing influence, John found his own joy fulfilled.

- A. He illustrated this for his disciples by referring to a custom at Near Eastern weddings.

1. The friend of the bridegroom was only an assistant, not the main participant in the marriage.
2. The assistant acted on behalf of the bridegroom and made the preliminary arrangements for the ceremony.
3. His joy came when he heard the bridegroom coming for his bride.

- B. John the Baptist's work was to prepare for the arrival of Christ, the "Groom."

1. John baptized only with water, not with the Spirit as Jesus did.
2. Therefore, Jesus must become greater and John must become less.
3. This was not merely advisable or fortuitous; it was the divine order.
4. John willingly and with joy accepted Jesus' growing popularity as God's plan.³³

V30) John's often quoted declaration, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

- A. Every opportunity, especially ministry has a life span.

1. John understood this divine principle and he was prepared for the transition.

- B. We must recognize the season of our opportunities and seize the moment.

1. "The opportunity of a lifetime must be seized within the lifetime of the opportunity." – Leonard Ravenhill

V31) John is developing the theme of the supremacy of Christ. He (Jesus) is from above and speaks of heavenly things. Those from the earth speak of earthly things.

- A. The following verses are valuable testimony to the person of Christ and that He came from above. They emphatically declare the following:

1. Jesus came from heaven and spoke with a higher authority than that of earth.
2. He spoke from observation, not from theory.
3. He spoke the words of God
4. The Father's love had caused Him to endow the Son with complete authority to execute His purpose.

³³ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 283). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- V32) John declares that Jesus is testifying of what He has seen and heard.
- A. Most in John's day and the masses of our day do not receive Jesus's testimony.
- V33) He continues that when one receives Jesus' testimony they re declaring that God is true.
- A. To reject this testimony is to call God a liar (1 John 5:10).
- V34) Jesus gives the perfect truth of God as He speaks the words of God, because He has the full endowment of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit without limit.
- A. The Old Testament prophets had the Spirit only for limited times and for limited purposes.
 - B. The Apostle John referred to Jesus as the One whom God has sent.
 1. Thirty-nine times the Gospel of John refers to Jesus being sent from God (vv. 17, 34; 4:34; 5:23–24, 30, 36–38; 6:29, 38–39, 44, 57; 7:16, 28–29; 8:16, 18, 26, 29, 42; 9:4; 10:36; 11:42; 12:44–45, 49; 13:16, 20; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5; 17:3, 18, 21, 23, 25; 20:21).
 2. This affirms Jesus' deity and heavenly origin, as well as God's sovereignty and love in initiating the Son's Incarnation (cf. Gal. 4:4; 1 John 4:9–10, 14).³⁴
- V35) The relationship between the Son and the Father is one of loving intimacy and complete confidence.
- A. The Son is endowed with all authority to accomplish the Father's purposes (5:22; Matt. 28:18).
- V36) Man has only two options: trust in the Son or reject (disregard) the Son (cf. vv. 16, 18).
- A. Unbelief is tragic ignorance but it is also willful disobedience to the clear light.
 1. God's wrath is mentioned only here in the Fourth Gospel (but cf. Rev. 6:16–17; 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15).
 - B. "Wrath," God's necessary righteous response against evil, remains on the unbeliever.
 1. This ultimate wrath is future but it also exists now.
 2. Endless sin and disobedience will result in endless punishment (Matt. 25:46).
 - C. The moral laws of the universe are as unvarying and unchangeable as its physical laws, and God cannot set aside either without violating His own nature.
 1. The rejection of His Son can be followed only by retribution.
 2. Acceptance of Christ is the personal appropriation of God's truth.

³⁴ Ibid p283

Jesus Goes To Galilee (4:1-6)

V1) Knowing that His success in winning disciples was a subject of concern to the Pharisees, Jesus left Judea to return to Galilee.

A. The Pharisees took pride in thinking they were spiritual. They could not tolerate anyone whose popularity detracted from their own.

1. The multitudes were drawn to both John the Baptist and Jesus.
2. Jesus' popularity was quickly surpassing JTB.

B. This was not pleasing to the Pharisees.

1. Jesus' amazing success irritated the self-righteous, self-centered, and self-exalting Pharisees.

C. Plus, the Pharisees, who constituted the ruling class was concerned about the growth of any messianic movement that could easily be interpreted as having political overtones.

1. Moreover, Jesus did not want to become entangled in any outward conflict with the Jews or Romans at this early point in His ministry.

V2) Jesus was not doing any baptizing. All baptizing in water was being done by the disciples.

V3) Jesus and his followers left Judea and began the journey to Galilee.

V4) John informed us that Jesus "had to pass through Samaria."

A. First, this was the shortest route from Judea to Galilee but not the only way.

1. The other route was through Perea, east of the Jordan River.

B. Second, Jesus "must" go through Samaria indicates a spiritual necessity.

C. In Jesus' day, the Jews because of their hatred for the Samaritans, normally took the eastern route in order to avoid Samaria. But Jesus chose the route through Samaria in order to reach the despised people of that region.

1. As the Saviour of the world, He seeks out and saves the despised and outcasts (cf. Luke 19:10).

D. "Samaria" in New Testament times was a region in the middle of Palestine, with Judea to the south and Galilee to the north.

1. Samaria was without separate political existence under the Roman governor.
2. The people were racially mixed and their religion resulted from syncretism and schism from Judaism.
3. Its center of worship was Mount Gerizim.

4. Even today in Israel, a small group of Samaritans maintain their traditions.³⁵

E. The area had historical roots back to the patriarchs.

1. The promise, the people, and the land were uniquely interwoven.
2. This place was their connection with the one true God.
3. God had commended the Law to be read from that location (Joshua 8:33).
4. The Samaritans who occupied this area felt they had an unusual claim on God who had worked so wonderfully there in the past.³⁶

F. After the northern kingdom, with its capital at Samaria, was captured by the Assyrians, many Jews were deported to Assyria and foreigners were brought in to settle the land and to help keep the peace (2Kings 17:24).

1. The intermarriage between those foreigners and remaining Jews resulted in a mixed race, impure in the opinion of Jews, who lived in the southern kingdom.
2. Those from the southern kingdom felt that their fellow Jews who had intermarried had betrayed their people and their nation.
3. The Samaritans had set up an alternate center for worship in Mount Gerizim (John 4:20) to parallel the Temple at Jerusalem.
4. There was a long-standing prejudice between Jews and Samaritans.
5. Jesus did not live by such restrictions. The route through Samaria was shorter and that was the route He took.

V5) He goes to the city of Sychar near Shechem in Samaria.

A. Sychar was near the area that Jacob gave to his son Joseph (Gen 48:21-22).

1. He bought the land in Shechem (Gen 33:18-20).

V6) Jacob's well was there.

A. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down by the well to rest and refresh himself. This spot was often used by weary travelers.

1. Using Roman time, it would have been around 6 PM.
2. Using Jewish time, it would have been around noon.

B. Most believe it was around noon because the Samaritan woman wanted to avoid the other women in the village who would typically come to the well in the cooler late afternoon.

The Woman of Samaria (4:7-38)

V7) As the woman approached the well to draw water, Jesus did a very unusual thing. He spoke

³⁵ Ibid pp. 284–285

³⁶ Harris, Ralph W. *The Complete Biblical Library, The New Testament Study Bible John*. Springfield, MO 1988 p85.

to a Samaritan woman, whom He had never met and ask her to “Give him a drink.”

V8) The disciples had gone to the village to buy food. They were going to miss the opening act of a remarkable event that would take place.

V9) The woman was shocked and taken aback that a Jewish man would ask for a drink from a Samaritan woman.

A. The antagonism between the two groups is at least as old as the return of the southern tribes from the Babylonian exile in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.

B. Plus, the normal prejudices of the day would prohibit public conversation between men and women, between Jews and Samaritans (Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans) and especially between strangers.

1. A Jewish Rabbi would never drink from a cup belonging to a Samaritan. They would rather be thirsty than violate any of these proprieties.
2. Moreover, it would make him ceremonial unclean.

V10) Jesus’ response to her was both remarkable and astounding.

A. If you knew who I am and what I could do for you, your attitude would be very different.

B. Here is what Jesus said to her

1. “If you knew the gift of God—Salvation
2. Who is it who says ‘Give me a drink’—The Messiah
3. You would ask me for living water”—Salvation/Holy Spirit

V11) Her response was an obvious one—How can you get living water which the well supplied (not stored water in a cistern, but flowing water) when you have nothing to draw with (the well was over 100ft deep) -- so where do you get this living water.”

A. She heard Jesus’ words but missed the real meaning.

B. Nicodemus asked, “How can these things be?” The women at the well asked, “Where do you get this living water?”

V12) She continued, “You are not greater than our father Jacob (Israel) are you, who gave us this well, and drank from it himself?”

A. Jacob our father has provided us with the best water to drink, how can you have better?

1. If it is good enough for Jacob, it is good enough for us.

B. She also was saying, “the Samaritans are as good as the Jews!”

V13, 14) Jesus responded and progressively began unfolding the truth so she would be able to

understand the difference in the two waters.

- A. Paraphrasing Jesus' words—Any one who drinks of this well water will thirst again. The water I give you, you will never thirst again, because it provides eternal life.

V15) She immediately asked Him “to give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to this well to draw water.”

- A. Her motives were selfish and not spiritually induced.

1. If she could eliminate the long trip to the well, the hard labor of drawing the water and the return trip of carrying the heavy water home—Please give me that water.

- B. John never mentioned her giving Jesus a drink of water. He forgot His own physical need, trying to meet her spiritual need.

V16) Jesus told her to go and get her husband. This was both proper and strategic.

- A. *Proper* because it was improper for a man to talk to a woman unless her husband was present.

- B. *Strategic* because she was in a dilemma from which she could not free herself without admitting her need.

1. She had no husband to call.
2. She would not want to admit her moral failure to a stranger.

- C. Jesus is introducing the woman to the personal pertinency of His message to her—*She could never receive what she failed to see she needed.*

- D. Jesus proceeded to probe her moral condition that she might recognize her spiritual need.

- E. Unless we confront the moral bankruptcy of our culture as it relates to God's Word, they will never see their dire need for spiritual repentance.

1. Inclusion of spiritual decadence within the church will never produce a spiritual revival and renewal.
2. The church has been called to separate itself from the influence of the culture.
3. Our calling is to change the culture and lead them to Christ.

V17) She responded to Jesus' request by telling him that she does not have a husband. Jesus replied and said, “You have told the truth.”

V18) Jesus continued by informing her that she has had five husbands, and the man she was presently with was not her husband.

- A. Jesus was letting her know that He already knew everything about her, including her marital history.

B. With just a few words, He was revealing the sin that was in her life and showing her the need for salvation.

V19) You can imagine her shock as well as her curiosity. How could he know these things?

A. To her this man was more than a Rabbi. He must be a prophet.

V20) Rather than confessing her sin and acknowledging her need for salvation, she brought up a centuries old argument between the Jews and the Samaritans about where to worship.

A. Perhaps she wanted to change the subject for her marital issue to that of seeking clarity on who he is and what his mission is, or that he has the answer to this centuries old debate.

B. We, the Samaritans worship in this mountain (Gerizim) and *you people* (Jews) say you have to worship in Jerusalem.

1. Before she could raise the issue to a debate, Jesus quickly engaged her.

V21) Jesus declared, “A time is coming.”

A. Jesus is referring to His coming crucifixion and death.

1. His death would inaugurate a new dimension to worship that would not be restricted to Mount Zion or Mount Gerizim.

B. He placed the emphasis of worship on His/our Heavenly Father.

V22) Jesus was firm in His declaration about this issue.

A. The Samaritan religion was confused and in error: “You Samaritans worship what you do not know.”

1. They were not the vehicle for the salvation of mankind.

B. Israel was the nation chosen by God to have great privileges (Rom. 9:4–5).

1. When Jesus said, Salvation is from the Jews, He did not mean that all Jews were saved or were especially pious.

2. “Salvation is from the Jews” in the sense that it is available through Jesus, who was born of the seed of Abraham.³⁷

V23) With the advent of the Messiah, a new order of and for worship was being established.

A. True worshipers, those who recognize that Jesus is the incarnate of God will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

1. They understand that Jesus Christ is the only Way to the Father (Acts 4:12).

B. To worship in truth is to worship God through Jesus Christ.

³⁷ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 286). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- C. To worship in Spirit is to worship in the spiritual realm which God has revealed to His people through Christ.
 - D. God the Father is seeking people to be His worshipers.
 - 1. He wants humanity to live in the correct and proper spiritual dimension and not be blinded by the deceiver of this world.
- V24) God is spirit is a better translation than the KJV's "God is a Spirit."
- A. God is not one spirit among many—He is the one and only true spirit.
- V25) The Samaritans, like the Jews were expecting a Messiah.
- A. They did not expect the Messiah to come from the David line, as Christ did.
 - B. The Samaritans rejected all of the OT with the exception of the Pentateuch based on Duet 18:15-18.
 - 1. They anticipated a Moses-like figure who would lead them and change the present circumstances.
 - C. It appears that the Samaritan woman understood some of what Jesus had said.
 - 1. She had hopes and expectation that when the Messiah, the one who called the Christ comes, He would explain everything.
- V26) Jesus made a self-declarator and testified, "I am He" (the Messiah).
- A. Throughout Jesus' ministry in both Galilee and Judea, because of the political climate, He typically used the title "Son of Man."
 - 1. With the Samaritan, there was no political risk from the Pharisees or the Sadducees.
- V27) By this time, the disciples had arrived from their trip into town to buy food (v8).
- A. They were amazed (in the strongest sense of the word) that Jesus had been speaking with a woman, particularly a Samaritan (see notes on v 9).
 - B. But no one questioned why He was talking to her or if He had some need that needed to be addressed.
- V28) With the arrival of the disciples, the woman left her water pot and raced into the city to tell the men what she had experienced.
- V29) In the excitement of her encounter with Jesus and the possibility of Him being the Messiah, she told the men of the city that they needed to come meet this man.
- A. He has told me all the things that I have done and He had no way of knowing this information.

B. Do you think this could be the Christ?

1. She framed the question in such a way to peak their maximum curiosity.
2. She wanted them to come and meet Him and get their opinion if they thought He was the Christ.
3. She knew that she had one opportunity for them to respond favorably to such a proclamation coming from a woman, and especially a woman with her reputation.

V30) Surprisingly, they left the city with her and made their way to the well.

A. It would be very unlikely that the elders of Sychar would receive any theological information from a woman, and even more so given her reputation.

B. Her appeal was so sincere and her invitation so urgent that they immediately proceeded to the well to investigate.

V31) The disciples were concerned about Jesus' welfare after the long morning journey and they were urging Him to eat.

V32) Jesus informed them, "I have food to eat that you are not aware of."

A. Before, He was tired and thirsty. But now food and drink were not important to Him.

V33) They were amazed that He was not hungry and discussed among themselves if someone else had brought Him food.

V34) The disciples misunderstanding of the events provided Jesus the opportunity to teach them.

A. "My food is to do the will of Him (God the Father) who sent Me and to accomplish His works."

B. He instructed them that the satisfaction of completing the work that the Father had entrusted to Him was greater than any food that He would receive.

1. His great passion and desire was to do God's will (cf. 5:30; 8:29).
2. He knew that "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. 8:3; Matt4:4).
3. His priority is spiritual, not material. It is the Father's work which must be done (cf. John 17:4).

V35) "Four months more and then the harvest" is probably a quotation of a current proverb.

A. Having sowed the grain, the farmer had to wait four months for it to ripen.

B. Jesus is pointing out that the spiritual harvest is always ready and must be gathered before it spoils.

C. As He was speaking, the Samaritans were leaving town and making their way across the fields toward Him.

D. Jesus said, “Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, they are white for harvest.

1. Can you picture the imagery and connect the words of Jesus as the Samaritans walked across the fields?
2. The eagerness of the Samaritans, the people that the Jews despised and rejected were like grain ready for harvesting—There would be no wait!

V36) Jesus let the disciples know that they would not have to wait to see the results of their mission; the sowing and reaping could and would happen simultaneously.

A. Jesus implied that they had already received a commission to reap for Him and that they could benefit from the preparation He and the prophets had made.

V37) The reaping of people for the Kingdom of God is not the task of any one group, nor is it confined to one era—“One sows and another reaps.”

V38) Jesus expands on His statements in the two preceding verses.

A. Sowers and reapers are blessed by the benefit of their forerunners, and succeeding generations gain from the accomplishments of their predecessors.

V39) John informs us that many from Sychar believed in Christ because of the testimony of the woman that Jesus had encountered.

V40) The Samaritans asked Jesus to stay longer. He agreed and stayed two days.

V41) Many others believed that He was the Messiah that was to come.

V42) John tells that the testimony of the woman had influence on others, but it was their personal encounter with Jesus that convinced them that “this One (Jesus) is indeed the Saviour of the world.”

A. They had heard, but now they had experienced!

Healing A Nobleman’s Son (4:43-54)

V43) After two days of ministry in the town of Sychar in Samaria, Jesus continued north and returned to the Galilee region.

A. Tenney suggests that the progress to Galilee is closely connected with the episode at Samaria. John seems to focus his Gospel on clusters of events.

1. Compare 1:19, 29, 35, 43 and 2:1, as well as those chronological groupings that appear later.³⁸

V44) Apparently, Jesus had detected in Judea the increasing hostility of the religious leaders, though the real opposition would not appear for some months.

A. Jesus knew that the public response to His ministry in Jerusalem had been insincere

³⁸ Tenney, Merrill C. “Acts.” In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: With the New International Version*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 59. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.

and shallow (John 2:23–25), and that it was not honoring to Him.

1. Jesus was really never identified with Judea even though He had been born in Bethlehem. He was known as the Prophet from Galilee (Matt. 21:11; John 7:52).

B. John points out that Jesus had testified that “a prophet has no honor in his own country.”

V45) To this point in time Jesus was received by the Galileans.

A. They had encountered Him at the feast in Jerusalem and had been impressed by His clearing the temple at the Passover feast (2:13–22) and His miracles (2:23).

B. But the people’s enthusiasm for the Healer (cf. Mark 5:21, 24b) did not always indicate they had faith in Him (Mark 6:1–6). He still was not really accepted (cf. John 2:24–25; 4:48).

V46) Jesus returns to Cana where His first miracle (turning water into wine) took place.

A. Why? Perhaps to cultivate the seed He had previously planted. Also, Nathanael was from Cana, so it could have been for personal reasons for the visit.

B. John informs us there was a royal official whose son was sick in Capernaum.

1. Capernaum was approximately 20 miles away.

C. Was this man a Jew or a Gentile? Possibly he was a Jew because Jesus included him among the people who desire signs and wonders (v. 48; cf. 1 Cor. 1:22). But we do not know with certainty.

1. We are not told his exact position in the government—He may have been a member of Herod’s court or a centurion.
2. Whatever his national or social standing, he was desperately in need of the help of the Saviour.

V47) He must have heard the reports of the people healed in Jerusalem. When he learns the Jesus has come from Judea back to Galilee, he went to Jesus and implores Him to come to Capernaum and heal his son who is at the point of death.

A. The first miracle at Cana came at the request of His mother (John 2:1–5), and this second miracle at Cana at the request of a father (John 4:47).

V48) Jesus’ responses to him “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe” may appear severe on the surface, but it was necessary.

A. Why? Because faith built only on miraculous signs will not be a complete faith (2:23–25).

B. This was not a rebuke of this nobleman.

1. It was our Lord's lament at the spiritual condition of the people in general, both in Judea and Galilee.
2. "Seeing is believing" has always been the "pragmatic" philosophy of the lost world. Unfortunately, it also manifest itself in the religious world.
3. The nobleman believed that Jesus could heal his son, but he made two mistakes in his thinking: (1) that Jesus had to go to Capernaum to save the boy, and (2) that if the boy died in the meanwhile, it was too late.³⁹

V49) The royal official immediately responds and asked Jesus to "come to his house before his child dies." You can sense the genuine distress in the father's words.

A. Obviously, he believes if Jesus comes and prays for his son, he will be healed.

1. This is exciting, expectant faith!

V50) Jesus' response "Go your son lives" appears to be a casual and calm answer to such an urgent and desperate life and death request concerning a child.

A. If the official really believed that Jesus could make a difference in Capernaum, he also had to believe Him now in Cana.

1. The father's faith was active—He believed what Jesus said and immediately began the 20 to 25 mile journey home.
2. He will soon learn that his son was healed the very moment Jesus spoke the words.

B. Jesus must have rejoiced greatly. Both the Samaritan woman and this anonymous nobleman believed His word and acted on it.

1. What about you? Do you believe His word? Is your faith active?

V51) As he made his journey home his servants met him and told him his son was alive.

V52) He asked the servant at what time did my son start getting better?

A. He informed him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour."

1. 7 P.M. Roman time or 1 P.M. Jewish time.

B. It was not a gradual healing, but instantaneously.

V53) The father knew his son was healed the moment Jesus spoke the words.

A. He and his entire family became followers of Christ.

V54) This healing was not the second miracle that Jesus ever performed, for that would contradict John 2:23 and 3:2. This was the second miracle that Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee.

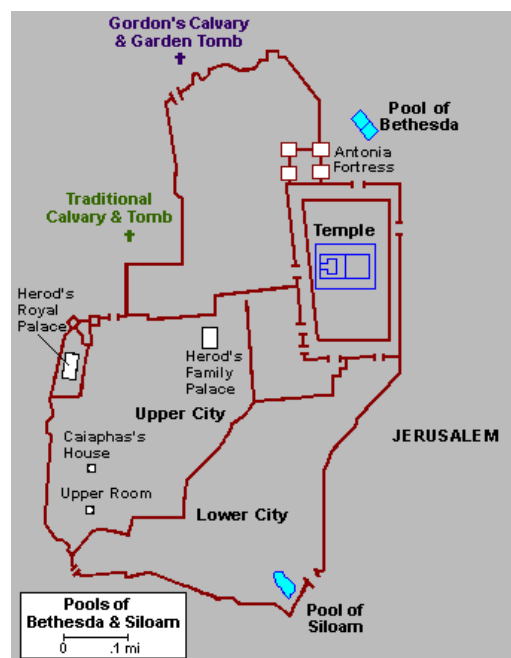
³⁹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 303). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Healing at Bethesda (5:1-17)

In chapter 5 we encounter a break in the chronological sequence. John was perhaps more interested with the issue of Jesus contention with unbelief than in chronology. Comparison with the Synoptic accounts shows that some amount of time may have elapsed between the healing of the son of the royal official at Cana and the event of the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem.

The first two miracles of Jesus that John records were somewhat private in nature. The servants and the disciples knew He turned the water into wine, and the royal official's family knew that He had healed their sick son. This miracle in Chapter 5 was not just public, but it took place on the Sabbath Day and incited the opposition of the religious leaders. One could say the "official persecution" against Jesus began with this healing.

This miraculous healing is not recorded by Matthew, Mark or Luke. They confine themselves mostly to the miracles that took place in Galilee, but John relates those in Jerusalem as well.



V1) Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the annual feasts. The feast is not named.

A. It may have been the Passover because it was the most celebrated among the Jews.

1. Jesus attended three other Passovers (2:23; 6:4; 11:55).

B. Three festivals required all Jewish males to come to Jerusalem each year: (1) the Festival of Passover and Unleavened Bread, (2) the Festival of Weeks (also called Pentecost), and (3) the Festival of Tabernacles.

C. We do not know which feast Jesus was observing when He went to Jerusalem, and it is

not important that we know. His main purpose for going was not to maintain a religious tradition but to heal a man and use the miracle as the basis for a message to the people.

V2) To the north of the temple area was a pool called Bethesda.

A. The excavations of a pool near the Sheep Gate have uncovered five porticoes or covered colonnades, confirming the accuracy of the description given here in the Fourth Gospel.

1. The pool was actually two pools next to each other.⁴⁰

B. The traditional location of the pool is at the present site of the church of Saint Anne.

V3, 4) At the pool lay a large number of sick and very needy people who were waiting for the waters to be stirred by an angel of the Lord.

A. The first person to enter the water after it was stirred would be healed from their disease.

B. Some manuscripts omit the end of John 5:3 and all of verse 4.

1. But the Bible nowhere teaches this kind of superstition, a situation which would be a most cruel contest for many ill people. No extant Greek manuscript before a.d. 400 contains these words.

C. However, without the additional wording the verse becomes problematic.

1. The event (and the man's words in John 5:7) would make little sense if these words are eliminated.
2. Why would anybody, especially a man sick for so many years, remain in one place if nothing special were occurring?
3. You would think that after thirty-eight years of nothing happening to *anybody*, the man would go elsewhere and stop hoping!
4. It seems wisest for us to accept the fact that something extraordinary kept all these handicapped people at this pool, hoping for a cure.⁴¹

V5) John noted that the man had been ill for thirty-eight years.

A. It is interesting that the Jewish nation wandered in the wilderness for thirty-eight years.

1. Now the time that it took for us to come from Kadesh-barnea until we crossed over the brook Zered was thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war perished from within the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them

⁴⁰ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 288–289). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁴¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 304). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

(Deut. 2:14).

2. Spiritually speaking, Israel was a nation of impotent people, waiting hopelessly for something to happen.

B. This crippled man was also impotent and had been waiting hopelessly for something to happen spiritually for him for thirty-eight years as well.

V6) Jesus knew about the man (John 2:23–24) and asked him if he wanted to be healed.

A. Rather than responding with a resounding and enthusiastic, “Yes! I want to be healed!” He began to offer excuses for his continued sad state.

1. He had been in that condition for so long that his will was as paralyzed as his body.

B. When you compare John 5:6 with verse 40, you will see that Jesus had a spiritual lesson He wanted to convey.

C. Did this man represent and exemplify the tragic spiritual state of the nation?

D. More importantly, does it represent our present spiritual condition and state?

V7) Rather than responding with a resounding and enthusiastic, “Yes! I want to be healed!” He began to offer excuses for his continued sad state.

A. I have no one to help me!

B. He had been in that condition for so long that his will was as paralyzed as his body.

1. When you compare John 5:6 with verse 40, you will see that Jesus had a spiritual lesson He wanted to convey.
2. Did this man represent and exemplify the tragic spiritual state of the nation?

C. More importantly, does it represent our present spiritual condition and state?

V8) Jesus simply told him to “pick up his pallet and walk.”

A. He commanded the man to do the very thing he was unable to do.

1. His command carried with it the required enablement.
2. When people obey His command to believe, God works in and through the power of His spoken and written Word.

V9) Immediately he was healed and he obeyed Jesus’ command. He picked up his pallet that he had used for years and he walked home.

A. The cure was immediate and many people at the pool witnessed the miracle.

V10) The miracle would not have caused a problem except that it occurred on the Sabbath Day.

A. The Jews were saying to the man who was cured, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not

permissible for you to carry your pallet.”

B. Jesus could have come a day earlier, or even waited a day; but He wanted to get the attention of the religious leaders.

1. Later in the book of John, He would deliberately heal a blind man on the Sabbath (John 9:1–14).

V11) But he answered them, “He who made me well was the one who said to me, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk.’”

A. The healed man realized the difficulty he was in and tried to evade any responsibility for violating tradition by saying he was just following orders.

V12) The Jews response was “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Pick up *your pallet* and walk?’”

A. The Jewish authorities were naturally interested in the identity of this man who told the invalid to violate their rules.

B. The scribes had listed thirty-nine tasks that were prohibited on the Sabbath, and carrying a burden (his pallet) was one of them.

1. Remember that man who was stoned for gathering wood on the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36).

V13) The healed man replied, “He did not know who the man was that healed him.”

A. Interestingly, Jesus did not take the time to heal anyone else. Instead, He “slipped away” so as not to create a problem because a crowd was gathering. So momentarily He was unknown.

B. This seems to be a case in which healing was done in the absence of faith. The invalid was chosen by Jesus as an act of grace because of his need and also to display God’s glory in him.

V14) Later Jesus finds the man in the temple and told him, “Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.”

A. This implied that Jesus sought him out in order to speak to him. The ex-paralytic seemed to have no gratitude to Jesus.

1. His conduct put him in a bad light because there is no indication that this encounter strengthened his faith and produced any commitment to Jesus.

B. Jesus’ warning (stop sinning or something worse may happen to you) does not mean that his paralysis was caused by any specific sin (cf. 9:3), though all disease and death come ultimately from sin.

1. The warning was that his tragic life of 38 years as an invalid was no comparison to what the eternal punishment of hell would be like.
2. Jesus is not interested in merely healing a person’s body. Far more important is

the healing of a persons soul from sin.⁴²

V15) After his encounter with Jesus in the temple, he informs the Jewish leadership that it was Jesus who made him well.

A. Perhaps out of fear, the man “informed” on Jesus. The Jewish leaders turned their attention from him and focused their accusations at Jesus Christ.

B. Unlike the healed blind man in John 9, this man was not excommunicated.

1. The Lord’s words (John 5:14) suggest that the man’s physical condition could have been the result of sin (but we do not know that).
2. Jesus did not say that the man’s sins had been forgiven as He did in dealing with the sick man lowered through the roof (see Mark 2:1–12).
3. It is possible to experience an exciting miracle and still not be saved and go to heaven.

V16) The verse introduces the element of controversy between Jesus and his antagonist. The Jews began persecuting Jesus because he was performing miracles on the Sabbath, in violation of their rules.

A. The Jewish leaders did not prosecute the man who was healed, even though he had broken the law; but they did begin to persecute the Lord Jesus.

B. Remember from our early chapters, the Jewish Sanhedrin (the religious ruling council) were the guardians of the faith. The members had the responsibility of investigating new preachers and teachers who appeared in the land, lest some false prophet come along and led the people astray. They had looked into the ministry of John the Baptist (John 1:19ff) and more recently had been scrutinizing the ministry of Jesus.

C. In addition to the case of the invalid’s healing (5:1–15), John later recorded the cure of a blind man on the Sabbath (chap. 9). The grain-picking (Mark 2:23–28), the healing of a shriveled hand (Mark 3:1–5), curing a woman who had been crippled for 18 years (Luke 13:10–17), and healing a man with dropsy (Luke 14:1–6)—all these took place on the Sabbath.

1. As seen in these passages, Jesus’ theology or philosophy of the Sabbath differed from that of His opponents. His opponents in the controversy were progressively humiliated while the crowds favored Him.
2. The opponents’ response was to persecute Jesus by opposing Him and trying to kill Him (John 5:16, 18; 7:19, 25).⁴³

⁴² Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 290). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁴³ Ibid p. 290

V17) Jesus responded to them by saying, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”

A. God rested on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2–3) from His work of Creation. But Jesus acknowledges the continuous work of God as a justification for His Sabbath activity.

1. It is not wrong for His Son to do works of grace and mercy on the Sabbath.
2. He is just continuing the creative work of God.

B. Notice the words of Jesus when He says, “My Father.” He did not say “your Father” or even “our Father.” His opponents did not miss His words of claim to Deity.

Jesus’ Equality With God (5:18-24)

V18) The Sabbath controversy was enough to cause them to hate Jesus, but the implication of His claim that God is His own Father was impossible for them to accept.

A. To them, God has no equals. Jesus’ claim, in their thinking, was a gargantuan blasphemy—To make oneself “equal with God” was a claim of arrogances punishable by death.

1. In the Talmud four persons were branded as haughty because they made themselves equal to God: pagan rulers Hiram, Nebuchadnezzar, Pharaoh, and the Jewish King, Joash.

B. In His forthcoming explanation, Jesus is not claiming identity with the Father as one person. Rather, He is asserting His unity with the Father in a relationship that is described as sonship.

V19) Jesus explained that the Son is dependent on the Father. He is not independent of or in opposition to the Father.

A. His activity is not self-initiated. The Father directs and has sent the Son.

1. The Son’s activity imitates the Father, and the Two always work together.

B. Jesus continually affirms that His work was to do the will of the Father (John 4:34; 5:30; 8:28; 12:50; 15:10).

V20) Jesus testifies that the Father loves the Son and reveals to Him all that He (God) is doing.

A. The Son is in no way independent of or in rebellion against the Father. Their relationship is one of continuous love.

B. The Son is not doing simply a part of God’s will; He has a full disclosure of all the Father’s works.

C. By the Father, the Son will do even more amazing works than this physical healing.

V21) One of the prerogatives of Deity is the right over life and death.

A. King Naaman of Israel asked, “Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life?”

(2 Kings 5:7)

B. One of Jesus' "greater" works (5:20) is the giving of life.

1. The Son gives life to whom He is pleased to give it, just as He chose to heal one man out of a crowd of disabled people.

C. The giving of life includes spiritual (eternal) life and a resurrected body.

1. The resuscitation of Lazarus (chap. 11) would illustrate both.⁴⁴

V22) The Father grants the Son not only the power to give life but to also judge humanity.

V23) Jesus' unity with His Father is so complete that the honor of God is tied to Jesus. To reject or dishonor God the Son is to reject and dishonor God the Father.

V24) For a second time, Jesus introduced His words with the solemn "verily, verily" (John 5:19, 24–25).

- A. More than twenty times in John's Gospel, Jesus uses this solemn form of address. He was saying, "Pay attention to this! What I am about to say is important!"
- B. Because Jesus has the unity and divine prerogatives mentioned in verses 19–23, to trust His message and His Father is to have in the present time eternal life (cf. 3:36).
 1. No judgment will come in the future (he will not be condemned (cf. 3:18; Rom. 6:13; 8:1) because he has already passed from one realm—death—into another—life (cf. Eph. 2:1, 5)).
 - a. The assurance of salvation does not begin at death or at the final judgment. "He has crossed over" is in the perfect tense, which indicates an accomplishment transit and settled state.
 2. Only one other time (in 1 John 3:14) is the phrase "passed from death to life" used.

Two Resurrections (5:25-30)

V25) Jesus' life-giving power can call a person out of the grave (11:43), everyone from their tombs (5:28–29), or anyone in spiritual death (v. 24) to eternal life.

- A. The words, a time is coming, occur four times in John: 4:21, 23; 5:25, 28.)

V26) Jesus expresses His deity by saying He was not dependent on any for life. Just as the Father derived His life from no one. Jesus possesses inherent life, the power to create and the power to new life that has extinguished.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid p. 290

⁴⁵ Tenney, Merrill C. "Acts." In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*: With the New International Version, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 65. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981

V27) Jesus continues and states that the Father gave Him authority to carry out (execute) judgment because He is the Son of Man.

A. The title “Son of man” used here refers to Daniel 7:13–14 and is a definite messianic title.

1. It is used twelve times in John’s Gospel and over eighty times in all four Gospels.
2. The Jews would know this title from their reading of the Book of Daniel; and they would know that, by using it, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, and the Judge.

B. The title “Son of Man” has appeared twice previously in this Gospel: once in describing Jesus’ function as a revelatory of divine truth (1:51) and once in connection with His function as a Redeemer (3:14).

C. Son of Man is used only by Jesus concerning Himself. As the Son of Man He is qualified to judge humanity because He belongs to it and understands the needs and viewpoints of all people.

1. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb 2:17).
2. Hebrews emphasizes Jesus’ priestly function rather than His judicial position, but the underlying concept is the same.⁴⁶

V28) Verse 28 and 29 contains one of the few references to eschatology in John’s Gospel.

A. The Pharisees believed the greatest act of the power of God was to take place at the physical resurrection.

B. Jesus made prodigious claims—His titles, assertions, and demands are given with clarity, conviction, and authority. Everything He said was supported by His powerful deeds and absolute authority.

C. Jesus made no distinction between the resurrection of the wicked and the righteous.

1. The Lord said, “All who hear my voice”—No exceptions.

V29) Jesus said, “When they hear my voice they will come forth. Those who did good deeds to a resurrection of life and those who committed evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

V30) This verse is transitional and John transitions from Jesus words of self-affirmation to His testimony.

A. He spoke with the confidence of being commissioned by the Father, not with arrogance of self-assertion.

1. Twenty-five times in John’s Gospel Jesus asserts that He was sent by the

⁴⁶ Ibid p. 65

Father.

- B. The section ends the way it began, with the point that the Son can do nothing apart from the Father (cf. v. 19). His judgment, as everything He does, is from the express will of the Father.

Jesus Produces His Witnesses (5:31-47)

V31) Because His critics were questioning His authority, Jesus is willing to produce witnesses to vouch for Him.

- A. The word witness is a key word in John's Gospel; it is used forty-seven times.

- B. Jesus did bear witness to Himself, but He knew they would not accept it; so He called in three other witnesses.

1. Under Jewish law, the self-testimony of a man was not accepted in court.
2. Later Jesus spoke against this, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going (John 8:14)

- C. Tenny states, "The apparent contradiction can be resolved because the statement in John 5 is based on legal grounds, whereas, that in chapter 8 is based on personal knowledge."

1. In 5:31, Jesus' point was that if He bore witness to Himself, this witness would not be accepted by the Jewish authorities. They would see it as an arrogant claim of self-exaltation.
2. Yet in another setting (8:14), self-authentication is perfectly valid because an individual is the only one who knows his own full experience.
3. Jesus affirmed that He did not seek an independent self-authentication. He was content to submit to the Father's will and to let the Father authenticate Him.⁴⁷

V32) Jesus stated, "There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about me is true."

- A. This could refer to the Father or to John the Baptist, both of whom are mentioned in the context. Because the witness of John the Baptist immediately follows v33, and Jesus' statement in v36 it seems more plausible that John the Baptist is the witness.

V33) The Witness of John

- A. The first witness was John the Baptist (5:30-35), whom the religious leaders had interrogated carefully (1:15ff).
 1. At the very end of His ministry, our Lord pointed the rulers back to the witness of John the Baptist (Matt. 21:23-27).

⁴⁷ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 291). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

B. John knew who Jesus was and faithfully declared what he knew to the people of Israel. John told the people that Jesus was the Lord (1:23), the Lamb of God (1:29, 36), and the Son of God (1:34).

C. Jesus' appeal to the popularity and the testimony of John the Baptist gave Him an immediate place of authority. How could the Jewish leaders accept John's preaching as being from God and reject Him.

V34) Jesus asserted that humanity is not His most important evidence. However, John's identification of Him as the Messiah had great significance.

A. Jesus' motivation in providing evidence for who He was, was so "that they might be saved."

V35) John was a lamp for the nation and his ministry stirred the people and temporarily awakened them spiritually. For a season, they embraced his message. The people thought the Messianic Age was on the horizon.

A. The more John demanded changes in their character and conduct, they began resisting his message.

V36) The Witness of Works

A. Jesus testifies "that the testimony that He had, was greater than John's testimony."

1. Obviously, John the Baptist was a great voice for God. However, he did not do any miracles (10:41).

B. The "signs" were specific works which God had allocated for the Son to perform.

1. These miracles were predicted in the OT (Isa 35:5-6).

C. Jesus' work was a clear manifestation that God was with Him and that He worked through Him.

1. Jesus always referred to His works when it was a matter of proving His divine mission (10:25, 32, 37-38; 14:10-11; 15:24).

V37) The Witness of the Father

A. Jesus' next witness is His Father. "The Father sent Me and He has testified of Me."

B. How did and does the Father give witness?

1. At Jesus' Baptism (Matt 3:17)

2. At Jesus' Transfiguration (Matt 17:5)

3. At Jesus' Triumphal Entry (John 12:28)

4. In Jesus' Works (John 3:2)

5. In People's Minds and Hearts (John 6:45)

6. The Inner Work of God upon the spirit of humanity that Jesus is Truth (John 6:45; I John 5:9-12).

C. Jesus informed them that, “they had not heard the Father’s voice nor seen His form.”

V38) Jesus continues His rebuke of them by stating, “you do not have the Word living in you, because you do not believe in Me whom the Father sent.”

A. Paul elaborates on this truth when he wrote, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom 8:16).

1. This testimony of collaboration between you and the Holy Spirit is essential in your relationship with Christ.

B. If there is no collaboration, there is no relationship between you and Christ.

1. Therefore, you will be culpable for having no relationship with Christ.

V39) Witness of the Scripture

A. The Jewish religious leaders studied the Old Testament with great diligence. They believed that if one could comprehend the words of the text, he would gain a share in the world to come.

1. They considered those ignorant of the Law to be under a curse (7:49).

B. Jesus knew their beliefs, remember He was a Jew. Perhaps, He was challenging them to further study God’s Word.

1. In the Scriptures, the Father witnesses to Jesus’ Messiahship.

2. The many OT prophecies confirm this to be true.

C. The Scriptures are so designed that when people read them, they are to recognize and acknowledge God’s glory. The Jews would certainly agree with that statement.

1. Jesus stated the people were incapable of both interpreting and applying the Scriptures.

D. Jesus is confirming that the Scriptures testify about Him.

V40) Jesus was telling them that life is contained in Him, not in observance of the Law of which they depended.

A. Jesus’ invitation of “Come to Me” is the only hope of true and eternal life.

V41) Jesus points out that the witness of the Father is far greater than any glory that would be attributed to Him from humanity

V42) He reminds them that, He knows them and He definitively tells them that, “they do not have not have the love of God within them.”

V43) Jesus explained that He came in the name of the Father, but the people would not accept His credentials from multiple witnesses and their testimonies. But that they would accept “another” who comes in his own name and without witnesses.

A. The Antichrist is the ultimate one that Jesus was referring to.

1. The Jews would receive him as they had received other political figures to save them.
2. However, their accepting of the Antichrist would lead to their destruction (2 Thes 2:8-13; 1 John 2:18).

V44) The seeking of human praise and accolades is a form of self-idolatry.

- A. John 12:37-43 points out that the love for the praise of people prevented the Sanhedrin Council from believing and accepting Jesus as the Messiah.
- B. They were more concerned about receiving the recognition and the glory of people rather than seeking the glory of the one and only God.
- C. They were ignoring the great commands of “loving the lord your God” (Deut 30:16; Micah 6:8).
 1. We are to walk humbly before God and not proudly before man.

V45) Jesus told the Jews the Law condemned both their attitude and life. Therefore, He does not have to accuse them.

- A. The Law given by Moses condemned and doomed all who were guilty of idolatry (Ex 20:3-7).
 1. The people’s opinion and their self-glorying were more important to them than God’s approval.
 2. The Law in which they sought refuge pointed out their guilt.
- B. The Pharisees prided themselves on being true followers of their ancestor Moses and they attempted with great effort to follow every one of his laws to the letter.

V46) “For if you believed Moses” points to the reason for the last statement.

- A. Moses would have no reason to accuse them if they had believed him.
 1. Their unbelief in Christ showed they did not believe Moses.
- B. Moses wrote with the objective of declaring the Messiah (Ex 3:13-14; Deut 18:15-18).
 1. Jesus does not refer to any specific passage (cf. Gen 3:15; 22:18; 49:10; Ex 3:13-14; Num 24:17; Deut. 18:15-18).
 2. Nor did He mention any specific types (such as the Passover, the manna, the rock, the offerings, or the high priesthood).
 3. He simply knew the Old Testament clearly points to Him.

V47) Jesus established His claims to Messiahship on the prophecies of Moses in whose writings the Jews claimed to believe.

- A. He called the Jews to believe Moses. If they would, they could also believe that Jesus was who He said He was.

- B. Since Moses' revelation was rejected (cf. Luke 16:29–31), Jesus' words were rejected also.
1. Later Jesus said that Isaiah had written about Him as well (John 12:41).
- C. The healing of the man on the Sabbath would come up again (John 7:21–23). The leaders would persist in protecting tradition instead of understanding truth (cf Mark 7:1–13).

Jesus Returns to Galilee (6:1-7:9)

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand (6:1-15)

John's Gospel is selective (John 20:30–31), he does not record events in the life of Jesus that do not help him fulfill his purpose. Between the healing of the paralytic (John 5) and the feeding of the 5,000, there are many events taking place, some of which are mentioned in Luke 6:1–9:10 and Mark 3:1–6:30. During this period, our Lord preached “the Sermon on the Mount” (Matt. 5–7) and gave the parables of the kingdom (Matt. 13).

Up to this point Jesus' popularity had been increasing, in spite of the opposition of the Jewish religious leaders. The miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 was a miracle of such magnitude that it is the only miracle of Jesus that is recorded in all four Gospels (besides Jesus' resurrection). The significance of the sign was expounded by Jesus in a long discourse (vv 22-77). It was a spectacular miracle, and it was well known all over Israel. This miracle caused a large surge in Jesus' popularity and their messianic expectations. Unfortunately, very shortly many of His followers would withdraw from following Him (v 66). As I taught earlier, you cannot build a lasting ministry on miracles. It must be based on sound doctrine. The people readily embraced the miracles but could not come to terms with some of Jesus' teaching (doctrine).

The Synoptics indicate that Jesus had several motives in retreating to the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. The time had come to prepare the disciples for his death and sort out those who would be loyal from those who would not. The determination of Jesus' enemies to remove him became known to him and to his disciples, and they had to confront this rapidly growing hostility. Furthermore, as the accounts show, Jesus refused to take the part of a political Messiah or king. Knowing these things, He called the disciples together so that they could report on their recent ministry (Mark 6:30; Luke 9:10). Matthew adds that Jesus had just learned of the execution of John the Baptist (Matt 14:12-13) and the He withdrew to the wilderness with his disciples for consolation.⁴⁸

V1) After the healing of the crippled man at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem on the Sabbath Day, and a lengthy discourse with the Jewish religious leaders about His equality with God, Jesus returned to the Sea of Galilee to continue His ministry (see map on page 11 of your notes).

A. John identified the Sea of Galilee as the Sea of Tiberias.

1. This lake was named for a town on the lake's west shore built by Herod Antipas.
2. The sea is actually a fresh water lake that is about 14 miles long and 9 miles wide.

B. Some time after this incident, it can be learned from the Synoptics that Herod

⁴⁸ Tenney, Merrill C. “Acts.” In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 71. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.

Antipas had killed John the Baptist (Mark 6:14–29; cf. John 3:24), the disciples had preached throughout Galilee (Mark 6:7–13, 30–31), multitudes of people were curious about Jesus, and Herod Antipas was seeking Jesus (Luke 9:7–9).

1. So the time between the events in John 5 and 6 was probably six months.⁴⁹

V2) A crowd gathered even in this “solitary” (cf. Matt. 14:13; Mark 6:32) and “remote place” (Matt. 14:15).

A. Miracles of healing always have a great impact upon people and increases their level of curiosity.

1. As the frequency of the miracles increased, the size of the crowds increased as well.

B. God’s word teaches us that signs and wonders are to continue through those who are in covenant relationship with Him.

V3) A chain of hills surrounds the Sea of Galilee and Jesus retreated there with His disciples.

A. Because of the great crowds that followed them, Jesus had very little uninterrupted time to teach his closest disciples. He used this opportunity to do so.

V4) Perhaps some of the crowd following Jesus was from the northern part of Israel and they had begun their journey south to Jerusalem for the annual Passover and had encountered Jesus.

A. The origin of the feast can be found in Exodus 12, when the Passover lamb was slain, and its flesh was roasted and eaten.

1. The feast celebrated the deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian slavery.
2. The Passover of this verse was (29 A.D.) 1 year before the Passover at which Jesus was crucified.
3. This is the third Passover of our Lord’s ministry (2:13;5:1).

V5) “Lifted up His eyes, and saw” is a typical Hebrew way of stressing Jesus’ intense compassion for the multitude.

A. Jesus’ question to Philip—“Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?”—was not for information but was part of His program of educating and testing the disciples (Luke 9:12; Mark 6:37).

B. Philip was from Bethsaida (1:44) which was the closest town, and he would know the local resources.

C. The answer to Jesus’ question was that it was impossible. How could they get food for several thousand people very late in the afternoon from the little neighboring villages.

⁴⁹ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 293). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

D. Jesus' question also produces a number of parallels with Numbers 11 in the Old Testament.

A. It is similar to Moses's question in Numbers 11:13. Other parallels between Numbers 11 and John 6 are:

1. Number 11:1 and John 6:41, 43
2. Numbers 11:7-9 and John 6:31ff
3. Numbers 11:13 and John 6:51ff
4. Number 11:22 and John 6:9, 12

V6) Jesus knew what He was going to do but He wanted to test them to see how they would respond.

A. Can you look back to a time when you were tested by God to see how you would respond?

B. God tests people to refine their faith, never to tempt them to do evil (cf. Gen. 22:1–18; James 1:2, 13–15; 1 Peter 1:7).

V7) Phillip's response to Jesus question that we do not have the funds to purchase the amount of food needed to feed so many.

A. 200 denarii would have been eight months worth of wages. Most people worked for one denarius for one day's labor.

B. Plus, that much bread to feed 5,000 men, (not including women and children) would not have been available to buy even if they had that much money.

C. However, we must not limit what God can or cannot do with what we do or do not have. We must never judge God's ability by our own bankruptcy.

V8) Andrew, Peter's brother had made his way into the crowd to see what resources might be available.

V9) He located a boy who had five barley loaves of bread and two fish.

A. That would be an adequate meal for the boy.

1. Barley bread is not as tasty as wheat bread and was less expensive. It was known as the bread of the poor.

B. Andrew acknowledged that this small meal for the poor was nothing when compared to the mammoth need before them.

C. I wonder how many times we have limited God's ability because of what we don't have? You know the mentality—The need is much greater than my provisions!

D. In performing miracles, Jesus always enjoyed working through people. Here he took

what a young child offered and used it to accomplish one of the great miracles in the Bible.

V10) In Mark's account of the miracle (Mark 6:33-44) in vv 39, 40 Jesus instructed them to have the people sit on the green grass in groups of 50 and 100. This arrangement made it easy to count the people and to distribute the food.

A. The men numbered 5,000. There were perhaps 10,000 fed when including the women and children.

V11) Jesus gave thanks for and blessed the five loaves and two fish. They distributed the food and everyone ate as much as they wanted.

A. Jesus "took" the offering. No matter how small or seemingly insignificant an offering may appear, "Little is much when God is in it!"

B. This very significant miracle was done simplistically without showiness.

V12) When everyone's hunger was satisfied and they were full, Jesus instructed them to gather the leftovers so that no food would be wasted.

V13) The disciples' gathering of the 12 baskets of fragments was part of their education, to show them that He is more than adequate to supply their needs.

A. The 12 baskets filled with fragments (leftovers) shows proof of the miracle.

1. The detail of collecting the remaining fragments of bread and fish may have been introduced to emphasize the sufficiency and generosity that Jesus provided.

B. Jesus used the term fragments because the Jews broke their bread and did not slice it.

V14) The effect of the miracle of feeding the multitude is recorded only by John. The purpose of his Gospel is to reveal the deity of Jesus; therefore, John tells us the people were aware of the sign.

A. The people testified that Jesus was "truly the prophet who is to come into the world."

1. Remember, they were looking for the prophet that Moses said would come (Deut 18:15).

B. Since Moses had provided food and water in the desert (Ex 16:11-36; 17:1-6; Num 11:1-33; 20:2-11), the people expected that the Prophet like Moses would do likewise.

V15) The people saw His sign, but they did not perceive its meaning. They were so excited with the prospect that Jesus might fulfill their expectations of a political Messiah. After all, one who could feed over 5,000 people met the criteria. They wanted to seize Him and make Him King.

A. This marks the highpoint of Jesus' popularity and a great temptation for Him.

1. Could He have the kingdom without the Cross? No. Jesus' kingdom would be given to Him by the Father (cf. Ps. 2:7-12; Dan. 7:13-14).

2. His kingdom will not come from this world (John 18:36).
3. The path of the Father's will lies in another direction. Before He can be the reigning Lion of Judah, He must be the Lamb who bears the sin of the world (1:29).⁵⁰

B. The desire of the multitude to make Jesus King marks both the height of his popularity in the moment of decision for him.

1. They wanted someone to rule them who would feed them and guarantee their security; they had no comprehension of His spiritual mission or purpose.
2. He, on the other hand, refused to become a political opportunist or demagogue.
3. His kingdom could not be promoted by organizing a revolt against the existing political powers or by promising a dole (entitlement) to all who join His banner.⁵¹

C. Jesus perceived that would come and by force try to make Him king. So He departed again into a mountain to be alone.

Jesus Walks on the Water (6:15-25)

Jesus knew the disciples were in danger. The crowd was so aroused by the supernatural miracle of feeding approximately 10,000 people and there was a movement to make Him King by force, if necessary. The disciples would have rejoiced at the opportunity to become famous and powerful! In fact, at this moment in their journey with Jesus, they had the same expectations as the people; they believed Jesus had come to fulfill the mission of restoring the kingdom of Israel to its former prominence and glory.

V16) Evening is from the beginning of sunset and extending until about 9:00 pm.

A. Mark 6:45 informs us that Jesus compelled His disciples to get into the boat and go to Bethsaida while He sent the crowd away.

V17) His disciples went down to the lake. As they got out on the lake and began their journey across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum, the sun went down and it became dark and the wind picked up. Jesus had not joined them as they had expected him to do.

A. According to the Gospel of Mark (Mark 6:45–48), Jesus was up in the hills praying while watching them in their toil.

V18) The west wind, which often picks up at evening, caught them in the open water. They were headed directly into it and found themselves making little progress. They were “straining at the oars” (Mark 6:48).

⁵⁰ Ibid p. 294

⁵¹Tenney, Merrill C. “Acts.” In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*: With the New International Version, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 72. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981

- A. Did Jesus know that a storm was coming? Of course. Then why did He deliberately send His friends into danger?
 - 1. Quite the opposite is true: He was rescuing them from greater danger, the danger of being swept along by a fanatical crowd who wanted to make Him king by force.
- B. There could also be another reason for that storm: the Lord had to balance their lives. Without balance they could be filled with pride because of their association with such a miracle worker and fall.
 - 1. The disciples had experienced great joy in being part of a thrilling miracle. Now they had to face a storm and learn to trust the Lord more.
 - 2. The feeding of the 5,000 was the lesson, but the storm was the examination after the lesson.
- C. At times we have storms in our life not to punish us, but to help keep our lives in balance and focused on Jesus Christ.

V19) They had rowed about three and a half miles, so they were in the middle of the lake.

- A. They were terrified to see a figure walking on the water. They thought it was a ghost (Mark 6:49).
 - 1. This occurred in the “fourth watch” of the night, that is, between 3 and 6 a.m. (Matt. 14:25; Mark 6:48).

V20) Jesus knew that they were very afraid and had no idea what to do.

- A. Jesus tells them, “It is I; do not be afraid.”
- B. The clause “It is I” literally means “I am,” and was used by Jesus (in 8:58) with very strong theological meaning.

V21) They were glad to receive Jesus into the boat. I am confident it brought calmness into their lives.

- A. If you allow Jesus and the presence of the Holy Spirit into the storms of your life, it will bring calmness and confidence in great measure to you.
- B. Immediately upon Jesus entering the boat, they found themselves instantly at the place they were so desperately trying to reach, but not having any success.
- C. Jesus showed them not only can He miraculously feed the multiples but He can intervene and protect those who serve Him.

V22) The day after the miracle of feeding the multitudes, the crowd that had gathered at the shore wanted to know where Jesus was.

- A. They knew nothing of the miracle that had taken place during the night, when Jesus was walking on the water toward the disciples. They were in the boat that Jesus had

sent them away in.

B. The crowd had seen Jesus push them off from the shore the evening before and Jesus did not get in the boat with them.

1. There was only one small boat at the shore so they assumed Jesus was still in the immediate area.

V23) Boats were arriving from Tiberias near the place where the miracle feeding took place, so they assumed Jesus would be in one of the boats.

V24) When they realized that Jesus nor His disciples were not in any of the boats, they decided themselves to hire the small boats to take them to Capernaum. They thought Jesus might be there.

V25) Finding Jesus was not difficult. There was always many people crowded around Him.

A. They questioned Him as to how He got to Capernaum?

1. They had been watching the shoreline from late the preceding night and from early morning and knew He did go by boat.

B. The how of the miracle is incomprehensible.

1. Jesus walks on water—Steps inside the boat and they are immediately at the land where they were going (v 21).

Jesus Speaks To The Crowd That Followed Him (6:26-40)

Some of the crowd that had been miraculously fed located Jesus in Capernaum. They were very curious and wanted to know how He got there (v 25).

V26) Jesus responded to them but He did not address their immediate question of “How did you get here?” Rather, He revealed their motives for searching for Him.

A. With strong language, Jesus informed them that their true reason for seeking Him is not because of signs or miracles, but because they ate and were filled and satisfied.

B. Their motives were carnal, and not spiritual. Their quest was in response to their flesh; their natural desire for food—So they wanted to make Him king.

V27) Jesus expounded, “That they should not work for food that perishes.” He was not condoning laziness, but was prioritizing how they should live their life.

A. Let your first priority be, “Seeking food which endures to eternal life.”

1. Jesus’ focus is on the spiritual, not the natural.
2. “Humanity does not live by bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4).
3. Physical food satisfaction is brief, but spiritual food leads to eternal life.

B. The Son of Man (the Incarnate Son of God) who has access to heaven (John 1:51, 3:13) will give people this spiritual food.

1. This spiritual food is ultimately Christ Himself (6:53).

C. God the Father authenticated Jesus' claim that He was true heavenly "food."

1. The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand was an impression of the seal of the Father—The bakers of Jesus day sealed (impressed) a mark on the bread to insure its quality.
2. Jesus will shortly tell them that He is their bread from heaven, bearing the Father's mark.

V28) They recognized that Jesus was telling them God had a requirement for them. If Jesus would inform them what God expects from them, they would be willing to do it.

A. They, as well as people today think that they please God and have eternal life by doing good things.

V29) Jesus' response was a contradiction to their thinking. They were thinking "works" because their religious experience was connected with the multitude of requirements from the Law and the added traditions given by the elders.

A. Jesus testified that the only work God wanted from them, was to believe in "Him whom the Father had sent."

1. God demands that people recognize their inability to save themselves and receive His gift (Rom 6:23).

V30) It is odd that after having witnessed one of the greatest miracles in the Bible that they would ask Him for a sign, a miracle so that they could see and then believe.

A. They asked him, "What work (miracle) are you going to perform?"

1. The miracle they had witnessed and had partaken in just hours before did not encourage them toward faith in Christ.

B. God's order is believe and see—Not see and then believe.

V31) The crowd as usual was demanding a sign. We will discover on several occasions that the crowds would ask Jesus for a sign to authenticate His claims.

A. Moses' claim that he was sent by God was followed by signs.

1. The feeding of the multitude did not equate to the magnitude of the miracle of the manna.

B. However, their forefathers did not believe Moses and they did not believe Jesus.

1. Our covenant with Christ is established by our relationship with Him; not by miracles.

V32) Jesus began the correction of their erroneous view of the manna by beginning with the strong language of, "Truly, truly. I say to you."

A. He corrected their ideas in three ways:

1. The Father, not Moses gave the manna.
2. The Father, was still giving “manna” then, not merely in the past.
3. The true Bread from heaven is Jesus, not the manna.

B. Therefore, their supposed superiorities of Moses and his sign vanished. Manna was food for the body, and it was useful. But Jesus is God’s full provision for people and their total existence.

1. Jesus repeatedly said, “He had come down from heaven” (vv 32–33, 38, 41–42, 50–51, 58).

V33) Jesus continues teaching on the true bread.

A. The “bread comes from heaven”—indicates the source of the bread of God.

1. “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

B. The “bread gives life”—declares what the bread of God accomplishes.

1. Jesus feeds, nourishes, and sustains life (our existence).

C. To “the world,” indicates the scope of the bread of God.

1. It was not limited as the manna was.

V34) The crowd did not perceive that Jesus was/is the genuine Bread which He had been describing.

A. Like the woman at the well who said, “Give me this water so that I will never thirst again” (4:15) this crowd did not understand Jesus’ deity when they said “Lord, always give us this bread.”

1. They, like the Samaritan woman were looking for a permanent solution to their temporal (earthly) problem.

V35) This verse begins the first part of Jesus’ Bread of Life discourse and concludes with verse 47.

A. It contains the first of seven great I AM statements recorded by John, statements that are found nowhere else in the Gospels.

1. For the other six, see John 8:12; 10:7–9, 11–14; 11:25–26; 14:6; 15:1, 5.
2. See pages 8 of your lecture notes.

B. God revealed Himself to Moses by the name I AM (Jehovah) (Ex. 3:14). God is the self-existent One who “is, and ... was, and ... is to come” (Rev. 1:8).

1. When Jesus used the name I AM, He was definitely claiming to be God.

C. Jesus corrected two additional errors in their thinking:

1. The food of which He spoke refers to a Person, not a commodity.
2. Once someone is in right relationship to Jesus, they find satisfaction

which is everlasting and not temporal.

D. “Bread of Life” means bread which provides life. Jesus is humanity’s necessary “food.”

1. In Western culture, bread is often optional, but it was an essential staple then.
2. Jesus promised, “He who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty.”
3. The “never’s” are emphatic in the Greek.

V36) Jesus rebukes them for their lack of faith. They had the privilege of a first hand encounter. They had witnessed Him (His personal presence), His teaching, and they had been part of the miracles He performed. Yet, they did not believe in Him.

A. Seeing does not always lead to believing!

V37) “All that” (*pan ho*) is neuter singular, signifying the complete (total) group of believers and not individual members of the group. The character or nature of the group is stressed, not their individual identity.

A. “The Father gives” and the Son receives.

1. It is the total group that the Father gives the Son. But “those who come to Me” speaks of the individual member of the group.

B. “I will certainly not cast them out” expresses Jesus’ promise to save the person who “comes,” “believes,” and “receives” Him.

1. One’s relationship is predicated by the action of their own will to come to Him.

V38) Six times in this immediate context, Jesus tells His audience that He “came down from heaven” (John 6:33, 38, 41, 50, 51, 58).

A. His purpose and mission is to fulfill the will of God the Father who sent Him.

1. He had not come to perform His own will.

B. As followers of Christ, we must realize that we are commissioned to do the will of our Heavenly Father and not pursue our own will.

1. “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Cor 6:20).

V39) Jesus continues expounding on the Father’s will to the crowd.

A. His will is explained with three emphasis:

1. “That which the Father has sent (given) Him”—Followers of Christ.
2. “I loose nothing (no one)” —We are secure in our relationship with Christ.
3. “Raised up on the last day”—The resurrection of those who have died believing in Christ.
 - a. “At the last day” is a phrase which is unique to John’s writing. Four times he uses this language (vv 39, 40, 44, 54).

V40) Jesus concludes His remarks to crowd by repeating and reinforcing the ideas of the previous verses.

A. Those who look and believe on Jesus, and remain in covenant with Him for salvation has eternal life.

1. The divine decree has insured it (cf. Rom. 8:28–30).

2. They/we have eternal life (John 6:47, 50–51, 54, 58) and will be raised at the last day (cf. vv. 39, 44, 54).

Jesus Speaks To the Jews Who Were Complaining About His Teaching (6:41-58)

Jesus turns His attention to the Jews who lived in the area that had been listening to his teaching to the crowd that followed Him because of the miracle of the loaves and fish.

V41) “The Jews” in John usually represent those who are opposed to Jesus, not the Jewish population at large.

A. The Jews were unbelievers and their hostility toward Jesus had been escalating.

B. They were very upset and angry that Jesus had said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”

1. “I am the bread” implies that no one was the bread but Himself.

C. Additionally, He said, “He came down from heaven.”

1. This statement of His heavenly origin increased their antagonism toward Him.

V42) They knew Jesus’ very lowly earthly origin in the despised village of Nazareth. They were familiar with His earthly father and mother, Joseph and Mary.

A. Their expectation of the Messiah was based on the popular idea that when the Messiah came, He would:

1. Appear as a mature man

2. Have a spectral arrival

3. Be a king

B. Obviously, Jesus met none of their expectations. How can He say, “He came down from heaven?” His claims was incredulous!

V43) Jesus made no attempt to correct their unbelief other than to rebuke their grumbling.

V44) Jesus continued and informed them that “No one can come to Him unless the Father draws them.”

A. He draws humanity by sending the Son (bread) into the world with the revelation of Himself.

1. God draws the sinner by revealing His love displayed on the cross of Calvary.

2. The drawing power of the Father takes place by the Holy Spirit’s reproving, convincing, and convicting the sinner of sins, righteousness, and judgment to

come (John 16:8-11).

B. Jesus repeats the phrase again, “I will raise them up on the last day” speaking of the promise of resurrection for those who belong to Him (cf 39, 44)

V45) To support His doctrine of salvation by God’s grace, Jesus cited the Old Testament.

A. The quotation, “They will all be taught by God,” is from the Prophets, Isaiah 54:13, and Jeremiah 31:34

1. This “teaching” of God refers to His inner work that disposes people to accept the truth about Jesus and respond to Him.

B. Jesus reinforces His teaching by reminding them that “Everyone who listens to and learns from God will come to and believe in Me (Jesus).

V46) The invisibility of God is taught in the Scriptures (1:18). This is the reason no image could be made of God (Ex 20:4).

A. Jesus claimed authoritative knowledge of God such as a child’s claim concerning their own father.

1. Jesus was with the Father in the beginning (1:1).

V47) The manifestation of God through the Son is the subject of Jesus’ discourse. The Person of the manifestation, therefore, must be believed in order that eternal life might be possessed.

A. “He that believes” denotes the one who is believing.

1. The present condition of believing is followed by the present possession of “everlasting life.”

B. He did not say he who “believed” but *is* “believing.”

1. It is not sufficient to have trusted and committed at a time in the past.

2. The experience must be a present practice.⁵²

V48) In verse 47 Jesus referred to eternal life. He now connects the “belief” to Himself as the “Bread of Life” (cf 35) that provides eternal life.

V49) Your fathers who ate the manna in the wilderness died.

A. The manna met only a limited need. It provided temporary physical life. The Israelites came to loathe it, and ultimately they died.

V50) Jesus uses this same language in verses 32, 33, 41, 42, 50, 51 and 58.

A. Jesus is a Bread of a different kind. He is from heaven and gives life. A person who eats of that Bread will not die.

⁵² Harris, Ralph W. *The Complete Biblical Library, The New Testament Study Bible John*. Springfield, MO 1988 p175

V51) Jesus clearly identifies Himself as the living bread that came down out of heaven. There is no ambiguity in His declaration of being sent by the Father.

A. If anyone eats of this bread.

1. Because Christ is the living bread, He offered Himself as bread (life), and declares that anyone eating this bread will live forever.

B. Jesus concluded His words to “The Jews” that He was/is God’s gift to the world.

1. He would give His flesh to and for the world so that anyone and everyone that will partake and follow Him will be forgiven of their sins and will have everlasting life with both Him and the Father.

V52) Many times Jesus’ teaching was not understood by the crowd or His disciples. Humanity’s carnal and limited mind attempting to ascertain the divine and unlimited mind of God is no small thing.

A. The Jews begin to argue among themselves about what Jesus had been teaching.

1. “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?”
2. Their perception and limited comprehension remained at a materialistic level.

B. Here we have another example in John’s Gospel of the people misunderstanding a spiritual truth by treating it literally (see John 2:19–21; 3:4; 4:11).

1. All Jesus said was, “Just as you take food and drink within your body and it becomes a part of you, so you must receive Me within your innermost being so that I can give you life.”

V53) This is the fourth time in this chapter that Jesus uses the phrase, I tell you the truth (verily, verily) (cf. vv. 26, 32, 47).

A. V 51 dealt with the first part of this verse “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man.”

B. Jesus is speaking of the Eucharist when he says, “eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood. The Sacramental evidence is obvious.

1. However, Jesus did not institute the Communion service until a year later.

C. When He told that they must drink “His blood,” His speech couldn’t have been more bold. Jesus’ hearers must have been shocked beyond comprehension by His perplexing words.

1. The Jews knew God’s command, “You must not eat or drink the blood” (Lev 17:10-14).
2. The blood also was the means of atonement. It is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life (Lev 17:11).

V54) Clearly, Jesus was speaking of making atonement by His death and giving life to those who personally appropriate His provisions (Him) (cf. John 6:63).

A. Faith in Christ’s death brings eternal life (cf. vv. 40, 47, 50–51) and later bodily

resurrection (cf. vv. 39–40, 44).

V55) Just as we need proper food and drink to be physically sustained and healthy, Jesus declares, “His flesh and blood is true spiritual food and drink” that will spiritually sustain us and keep us spiritually healthy.

V56) Jesus is not speaking metaphorically. He is literally speaking about His life, death and resurrection.

A. Eating and drinking indicates present tense and ongoing communion with Jesus.

1. Our communion/fellowship with Him and His communion/fellowship with us is relationship driven.

V57) “The living Father” is a term that occurs only here, though the term “the living God” occurs 14 times in the NT (cf. 5:26).⁵³

A. Jesus reiterates three truths:

1. The Father sent Him
2. Because the Father lives, He lives
3. Because He (the Son) lives, the believer lives.

V58) Jesus concludes His remarks to the Jews.

A. He restates three facts:

1. This bread (Jesus) came down out of heaven
2. Your forefathers who ate the manna died
3. He who eats this bread will live forever

Jesus’ Words to His Disciples (6:59-65)

After His discourse with the Jews, Jesus turns His focus to the disciples. He wanted to know if what He had taught the Jews was going to cause them to stumble. This constitutes the third group of people that Jesus had spoken to in chapter six.

V59) John informed us that Jesus was teaching these things in the synagogue in Capernaum.

A. The synagogue method of teaching was by questions and counter questions, comments with opposing comments (dialogue).

V60) The enigmatic words of Jesus greatly disturbed some of the disciples as much as it did the antagonistic Jews. As they began understanding what He was teaching, it was totally unacceptable to them. They responded by saying that this is a “very hard and difficult saying to receive.”

A. Jesus’ teaching was not hard to understand but hard to accept once understood.

1. The Jews lacked the spiritual perception to grasp His meaning. Therefore, they rejected His words.

⁵³ Ibid p. 179

B. The immediate expectation and enthusiasm for Jesus as their political Messiah (v15) was over. They knew He would not be their deliverer from Roman oppression.

V61) Jesus was aware that His disciples had grumbled at His teaching as well. Having divine knowledge and knowing what they were thinking (2:25) He asked them, “If His teaching would cause them to stumble?”

V62) Jesus challenged His disciples by asking them, “If they were offended by the process of salvation.” Paul wrote that the crucified Messiah was a “stumbling block” to the Jews (1 Cor 15:43).

A. He wanted to know “How are you going to respond when you see the Son of Man ascending to where I was before?”

B. Jesus was saying, “If you stumble at My descent from heaven, will you also stumble at My ascent back to heaven?”

1. His intention of returning to His Father is clearly stated in John 14:3 and 17:11.

2. Thank God the resurrection and ascension answered many of the disciples’ questions. Afterwards, they often said, “We remember when Jesus said.....”

V63) Jesus restates that the “flesh profits you nothing.” But the words that He spoke are “spirit and life.”

V64) “Jesus knew” speaks once again of His divine knowledge of all people.

A. Jesus knew which followers were believers and which ones were unbelievers.

1. This is another evidence of His supernatural knowledge (cf. 1:47; 2:24–25; 6:15).

2. He also knew that Judas would betray Him (v 70).

B. Jesus knew from the beginning that apostasy would be a constant problem for the church.

1. Jesus spoke the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matt 13:24-30) in which “the enemy” (Matt 13:28) sows weeds in the Church.

V65) Jesus had taught that divine enablement was necessary for people to come to faith (v. 44). The apostasy here (v. 66) should not be surprising.

A. Believers who remain with Jesus is evidence of the Father’s work.

1. The unbelieving crowds are evidence that “the flesh counts for nothing” (v. 63).

Peter’s Confession of Faith (6:66-71)

Peter clearly answered Jesus’ question to His disciples about their commitment to Him and their comprehension of who He is, and what the Father had sent Him to accomplish. However, Peter

made the mistake of thinking all of the disciples were committed believers and followers of Christ and presumes to speak for everyone. Peter did not know that Judas was a betrayer!

V66) Some of the saddest words in the Scriptures are spoken here, “Many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.”

A. The preaching of the Word of God always leads to a sifting of the hearts of the listeners. God, through the Holy Spirit draws people to the power of the truth from His Word.

1. Those who reject the Word will reject the Savior.
2. Those who receive the Word will receive the Savior and experience the new birth, eternal life.

V67) Here is the first mention of “the twelve” in John’s Gospel.

A. When the twelve disciples saw the withdrawal of so many followers, they were greatly troubled by what they had heard Jesus teach (v 61) and this mass exodus of believers.

B. Jesus was acutely aware of His chosen disciples confusion, apprehension, and doubt. So He questions them as to their faith and commitment to Him.

C. Jesus knew that they did not fully understand His teaching and they would not until after His resurrection (20:9).

V68) Peter, as a spokesman for the group, gave his confession of faith.

A. The path may be difficult, but he was convinced that Jesus’ words led to eternal life.

1. No one else has the gift of eternal life.

V69) Peter continued, “We have believed and have known that You are the Holy One of God.”

V70, 71) Jesus then asked, “Have I not chosen you, the Twelve?”

A. John’s Gospel does not record Jesus’ choice of the Twelve.

1. He assumed his readers knew the Synoptics or common church tradition (cf. Mark 3:13–19) of their selection.

B. This choice was not election to salvation, but was Jesus’ call to them to serve Him.

1. Yet, He said, one of you is a devil!
2. In the light of John 13:2, 27, Satan’s working in Judas was tantamount to Judas being the devil.
3. In 6:70 the Greek does not have the indefinite article “a,” so it could be translated “one of you is Satan (devil).”

C. Jesus’ knowledge of Judas (who was called Judas Iscariot because his father was Simon Iscariot) was still another example of His omniscience (cf. 1:47; 2:24–25; 6:15, 61).

1. Later in the Upper Room, Jesus again said one of the Twelve would betray Him (13:21).
2. John called Judas “the traitor” (18:5).
3. Judas was a tragic figure, influenced by Satan; yet he was responsible for his own evil choices.⁵⁴

D. The disciples later could reflect on this prophecy of His and be strengthened in their faith.

⁵⁴ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 298). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Jesus Visits Jerusalem (7:1-52)

In chapter seven, Jesus moves from Galilee to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. This movement prepares the way for confrontation between Jesus and His opponents. For the past months, Jesus' ministry had been in the relative obscure area of Galilee. Being in the Galilee region was safer and provided a delay in the conflict with the Jewish leadership. However, conflict would rapidly escalate in Jerusalem as He resumes His ministry there.

V1) "After these things" speaks of feeding the 5,000 and Jesus' discourse on Himself as the Bread of life. As a result of His teaching, many professed disciples withdrew from following Him.

A. He continued His ministry in Galilee and had not returned to Jerusalem because His Jewish enemies were seeking to kill Him.

V2) The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated in the autumn "on the fifteenth day of the seventh month" (Lev 23:34), which would compare roughly to the second week of October in our calendar.

A. Each family constructed its own temporary shelter of branches to live in for the seven days of the feast. This typified the years of wandering in the desert before entering the Promised Land.

1. It was a joyous celebration commemorating God's provision to their ancestors forty year wilderness journey and their transition to their own land.
2. It was one of three annual feasts that all Jewish men were required to attend (Duet 16:16).

V3) Jesus' half brothers, James, Joses, Simon, and Jude, the younger sons of Joseph and Mary (Matt 13:55, Mark 6:3) suggested that Jesus should leave the Galilee region and return to Judea. The Feast of Tabernacles would be the perfect opportunity to display His power, and perhaps recapture some of the lost crowds from His Bread of Life teaching in chapter 6 in Galilee.

A. With pilgrims coming from all over the region to the religious capital of Jerusalem, it would be an excellent opportunity for Him to acquire some additional publicity.

1. Do some teaching, perform some miracles so that your disciples can see the works that You are doing.
2. Perhaps they thought the hostility against Him had subsided.

V4) It did not seem rational to Jesus' brothers for Him not to show off His glory. If He really was who and what He claimed to be, they reasoned, He should publicly demonstrate it.

A. They advised Him to display Himself in a powerful, brilliant way: Show Yourself to the world.

1. But God's way was a public display on a cross of humiliation.

V5) John explained that even His own brothers did not believe in Him.

A. What then was their motivation for trying to get Jesus to go to Jerusalem during the

feast and demonstrate and display His power?

V6) Jesus responded that, “His time was not yet here.”

A. They could move about without any consequences; for them any time is right.

B. Jesus always pleased the Father, so His time movements were those the Father desired.

1. It was not yet time for the public manifestation (the Cross).
2. Several times John noted that Jesus’ time had not yet come (2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20).
3. Then in His intercessory prayer, just before the Cross, He began, “Father, the time has come” (17:1; cf. 12:23, 27; 13:1).

V7) The reason his family could move about freely, and He could not was because of the world’s hatred for Him.

A. The world was not dangerous for His brothers, because they were part of it.

B. But the world hated Jesus because He is not of it. He had come into it as Light and pointed out its sin and rebellion against the Father.

V8) Jesus tells His brothers to go ahead to the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem.

A. I am not going to feast (KJV includes the word “yet”).

1. Jesus was going to delay His arrival in Jerusalem and continue ministering in Galilee.

B. It was not yet the Father’s time—God’s timing is everything!

V9) Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee doing the tasks of ministry which the Father had ordained. Every move Jesus made was in accordance with His Father’s will.

V10) After Jesus’ brothers left for the feast, Jesus went to Jerusalem also.

A. Because of the plot to kill Him (vv 1, 25) Jesus secretly enters the city.

1. He did not want to draw attention to Himself by arriving with an entourage.
2. It was not yet time for His messianic manifestation (the cross).

V11) Because all Jewish men were required to attend the festival and because the area would be filled with worshippers, they assumed Jesus would be present.

A. Because they had been unable to locate Him, they were asking the temple authorities, “Where is He?”

B. Jesus’ secret arrival in Jerusalem was not an act of deception. It was an attempt to avoid the publicity. Jesus knew His enemies would be watching and waiting for His arrival.

- V12) There was division among the crowd regarding Jesus' ministry. Some said, "He is a good man." Others declared, "No, He leads the people astray (deceives them)."
- V13) No one was speaking openly or defending that Jesus was the Messiah because they feared the Jewish leadership. They did not want to involve themselves or Jesus.
- V14) The first three days passed without anyone seeing Jesus. Perhaps, the authorities had relaxed their search, since He had not shown up for the beginning of the feast.
- A. The crowds were curious to see if He would be present to teach and perform miracles.
 - 1. As the festival reached the half way point, no Jesus as of yet.
 - B. Without any announcements or pretentiousness, Jesus show up in the temple and began to teach.
- V15) As the official religious leaders (priest, scribes) listened to Jesus' teaching along with the crowds, they were amazed and astonished. His teaching was with authority, and not like the teachers of the Law. (cf. Mark 1:22).
- A. His teaching was academic and spiritually penetrating. He had never been a student in any Rabbinic school. They could not comprehend how this could be possible.
- V16) In the next three verses, Jesus speaks of the divine authority of His teaching.
- A. The religious authorities assumed that a person studied in a traditional Rabbinical school or was self-taught.
 - B. But Jesus' response provides a third option—His teaching was from God who had commissioned Him (cf. 12:49-50; 14:11, 24).
 - 1. He did not teach from a personal motive, but from His divine commission.
 - 2. His teaching was designed to manifest God to humanity.
- V17) Jesus informed his listeners that if they are sincere and willing to do God's will, they would know that His teaching was from God and not self derived.
- A. True salvation and experiential knowledge of Jesus' teaching requires a sincere desire to do the will of God.
 - 1. He clarifies what he means in the next verse when He says, "Or whether I speak for myself."
- V18) This verse provides the test of motivation that can be applied to the product of the teaching.
- A. If a person seeks their own glory, they will teach and act from that motive.
 - 1. Jesus did not seek to glorify Himself, but God who sent Him.
 - 2. God is the ultimate and only authority.
 - B. The person who is not self-seeking but teaches for the glory of God must be true.
 - 1. Therefore, Jesus is the true and righteous one without any injustice.

- V19) Jesus acknowledged God used Moses to transmit the Law and its authority to Israel.
- A. He accused His adversaries, who claimed to be champions of Law, with failure to keep the Law.
 - 1. “Because there is in you no true striving to do the will of God. Therefore, you cannot know My divine mission.”
 - B. His accusation that they were plotting to kill Him was substantiated by their action at the conclusion of the feast (7:44-45).
- V20) The Jews slandered Jesus with this demon accusation four times in John alone (7:20; 8:48, 52; 10:20).
- A. The crowd’s response to Jesus’ accusation shows that the decision of the rulers had not been widely publicized.
- V21) The miracle Jesus referred to, was His healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, which He had performed on the Sabbath in Jerusalem at His last visit (5:1–18).
- A. Jesus was not saying that this was the only miracle that He had performed. By this time in His ministry, many notable miracles had taken place.
 - B. The Jews were concerned about the one that took place on the Sabbath. Jesus addressed this issue in the next verse.
- V22) Circumcision is a religious rite that predated Moses.
- A. Abraham circumcised as a sign of the covenant (Gen. 17:9–14).
 - 1. But Moses gave Israel circumcision in the sense of establishing it as part of the Levitical system.
 - 2. Under the Mosaic Law, “On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised” (Lev. 12:3) and they did so on the Sabbath.
- V23) If that day fell on a Sabbath, circumcising a boy would seemingly violate the Sabbath Law of rest. Yet the Jews circumcised on the Sabbath.
- A. Therefore, Jesus argued, if care for one part of the body was permitted, then certainly the healing of a whole body (that of the paralytic) should be allowed on the Sabbath.
 - B. Therefore, they had no reason to be angry with Him because He healed a crippled man on the Sabbath.
- V24) Many times decisions are made on the basis of outward appearance. Jesus said, “Judge with righteous judgment.”
- A. His statement was appropriate because the Book of the Ecclesiastes was read at the Feast of Tabernacles which He was participating in.
 - 1. The conclusion of the Book of Ecclesiastes stresses making sound and correct judgment (12:11).

V25) People in Jerusalem knew that the leaders were trying to kill Jesus and here He is in Jerusalem.

V26) Jesus is openly speaking to the public in the temple and around Jerusalem and the leaders are not saying or doing anything to Him. Why have they not arrested Him?

A. The people are now wondering, “Is their hesitation to do anything because they think He is the Christ?

1. The people were uncertain of Jesus’ real identity.
2. They felt that if He was a deceiver, He should be arrested, or if He was the Messiah, they should accept Him.

V27) The people who asked the question of verse 26 answered their own question. Their answer was founded on their conception of the Christ who was to come. They rejected Jesus for two reasons:

A. First, “we know this man” and His origin.

1. Jesus was from Nazareth, a little despised town in Galilee.
2. His father was mere carpenter, not a nobleman but a peasant.
3. Therefore, they reasoned no Messiah could come from such a family or area of the country.

B. Second, they believed when Christ comes “no one will know where He is from.”

1. The theory may have been an interpretation of Malachi 3:1.

V28) In the midst of interaction and confusion among the crowd, Jesus shouted out, perhaps, with a little sarcasm, “So you know me and where I am from, do you?”

A. Jesus affirmed His divine origin in spite of His humble early beginnings.

1. “I have not come of myself.”
2. “But God (my Father) who sent me is true.”

B. They did not know His true origin or His mission. Therefore, they did not know His Father, and they could not know Him.

V29) Jesus provided three reasons to validate His origin and mission.

A. First, His knowledge was of God. Second, His origin was from God. Third, His commission (sent with God’s authority) was from God.

V30) Jesus’ enemies attempted to seize Him, but they failed because His hour (time) had not yet come.

A. Not only did “the hour” prevent Him from the sudden actions of others (2:4), but it assured Him of His Father’s divine protection until “His time” (His death) had come.

1. God is sovereign!

- V31) Many in the crowd responded in belief, although it was hesitant. They did not affirm that He was the Messiah but cautiously suggested that the Messiah would perform no more miracles than Jesus did. Therefore, they tended to believe that He might be the promised deliverer they had long waited for.
- V32) With the growing approval of Jesus by the crowd, it prompted the chief priests and the Pharisees to take action. To delay any longer could result in more people turning to Jesus.
- V33) While the plan to arrest Him proceeded, Jesus continued to teach. He informed them that He will only be with them for a short time before He returns to His Father.
- A. This time was determined by God, not by the authorities.
- V34) As in previous messages, the people misunderstood what Jesus was saying. Within six months, Jesus would go back to the Father in heaven and the unsaved Jews would not be able to follow Him.
- A. “You will look for Me” is a prophecy that the Jewish nation will long for her Messiah.
 - 1. She is doing this now, not knowing that Jesus is her Messiah.
 - 2. Later she will weep for Him (Zech. 12:10–13; Rev. 1:7).
 - B. What a contrast between “where I am, there you cannot come” (John 7:34) and “that where I am, there you may be also”! (John 14:3)
 - 1. Had these people been willing to do God’s will, they would have known the truth—Soon it would be too late!
 - 2. He went bodily to heaven where unbelievers cannot come (cf. John 8:21).
- V35) The people had absolutely no understanding of what Jesus was saying. His words were an enigma to the crowd.
- A. Where could He possibly go that they could not find Him?
 - B. During that period the many Jewish people lived in Palestine. Others had migrated throughout the Roman Empire and beyond, as far east as Babylon.
 - 1. They were scattered among the Greeks.
 - 2. “Greeks” means not just people of Greece or Greek-speaking people but generally non-Jews or heathen (cf. “Greek” and “Jew” in Col. 3:11).⁵⁵
 - C. The question then was, will Jesus go teach the heathen? Without the Jews realizing it, their question was prophetic of the spread of the gospel after Jesus’ Ascension.
- V36) The crowd, after pondering what Jesus meant, simply repeated their questions. They did

⁵⁵ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 301). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

not understand His words.

A. Later Simon Peter, who, upon hearing Him speak similar words, said, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you” (13:37).

V37) This was the final day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Weeks).

A. The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated with certain festival rituals.

1. One was a solemn procession each day from the temple to the Gihon Spring. A priest filled a gold pitcher with water while the choir sang (Isaiah 12:3).
2. Then they returned to the altar and poured out the water. This ritual reminded them of the water from the rock during the wilderness wanderings (Num. 20:8–11; Ps. 78:15–16).
3. It also spoke prophetically of the coming days of Messiah (cf. Zech. 14:8, 16–19).
4. The Feast’s seventh and last day was its greatest (cf. Lev. 23:36).⁵⁶

B. Whether it was the seventh or the eighth day is unclear.

1. Deuteronomy 16:13 calls for seven days; Leviticus 23:36 prescribes an eight day, which follows the routine of the seventh.
2. Josephus (Antiq. 3. 10. 4) says that on the eighth day there should be a sacrifice of a calf, a ram, seven lambs, and a kid in propitiation of sin.
3. If “the last and greatest day of the Feast” refers to the eighth day, it makes the appeal of Jesus all the more meaningful.⁵⁷

C. Jesus stood, in contrast with the Rabbis’ usual position of being seated while teaching, said in a loud voice (cf. John 1:15; 7:28; 12:44) was a way of introducing a solemn announcement. His offer, Come to Me and drink, was an offer of salvation (cf. 4:14; 6:53–56).

V38) Jesus was referring to the experience of Israel recorded in Exodus 17:1–7.

A. Water was but a picture of the Spirit of God. Believers would not only drink the living water, but they would become channels of living water to bless a thirsty world!

B. The “artesian well” that He promised in John 4:14 has now become a flowing river!

1. While there are no specific prophetic Scriptures that indicate “rivers of water” flowing from the believer, there are a number of verses that parallel this thought: Isaiah 12:3; 15; 32:2; 44:3; and 58:11; and Zechariah 14:8.
 - a. Note that Zechariah 14:16ff speaks about the future Feast of

⁵⁶ Ibid p. 301

⁵⁷ Tenney, Merrill C. “Acts.” In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*: With the New International Version, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 72. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981

Tabernacles, when the Lord is King.⁵⁸

C. Jesus made His final statement to the entire multitude before they dispersed and returned to their homes.

V39) John explained that the “living water” (v. 38) was the coming gift of the Holy Spirit.

A. The Spirit within a believer satisfies their need of God, and provides him with regeneration, guidance, and empowerment.

B. In the earliest Greek manuscripts, the words, “Up to that time the Spirit had not been given,” are simply, “for there was not yet Spirit.”

1. This cannot be taken in an absolute sense because the Spirit had actively worked among people in the Old Testament era.

C. Jesus referred to the special baptizing, sealing, and indwelling work of the Spirit in the Church Age, which would start on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5, 8).

1. Jesus said He would “send the Spirit” to His followers (John 15:26; 16:7).

2. “The Spirit had not yet been given” to indwell believers permanently (cf. Ps. 51:11).

3. That happened after Jesus was glorified, that is after His death, resurrection, and Ascension.

4. “Glorified,” “glory,” and “glorify” are used frequently in John’s Gospel (John 7:39; 11:4; 12:16, 23, 28; 13:31–32; 14:13; 15:8; 16:14; 17:1, 4–5, 10).⁵⁹

V40) Many of the people as a result of His teaching were saying, “This certainly is the Prophet.”

A. Some saw Him as the Prophet mentioned by Moses (Deut. 18:15, 18). Who would speak God’s words to people.

1. See your lecture notes on John 1:21 for more information.

V41) Others said, “Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. Jesus is that predicted Prophet” (Acts 3:22).

A. Many rejected Him because He came from Galilee (cf. John 7:52).

V42) The ignorance of the crowd in Jerusalem concerning Jesus is revealed by their uncertainty about His origin.

A. According to Samuel and Isaiah (2 Sam. 7:16; Isa. 11:1) the Messiah was to be born into a Davidic family.

⁵⁸ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 317). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁵⁹ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 301–302). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

1. Micah predicted that He would be born in Bethlehem ... David's hometown (Micah 5:2).
2. Jesus is from a Davidic family (Matt. 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–38; Rom. 1:3) and was born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1–6).

B. But the crowd ignorantly overlooked those facts.

V43) The crowd continued to be divided as to who Jesus was.

V44) Their divided opinion enabled Him to continue His ministry without being immediately arrested.

V45) When the arresting officers that were sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus, arrived without Him, they wanted to know, “Why did you not bring Him?” Why did you fail in your mission?

V46) The response by the officers showed that Jesus' teaching had a powerful influence on all who listened to Him. Although they had been officially sent to arrest Him, His teaching had such an impact upon them that they could not carry out their orders.

V47) The Pharisees were angry that their orders had not be carried out. Now they were concerned if the officers had become followers and asked them, “If they had also now been deceived and led astray.”

V48) The Pharisees reminded the officers that none of the rulers of the Pharisees believed in Him.

A. Their statement reveals their pride. They thought they were too educated (v. 15) to be taken in by a deceiver.

1. Ironically a number of the rulers did believe (12:42; 19:38–39).
2. The Pharisees were jealous of Jesus' great popularity—“The whole world has gone after Him” (12:19).

V49) The Pharisees explained Jesus' popularity by suggesting that the people were too ignorant to recognize Jesus as a deceiver.

A. The crowd, according to the Pharisees, did not know the Law. They did not study it, so they could not obey it. And since they did not obey it, they were under God's curse (Deut. 28:15).

B. The irony of the situation was that the Pharisees, not the crowd, were under God's wrath because they rejected God's revelation in Jesus (John 3:36).

V50) Knowing the council's desire to kill Jesus, Nicodemus spoke up.

A. Nicodemus had an encounter with Jesus back in Chapter three.

1. He was also a member of the Sanhedrin and a member of the Pharisees.

V51) Nicodemus spoke up for justice and fairness and raised a legitimate legal objection by reminding them that their Law did not condemn someone, until the accused was heard and witnesses testified against them (Deut 17:8,9; 19:15-19).

V52) Nicodemus was a respected teacher in the nation (3:10), but the other members of the Sanhedrin chose to insult him.

A. Their prejudice and hatred against Jesus was so overwhelming that they put aside their cognitive abilities and cast reason to the wind. At this point, they had no concern for justice.

B. The Sanhedrin accused Nicodemus of being as ignorant as the Galileans. A prophet does not come out of Galilee, they argued. So the messianic Prophet cannot be a Galilean (cf. 7:41).

C. They were incorrect, for several prophets had come from Galilee.

1. Elijah (1Kings 17:1), Elisha (1Kings 19:16), Johan (2Kings 14:25), Nahum (Nahum 1:1), and Hosea (Hosea 7:1; 8:5,6).
2. Isaiah predicted that from Galilee, a great light would shine to bring deliverance (Isaiah 9:1,2). The verses that follow the prediction of the great light from Galilee are certainly messianic (Isaiah 9:3-7).

V53) Being totally exasperated by the officers' failure to arrest Jesus and Nicodemus' reminder of the order of the Law, they adjourned, filled with frustration and hatred and everyone went home!

Jesus Continues His Teaching at the Temple (8:1-59)

The Woman Caught in Adultery (8:1-11)

Almost all textual scholars agree that these verses (7:53–8:11) were not part of the original manuscript of the Gospel of John. The NIV states in brackets that “The earliest and most reliable manuscripts do not have John 7:53–8:11.” The style and vocabulary of this passage differ from the rest of the Gospel, and the passage interrupts the sequence from 7:52–8:12. It is probably a part of true oral tradition which was added to later Greek manuscripts by copyists.⁶⁰

Five questions need to be considered before commenting on this story: (1) Is it Scripture? (2) Was it written by John? (3) Is it ancient and true, that is, historical? (4) Is it canonical? (5) If it was not originally part of John’s Gospel, why is the material placed before 8:12 in most English Bible versions? Questions 1 and 4 are closely related but are not identical. As to question 1, the consensus of New Testament textual scholars is that this section was not part of the original text. For Protestants who accept that judgment, this fact settles the issue of canonicity (question 4): the passage is not part of the biblical canon. However, for Roman Catholic scholars canonicity means that this passage is authoritative because it is in the Vulgate. So even though the passage may not have been part of John’s original manuscript, Catholics nevertheless accept the passage as having God’s authority because the Vulgate includes it. Question 2, on the passage’s Johannine origin, is also tied to question 1. Not only do many Greek manuscripts lack these verses, but those that do include them often mark them with asterisks or obeli. In addition, various ancient Greek manuscripts include the passage in five different locations (after John 7:36, after 7:44, after 7:52, after 21:25, and after Luke 21:38). Both the textual evidence and stylistic data in the passage indicate that this is non-Johannine material.

Most commentators answer question 3 (Is it historical?) by yes. If this judgment is correct, then this is a rare extra-biblical authentic tradition about Jesus. John alluded to other things Jesus did (John 21:25) so this story may be one of those events. The answer to the fifth question seems to be that the material was placed before 8:12 in most Bible versions because the contents of this section relate well to two statements of Jesus in chapter 8 (“I pass judgment on no one” [8:15], and “Can any of you prove Me guilty of sin?” [8:46]).⁶¹

Is the story of the woman taken in adultery a part of Scripture? If it is, where does it belong in the Gospel record? John 7:53–8:11 is not found in some of the ancient manuscripts; where it is found, it is not always in this location in John’s Gospel. Most scholars seem to agree that the passage is a part of inspired Scripture (“a fragment of authentic Gospel material,” says Dr. F.F. Bruce) regardless of where it is placed.

⁶⁰ Ibid p. 302-303

⁶¹ Ibid p. 346

For many of us, the story fits right here! In fact, the development of the entire chapter can easily be seen to grow out of this striking event in the temple. Our Lord's declaration on His being the Light of the world (John 8:12) certainly fits, and so do His words about true and false judgment (John 8:15–16, 26). The repeated phrase “die in your sins” (John 8:21, 24) would clearly relate to the judgment of the woman; and the fact that the chapter ends with an attempt to stone Jesus shows a perfect parallel to the opening story. The transition from John 7:52 to 8:12 would be too abrupt without a transitional section.⁶²

Verse 7:53 shows that this story was a continuation of some other material. The original verse connection is now lost.

- V1) Jesus left the temple and went to the Mount of Olives to spend the night. He did this multiple times during the Passover season and slept under the trees. However, this event as it is recorded does not take place during the Passover.
- V2) Early in the morning Jesus returns to the temple. The crowds were gathering as well to hear His teaching. He sat down as was the custom of the Rabbi's and began teaching them.
 - A. Since Jesus regularly taught in the temple courts ... the people daily gathered to hear Him. As Luke wrote, “Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening He went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives, and all the people came early in the morning to hear Him at the temple” (Luke 21:37–38).
- V3) While Jesus was teaching, “The scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery.”
 - A. It is interesting that they brought this lady to Jesus. Jesus was not a judge and they had courts to try such cases.
 - B. Why did the Jews not bring the man with the woman? The Law stipulated that both were to be tried in the court (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22-24).
- V4) Their reference to Jesus as teacher was filled with hypocrisy, for they did not honestly attribute that high and notable function and office to Him.
- V5) They were eager to trap Jesus so that they could condemn Him as a lawbreaker.
 - A. Adultery was a sin punishable by death (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22-24).
 - B. They wanted to know Jesus' opinion for entrapment reasons:
 - 1. If He said, “Stone her,” they would accuse Him before the Romans, because they alone had the authority to execute anyone in Israel.
 - 2. If Jesus said, “Let her go free,” He would be acting and teaching against the law of Moses.

⁶² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 319). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- V6) John clearly states their reason for wanting to know Jesus' opinion on the matter.
- A. Jesus seems to ignore their harassment and draws the attention of those gathered from the accused woman to focus on Him and prepare them for an important directive that He was about to give.
 - 1. He stoops down and with His finger wrote on the ground.
- V7) Thinking they had Jesus at a huge disadvantage they continued pressing Him for an answer.
- A. Truly, they were not prepared for the answer that He would give them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."
- V8) Jesus immediately stooped down and wrote on the ground.
- A. Perhaps Jesus does this to give the Pharisees and scribes time to search their own hearts.
 - B. Jesus offered no opinion about the woman and her sin, only that they judge themselves.
 - 1. Therefore, He had not denied the law of Moses or acquitted the woman.
- V9) Hearing the challenge of Jesus, the self deliberation was short and they departed beginning with the oldest first and followed by the younger.
- A. Who was on trial? Was Jesus? Or the woman? Neither - it was the Pharisees and scribes that had their day in court as the accused.
 - 1. The disciples and the people were the observers, but the Pharisees and scribes departed, weighted with guilty consciences.
- V10) As the last accuser departed Jesus straightened up, said to her, Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?"
- V11) Her joyful and humble response, "No one, Lord."
- A. We hear no words of confession from her as we do from the Samaritan woman who was guilty of the same sin. However, that does not imply that she was not humble, submissive, and perhaps repentant.
 - B. Jesus did not excuse the woman for her sin. He emphasized that the woman's life should give evidence of her repentance.
 - C. Jesus speaks the redemptive words of "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more."
 - 1. Jesus does not look upon sin lightly, yet He who bore the sin of the world by His suffering forgives most graciously.

Jesus is the Light of the World (8:12-20)

- V12) This discourse continues Jesus' public teaching in the city of Jerusalem in the temple area.

- A. How fitting that during the Feast of Tabernacles, when the large lamps were burning, Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world” (cf. 1:4, 9; 12:35, 46).
 - 1. The world is in darkness, a symbol of evil, sin, and ignorance (Isa. 9:2; Matt. 4:16; 27:45; John 3:19).
 - 2. “Light” in the Bible is a symbol of God and His holiness (Acts 9:3; 1 John 1:5).
 - 3. Jesus is “*the* Light,” not merely a light or another light among many lights. He is the only Light, “the true Light” (John 1:9), for the whole world.
- B. When Jesus said, “Whoever follows Me,” He meant whoever believes and obeys Him (cf. 10:4–5, 27; 12:26; 21:19–20, 22).
 - 1. Jesus was speaking of salvation.
- C. Coming to Christ for salvation results in a different kind of life. A believer will never walk in darkness, that is, he will not live in it (cf. 12:46; 1 John 1:6–7).
 - 1. He does not remain in the realm of evil and ignorance (John 12:46) for he has Christ as his Light and salvation (cf. Ps. 36:9).

V13) As usual, the Pharisees challenged Jesus’ claims.

- A. Jesus’ testimony concerning Himself would not be legally accepted because His testimony concerning Himself would presumably be biased.
 - 1. The law required two witnesses to establish a fact in a capital case (Deut. 17:6; 19:15; John 8:17).
 - 2. Rabbinic tradition rejected self-testimony.
 - 3. Jesus had on a previous occasion admitted as much for He said, “If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid” (5:31).

V14) Here He protested saying, “Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going.”

- A. While a person’s testimony about himself may be biased by self-interest, it is equally true that no one knows more about his own nature and experience than the person himself. No individual can be sure of his own origin apart from external testimony, nor can he be sure of his future circumstances. Jesus, however, . . . knew “that he had come from God and was returning to God (13:3)”⁶³
- B. His testimony about Himself was therefore more accurate than that of His opponents, for they had no idea of His origin or His destiny, as the confusion reported in 7:25–44.
- C. For a witness to be credible, he must possess and produce facts concerning that which he testifies. Jesus was a credible witness, for He possessed the facts and testified to the

⁶³ Tenney, Merrill C. “Acts.” In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*: With the New International Version, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 92. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981

reality.

V15) Jesus argued further that the Pharisees were not qualified to come to a conclusion and offer a verdict on the validity of His witness because they used the wrong criteria: “You judge by fleshly (human) standards.”

A. Jesus stated the He was not “judging anyone.”

1. “I judge no man” reminds us of the narrative just preceding when Jesus told the woman taken in adultery, “Neither do I condemn you.”
2. A short time earlier He taught the principle: “Judge not according to appearance , but judge righteous judgment (7:24).

B. Jesus was not a civil judge nor did He come on a mission of condemnation. He came to seek and to save those who are condemned already (3:16-18).

V16) Jesus declared “If I judge, My judgement is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me.”

A. The Father and the Son mutually think, speak, and work to accomplish their purposes for and within humanity. God is not prejudiced toward any one nor does He judge according to outward appearances (Heb 4:12).

V17) In your own Law may refer to Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15 (or to Rabbinic laws), which speak of the necessity of two witnesses.

V18) In Jesus’ case, only God could authenticate Him. God the Son and God the Father are the required two Witnesses. The Father sent Jesus and authenticated Him by the signs (miracles) He performed.

V19) Jesus’ had said early that God was His Father (cf. 5:18).

A. The Jews were puzzled by His familiar way of talking about Him. That was not something the Jews did.

1. The Pharisees asked Him, Where is Your Father? Was He talking about God, or (as they supposed) His human father?

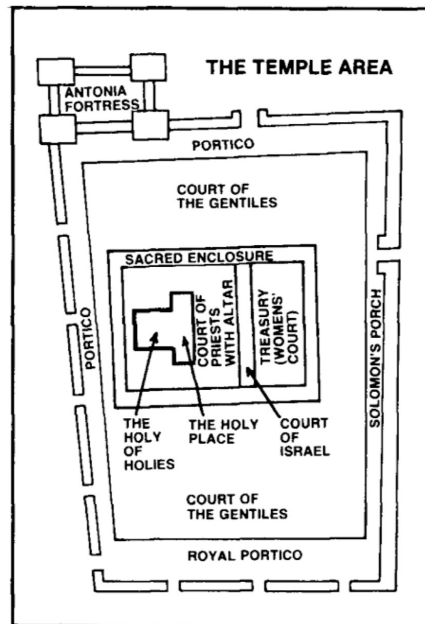
B. Their ignorance of Jesus showed their ignorance of God, for Jesus is the Revelation of the Father (cf. 1:14, 18; 14:7, 9).

1. Jesus clearly states, “If you knew Me, you would know My Father also.”

V20) Jesus spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. This was probably in the women’s court.

A. Jesus went there and instructed the people. No one seized (arrested) Him because, as John repeatedly pointed out, Jesus was working on God’s time schedule to accomplish the Father’s will and not on humanities.

1. He lived a protected life until His work was completed.



Jesus Warns Against Unbelief (8:21-30)

V21) “Again” highlights an additional time Jesus makes a similar statement.

A. It marks the dual destiny of Jesus and those who disbelieve: He would return to His Father, and they would die in their sins.

1. Their disbelief and sin would eternally separate them from the Father.

V22) The question among themselves was, was Jesus saying that He is going to kill himself?

A. Their continued confusion to what Jesus was saying was both a misunderstanding and an ironic prophecy; They wondered if He would commit suicide and thus be unreachable.

1. Earlier they thought He meant He would go teach non-Jews in other lands (7:35).

B. Jesus did not kill Himself, but He did lay down His own life for the sins of humanity (10:11, 18).

V23) To Jesus, the difference was natural; to them that questioned, it was unnatural. They could only explain it by assuming that He belonged to the realm of the dead.

A. An insurmountable barrier divided them—unbelief!

V24) The attitude of unbelief is not just unwillingness to accept Jesus’ statement as fact; it is resistance to the relation of God in Christ. Not only did they repudiate His claims, they completely rejected His person.

V25) The question “Who are you?” shows the Pharisees’ exasperation with Jesus’ hints and

seemingly extravagant claims.

A. The crowd had ventured many guesses about His identity: “the Prophet (7:40), “the Christ” (7:41), and others.

1. The more Jesus explains, the less satisfied they became.

B. They wanted a definite answer on which they would be able to accuse Him of blasphemy.

C. Jesus’ answer is difficult to translate and there are many different readings.

1. “Even what I have told you from the beginning” (RSV)

2. “Why should I speak to you at all?” (NEB)

3. “Altogether that which I should say to you” (Darby)

4. “What should I tell you first?” (Beck)

5. Tenney states, “Just what I have been claiming all along”—seems to be as satisfactory as any of the others.

V26) Jesus could have said much more. He had enough information that He could have easily judged and condemned His accusers.

A. Their judgement is connected to their unwillingness to acknowledge Jesus’ relationship to the Father.

B. Because He was speaking what the Father told Him, the Father’s judgment would come on them, too.

V27) John added that the people did not understand that Jesus was referring to the Father. God was unknown to them so they missed Jesus (cf. 1:18).

V28) Jesus as the Son of God was now unknown to them.

A. Only the Crucifixion (when the Son of Man would be lifted up) would enable them to see Him for who He really is.

1. The Cross would reveal that Jesus is God’s Word (the *Logos*) to humanity.

B. Jesus informs them as he has done previously in John that He does nothing on His own initiative. He taught them what the Father taught Him.

V29) Jesus’ union with the Father is one of love and continual obedience (cf. 4:34; 5:30).

A. Though people rejected Jesus, the Father will never abandon Him. Jesus is never alone, and even on the cross the Father glorified Him (cf. 16:32; 17:5).

B. Jesus is the only perfect being in the universe or He was the greatest imposter the world has ever known.

1. His teaching, ministry, and His resurrection from the dead proved He was and is who He claimed to be—The Son of the Living God!

V30) Because of the God's anointing upon His life, His teaching and miracles caused many to believe in Him.

A. The validity of their belief may be in question. The people's lack of spiritual perception and shallowness of commitment are reflected in their response to Jesus' initial counsel.

B. The following verses 31-59 begin with proud resentment on the part of the Jews and conclude with an attempted stoning.

The Truth Will Make You Free/The True Children of Abraham (8:31-47)

V31) These disciples have agreed in principle with Jesus' teaching, but their perseverance in following His teaching will reveal whether they are genuine disciples.

A. It was possible and still is to "believe" in the message of repentance and the coming kingdom without being born again.

B. True followers of Christ are those who continue to follow Him, relying on His Word even when we do not fully understand it

V32) The result of abiding in His Word is that the Word will progressively become clear.

A. To be "free" is to be released from the bondage of sin, and to have and live in the light instead of the darkness.

V33) Their response indicated that they had not grasped Christ's message.

A. Even though they were under Rome, they insisted that as Abraham's descendants they were free men. How could Jesus free them when they were not slaves?

1. They had no sense of their bondage to sin.

V34) Three times in this chapter (vv. 34, 51, 58) Jesus said, I tell you the truth. Verily, Verily or Truly, Truly indicates an important statement is forthcoming.

A. The very act of committing sin reveals that the one doing the act is under the power and authority of sin.

1. Sin is personified as a cruel master. Paul used the same illustration (Rom. 6:15-23).

V35) Jesus used the analogy of a slave in the household as opposed to the son who is heir of the household.

A. A natural slave can be set free by the heir of the household.

B. Jesus is the Son of God and heir of all power and authority of the Father (Mat28:18).

1. Therefore, He can set the slave free!

V36) If the Son (heir) frees the slave, then the slave is free indeed.

A. The Jews hope of freedom from spiritual slavery to sin, is not found in the ancestry of Abraham but in the action of Christ.

V37) Physically the Jews were descendants of Abraham and of course, Jesus knew this.

A. This fact compounded their error.

1. They were falsely claiming him as their spiritual ancestor.
2. They were murderous in intent in “seeking to kill Jesus.”
3. They were impervious to revelation because Jesus’ words had “no place in them.”

V38) Jesus spoke what He had seen in the Father’s presence. Therefore, His words were/are God’s truth.

A. The people had no affinity for His words because they listened to their father (Satan; v. 44) and followed him.

V39) To counter the thrust of Jesus’ argument, the Jews claimed Abraham as their spiritual father.

A. Jesus responded by stating that spiritual descendants of Abraham do what Abraham did, that is, they believe and obey God.

1. Therefore, they should respond in faith to Jesus the Christ, God’s messenger and do what He says.

B. John the Baptist had earlier warned the Jews against the danger of trusting in their Abrahamic lineage (Luke 3:8).

V40) This verse is solid evidence that they were not children of Abraham.

A. They were rejecting the divine Messenger and seeking to kill the One who told them God’s Word.

1. Abraham did not do that; he was obedient to God’s commands (Gen. 12:1–9; 15:6; 22:1–19).

V41) Jesus told them that “They are doing the works of their father.”

A. He did not say “our father.” Therefore, He was not referring to God, but to their father, Satan (44).

B. They responded to Jesus with their claim to be genuine descendants of Abraham.

They quickly added that they were not born out of fornication, and therefore, were not illegitimate.

1. According to Deut. 23:2 all illegitimate persons were excluded from the assembly of the Lord.

C. They could have been casting aspersions on Jesus’ birth.

1. Whether this was a slur by the Pharisees and if it had any relationship to the Virgin Birth has to be left to speculation.
2. It is possible the mystery surrounding Christ’s supernatural birth was known by these Pharisees.

- V42) Jesus provides additional evidence of the Jew's hypocrisy.
- A. If they truly loved God, they would give evidence of that love by showing love to His Son.
 - 1. Within the family circle there is love; it involves loving all whom the Father has sent. To love God is revealed in loving Jesus.
 - B. Jesus declares that He has come from the Father and not on His own initiative, and that the Father had sent Him.
- V43) Jesus the *Logos* speaks to people, but their fundamental opposition to Him caused them to misunderstand His words and teaching.
- A. Unable to hear means a spiritual inability to respond.
 - 1. Paul later wrote that "the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him" (1 Cor. 2:14).
- V44) Abraham, nor God was their father. Jesus clearly identifies the devil (Satan) as their father and there was no ambiguity in His statement.
- A. The devil is the enemy of life and truth. By a lie he brought spiritual and physical death to mankind (cf. Gen. 3:4, 13; 1 John 3:8, 10–15.)
 - B. He still distorts truth (there is no truth in him ... he is a liar and the father of lies) and seeks to lead people away from God, the Source of truth and life (2 Cor. 4:4).
 - C. These Jews wanted Jesus' death and since they rejected the truth and embraced the lie, their family solidarity with Satan and his desires was certain.
- V45) Jesus contrasted their nature with His origin. The truth of this verse is opposite to the lie of the previous verse.
- A. They did not believe Him, because they were of a different nature.
 - B. Jesus, in contrast with them, lives in truth and proclaims it.
 - C. Since unbelievers love darkness and not light, and falsehood not reality, they reject Jesus.
 - 1. They lived in a world of lies, distortion, and falsehood.
 - 2. Truth was a foreign language to them because the native language was lies.
- V46) Jesus gave them a challenge "Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?"
- A. Whose else could have asked such question, but Jesus?"
 - 1. If Jesus had not been sinless, someone in the angry and hostile crowd would have accused Him.
 - B. Jesus asked them a simple question, "Why do you not believe me?"

C. Do you ever ask yourself, Why did it take so long for me to believe?

V47) Jesus ended this section of the dialogue by repeating that the Jews refused to hear Him because they did not belong to God.

A. Their angry and bitterness toward Jesus and their obtuseness toward His teaching contradicted their claims.

Controversy About the True Children of Abraham Continues (8:48-59)

Verses 48-59 brings us to the final dialogue between Jesus and the Jews in chapter 8. The chapter began with the scribes and Pharisees bringing the woman who was caught in the act of adultery and them asking Him, “What should be done to her?” The chapter concludes with the Jews picking up stones to stone Jesus to death. Their attempt was unsuccessful. Other discussion has included Jesus’ warning against unbelief and “Who the Son sets free, they are free indeed.”

V48) The Jews response to Jesus was swift and harsh; they called Him a Samaritan and said He was demon possessed.

A. The Samaritans were a mixed race of Jews with a religion the Jews considered apostate. Their intention was to insult Him by classifying Him as a non-Jew.

1. To call Jesus who was a Jew, a Samaritan, was to use a term of abuse, referring to a heretic or one with a false worship.

B. How ironic that after Jesus said to them that “their father was the devil” (8:44), they said, “He was demon-possessed!”

1. Their charge that Jesus was demon-possessed suggested they thought He was mad, unclean, and evil.

2. This was not the first or the last time they would accuse Him of demon possession (cf. 7:20; 8:52; 10:20).

V49) Jesus’ rebuttal was that He is not demon possessed. His desire was to honor His Father.

A. As followers of Christ, our primary goal is to honor our heavenly Father as well.

1. Their attempt to dishonor Him was an attack not just against Him, but also against His Father—The same principal applies today.

V50) When accused, Jesus did not seek to justify Himself (v54). He committed His case to the heavenly Judge, knowing that even if people judge the Son falsely, the Father would reverse their verdict and vindicate Him.

V51) Again, Jesus uses the solemn affirmation of truly, truly, I tell you the truth.

A. He tells them “If you keep my words and teaching you will never see death.”

1. His Word is another way of expressing a positive response to His revelation. If you “hear” His Word (5:24) and “hold” to His teaching (8:31).

2. It means to observe, pay attention to, or to fulfill.

B. A person who obeys Jesus will never see death, that is, he will not be eternally separated from God (3:16; 5:24).

V52) The Jews felt vindicated in their accusation in v48 based on his response in v51.

A. How absurd to think that one could have eternal life by keeping Jesus' words—
Indeed, He was demon possessed.

V53) The Jews responded by asking, "Surely you are not greater than our father Abraham and the prophets who died?"

A. If Abraham, the father of the nation and the prophets, the anointed messengers of God died, how could this obscure Galilean claim to have power of life and death.

V54) Again, Jesus referred His defense to the Father.

A. God was responsible for His message and vindication.

1. If He honored Himself, His glory would have no value

B. The hostile Jews claimed a relationship to God; but it was formal (ritualistic) at best and non-existent at worst.

V55) Jesus had an intimate relationship and union with God but His enemies did not.

A. Jesus was saying, "You have not really attained an experience of/or with God; I have a full consciousness of Him."

1. For Jesus to have denied such knowledge of God it would have made Him a liar.

V56) Jesus claimed that Abraham had a preview of His ministry and had rejoiced in it.

A. This may refer to the promise God gave Abraham that his seed would become the vessel of divine blessing, that is the Messianic Promise to all the nations (Gen 12:3).

B. Abraham was given a son Isaac, through whom the Seed (Christ) would come.

1. How much of the messianic times God revealed to His friend Abraham is unknown.

2. But it is clear that he knew of the coming salvation and he rejoiced in knowing about it and expecting it.

V57) The unbelieving Jews objected that one so young (not yet 50 years old) could not have seen Abraham. They could not understand how Abraham and Jesus could have possibly had any visual contact.

V58) Jesus' response could only mean a claim to deity.

A. Jesus affirmed His superiority over the prophets and Abraham.

1. When Abraham was born, Jesus already existed.

2. Jesus, because of His equality with God (5:18; 20:28; Phil. 2:6; Col. 2:9),

existed from all eternity (John 1:1).

B. “I Am” is a title of Deity (cf. Ex. 3:14; Isa. 41:4; 43:11–13; John 8:28); the Jews’ response (v59) showed they understood it that way.

V59) Jesus’ clear affirmation of His deity evoked a crisis. They fully understood what He was claiming.

A. They had to decide whether He was what He claimed or was a blasphemer (cf. 5:18).

1. Stoning was the normal punishment for the sin of blasphemy.

B. The words, “but Jesus hid Himself” could refer to a supernatural means of escape.

1. The NIV’s slipping away (lit., “He went out”) implies ordinary means (cf. 5:13; 10:39; 12:36).

2. Once again, His time had not yet come (cf. 2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20).

The Healing of the Blind Man (9:1-41)

The schism between the believers and non-believers, which had become obvious at the time of the feeding of the five thousand (chapter 6) had intensified at the Feast of Tabernacles (chapter 7). It had escalated to the point where they picked up stones to kill Him (8:59). The last six months of Jesus' life was filled with controversy and attempted entrapments against Him.

The healing of the blind man probably occurred shortly after the Feast of Tabernacles while Jesus was still in Jerusalem. Tenny states, "The healing was not only a sample of Jesus' ability to restore sight to a man who was congenitally blind; but it also represented more, the healing brought new light to the disciples on one of the mysteries of life that had bewildered them"⁶⁴

This public healing has serious repercussions because the healing takes place on the Sabbath (cf 5:1-18). This chapter focuses on the reaction to the healing and the subsequent discussion over Jesus' authority, identity, and origin. The Pharisees were indignant that Jesus healed on the Sabbath and accused Him of violating the Law. Therefore, He cannot be from God. Others responded by saying, "How could such a notable healing take place through someone who was not sent from God?" The testimony of the healed man is central to the spiritual insight of the chapter.

V1) Jesus passed by a man that had been born blind.

A. This is important to the narrative for two reasons:

1. The doctrinal discussion prior to the man's healing
2. The man having been born blind makes the miracle more significant.

V2) The disciples were curious as to who had sinned to bring about this judgment of blindness upon this man. Was it his parents or himself?

A. They faced a theological problem.

1. Believing that sin directly caused all suffering, how could a person be *born* with a handicap? Therefore, either this man ... sinned in his mother's womb or his parents sinned.
2. "Who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations" (Ex 34:7).

B. Were the disciples filled with compassion for the blind man or were they just curious about a theological issue from the OT?

V3) Jesus was not implying that neither the blindman or his parents were above sinning. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23).

A. Jesus denied that any particular sin had caused the man to be born blind.

⁶⁴ Ibid p. 100

1. It was not a retribution for some sin committed by his parents or himself.
2. It was not punishment nor had it happened by a random chance.

B. But this had happened that the “works of God might be displayed/manifested in him.”

C. Sometimes suffering is permitted not because someone has sinned. But it is permitted to happen because of God’s purpose—God’s healing power in the man’s life.

1. The mercy and grace given to the blind man was much more important than the cause of the blindness.

V4) The hostility was accelerating against Jesus because of the Jews unbelief. He recognized that His remaining time was short.

A. “We must work” is a better translation than “I must work” as the KJV has it.

1. Jesus associated His work with the works of the disciples.
2. What was true of Jesus and His work, is true of all of His disciples.

B. “While it is day” expresses two ideas.

1. First, it indicates a given time in which work can be accomplished.
2. Second, “while it is” suggests there is a limit to one’s life and work—night is coming.

V5) Jesus made this very statement in 8:12. “As the Light of the world” Jesus provides salvation to all who will believe. After His death, His disciples would be His lights, bringing Christ to others (cf. Matt. 5:14; Eph. 5:8–14).

V6) This healing is interesting because it is only one of three times in which Jesus uses spittle to heal someone. The other two instances are in Mark 7:31-37; 8:22-26.

A. Jesus placed clay (mud with ... saliva) on the man’s eyes.

1. Humanity was made from this same substance—the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7).
2. Perhaps, Jesus used the clay as an aid to develop the man’s faith, not as a medicine. The touch of a compassionate hand would be reassuring. The weight of the clay on his eyes could serve as indicator to the blind man that something had been done to him, and it would encourage him to obey Jesus’ command.
3. Jesus’ making of clay broke the Rabbinic regulations against kneading clay on the Sabbath (John 9:14).

V7) Jesus told the man, “Wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). This is located at the southeast corner of Jerusalem (see the map).

A. The Sent One (Jesus) from the Father, sent the blind man to the pool called Sent.

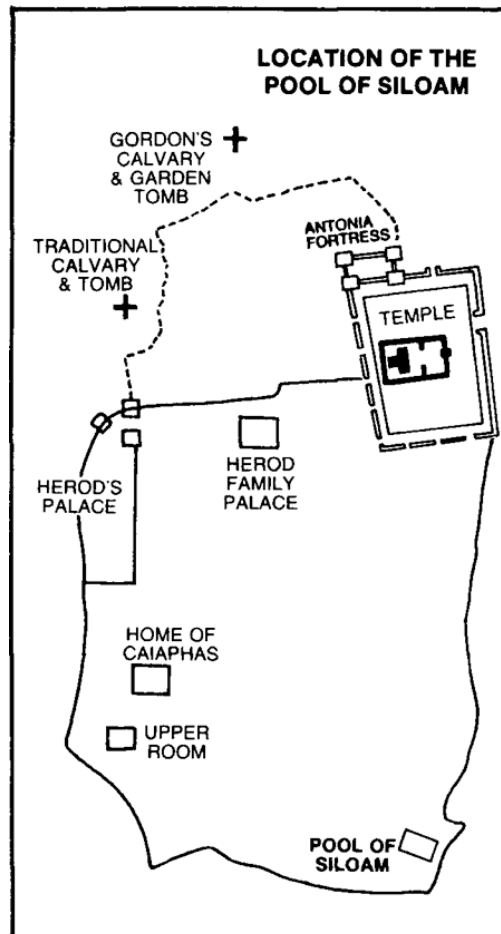
1. The man obeyed and washed...and went home seeing!
2. Healed by the grace and power of God!

B. The pool of Siloam was part of the water system of the city of David, in the older southeastern part of Jerusalem.

1. Siloam likely had some mythological reputation surrounding it, suggesting that someone could be healed by entering the pool at particular times under certain conditions.

C. This passage is the only NT reference to this pool.

1. The pool was a reservoir that originally collected water from the channels on the west side of the Kidron Valley.
2. Hezekiah had a tunnel dug to direct water into the pool from the Gihon spring (2 Kgs 20:20; 2 Chr 32:20).
3. Parts of this water system are likely referenced in the OT in Isa 7:3; 8:6; 36:2; Neh 3:15.⁶⁵



⁶⁵ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Jn 9:7). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

- V8, 9) The blind man's healing caused quite a commotion.
- A. Some were saying, "This is the blind guy that used to sit and beg."
 - 1. Others were saying, "This is not the same guy. He just looks like him."
 - B. The healed blind man kept telling everyone, "I am the one."

- V10) The curiosity of the neighbors demanded an explanation of what had happened.
- A. If you are the same guy, "How did this miracle happen?"
 - B. The answer to their question would assure them of his true identity.
 - 1. He was more than prepared to narrate the facts to them.

- V11) He tells them the story of exactly what had taken place.
- A. He did not attempt to explain who Jesus really was, because he did not know. He simply stated the a man named Jesus made this happen.

- V12) The people wanted to know where Jesus was. Where did He go?
- A. Since he was blind at the time of the miracle, he had no idea where Jesus went. He replied, "I do not know."

Controversy Over The Healing (9:13-41)

- V13) This was an obvious miracle, since the man had been born blind. It had created an enormous amount of controversy filled with questions among the people.
- A. Therefore, the people brought the man who was formally blind to the highly respected religious leaders, the Pharisees, who were custodians of the faith, for further inquiry and explanation of the miracle.
- V14) The Pharisees were more concerned about when (on the Sabbath) and how (He made clay) the miracle took place, than the miracle itself.
- A. Jesus had healed on the Sabbath before this man's healing (cf. John 5:16; Mark 3:4; Luke 13:14).
 - 1. The healings in John chapters 5 and 9 occurred at a public pool; both concerned incurable cases; and both occurred on the Sabbath
 - B. Jesus was teaching the Pharisees the true meaning of the Sabbath by what He did.
 - 1. Clearly, Jesus' teaching and actions conflicted not with the law of the Sabbath but with Jewish traditions built around it.

- V15) When the Pharisees asked him "how he received his sight," he briefly told them the same story that he had earlier told the people in v. 11.

- V16) His response to their question created a heated discussion amongst the Pharisees.
- A. There was no dispute as to whether the man could see.

- B. The controversy centered on Christ's commission from God.
- C. The Pharisees believed that since Jesus "violated" the Sabbath, He was a false prophet who was turning the people away from God.
 - 1. So they concluded, This Man is not from God.
 - 2. Later they said Jesus was "a sinner" (John 9:24).
- D. Others concluded that the signs were so impressive that a sinner could not do them.
- E. The Pharisees were divided as to who Jesus was.

V17) The disagreement among the Pharisees were obvious and perhaps, embarrassing.

- A. So they asked the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" He replied, "He is a prophet."
- B. A prophet was one who was sent from God with a message to the people. Prophets also performed miracles as evidence of their divine calling and mission.
- C. His answer only further exasperated the Pharisees.
 - 1. If the Pharisees had acknowledged Jesus' signs and miracles as genuine, they would have to recognize Him as a prophet from God and would have to accept His teaching.

V18) Remember the term "Jew" in John's Gospel indicates those Jewish leaders who were hostile to Christ.

- A. There was no way they could except Christ as a viable prophet sent from God.
 - 1. Therefore, the only option was to try and discredit the miracle.
 - 2. They would use any real or imagined evidence to disprove him and Christ.
- B. They stated, "that they did not believe him, that he had been born blind and had not received his sight."
 - 1. They called for the parents of the blind man who received his sight for questioning.

V19) Upon the arrival of the parents the Jews had questions for them.

- A. They asked the parents three questions:
 - 1. Is this your son?
 - 2. Was he born blind?
 - 3. Then how does he see?

- B. They were hopeful the parents would deny the miracle.

V20) His parents answered the first two questions with a simple "yes."

- A. The parents were perhaps struggling with showing proper respect to the powerful national leaders and appreciation for the One who had healed their son.

V21) The third question they answered by saying, “we do not know.”

- A. Their answer was truthful because it does not appear that they were present when the healing took place. Therefore the healer was unknown to them.

1. Had they repeated their son’s testimony it would not have been valid, for it would have been second hand knowledge or hearsay.
2. They were wise not to give their opinion.

- B. They suggested that they ask their son because he was legally old enough to speak for himself.

V22) They were wise not to give their opinion, for if they had, they knew the penalty would be excommunication from the synagogue. The parents shifted the pressure from themselves by noting that their son was of legal age to testify for himself

V23) Their motivation for their answer was to keep from being excommunicated from the synagogue.

The Second Questioning of the Healed Blind Man (9:24-34)

V24) To the Jews there was only one solution to this situation.

- A. Working on the Sabbath was forbidden by the Law

1. Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; therefore, Jesus was a sinner.

- B. They insisted that he “give glory to God” for his miracle. The essence of this idea is stated in several Scriptures (Joshua 7:19; 1Sam 6:5; Jere 13:16; Luke 17:18).

1. It can mean one of two things:
 - a. “Give the glory for your healing to God for it is from God.”
 - b. “Do not give any glory to this man Jesus, but give the glory to God.”

V25) The man was reluctant to become involved in a discussion pertaining to the Law, but his healing was undeniable and was admitted to by the Jews. Therefore, he gladly responded to their question.

- A. “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

1. His answer was pithy and a bold declaration to the healing power of Jesus.

V26) They asked him to go over the story again, hoping to find some contradiction in the man’s report.

V27) The healed (former blind man) had already told them how he was healed (v. 15), but they did not listen to him. That is, they rejected it.

- A. He sarcastically asked if their request for him to repeat his report indicated that they had changed their hearts. Were they inquiring because they were interested in becoming Jesus' disciples?
- V28) The idea of this illiterate beggar sarcastically suggesting they were interested in Jesus was more than their pride could take. They reviled him and then claimed that they were Moses' disciples.
- V29) The Jews continued and told the man "that they knew God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where He (Jesus) is from."
- A. By saying, "As of this fellow" (KJV) they were adding another insult and denying that they had any knowledge of His origin.
- B. They certainly did not follow the lead of Nicodemus who confessed to Jesus himself: "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him" (John 3:2).
- V30) It is becoming apparent that the former blind beggar is becoming a follower of Jesus.
- A. His response to them is rather intriguing: "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes."
1. They said in a condescending way, "We do not know where this fellow came from" (v29). Implying that Jesus was not sent from God.
 2. The healed man suggested that He (Jesus) was from God!
- V31) The Pharisees theology was that Jesus was a sinner because He "worked" on the Sabbath.
- A. The former blind man said, "We know that God does not hear sinners."
1. The Pharisees agreed that this is why God did not hear His (Jesus) prayer and would not answer it.
- B. He continued, "If anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him."
1. The healed man concluded that Jesus was not a sinner and did not violate the Sabbath—His healing was proof!
- V32) The healed man pointed to an outstanding truth. No man born blind had ever been healed.
- A. No prophet had ever performed such a miracle though they had worked miracles, including raising the dead.
- B. Giving sight to the blind was reserved for a credential of the Messiah (Isa 35:5; 42:7).
1. Jesus made His claim to Messiahship on this evidence (Luke 4:18).
 2. He reassured John the Baptist of his mission by pointing out that the "blind receive their sight and the lame walk" (Matt 11:5).

V33) The former blind beggar boldly proclaimed, “If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.”

A. His healing should have been ample evidence that Jesus came from God.

V34) The Jews had no real answer to his argument that Jesus was sent from God.

A. So they attacked him and said, “You were born entirely in sin, and you are teaching us?”

1. They believed his blindness was a curse of his sin
2. Seems that had forgotten the Book of Job.

B. So they threw him out. They banned him from the synagogue so that he might not influence others to become followers of Christ.

Jesus Talks to the Healed Man and Affirms His Deity (John 9:35-41)

V35) Jesus heard that they had put him out of the synagogue so He took the initiative to find him.

A. He asked him, “If he believed in the Son of Man?”

1. During his interview with the council, he testified that he believed Jesus was a prophet. Jesus was calling him to a commitment to receive Him as Messiah.
2. It demanded a personal decision to accept or reject.

B. “Son of Man” is a title of the Messiah which includes a rich background.

1. 13 “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed (Dan 7:13-14).

V36) This is the first time the man had actually seen Jesus.

A. He was blind when he went to wash and did not see Jesus until this encounter.

1. He called Jesus Lord as a title of respect, not a recognition of Him as God.

B. He wanted to know who the Messiah was so that he could believe.

1. He admitted his ignorance of who the Messiah is.

V37) Jesus disclosed Himself to the former blind man and gave him the necessary knowledge for believing faith. Faith involves an act of the will, based on information.

V38) The formerly blind man responded to Jesus in two ways:

A. First he said, “Lord, I believe.”

1. Here he used the word “Lord” as acknowledgement of Jesus’ being the Messiah.
2. His confession was simple, yet he was now born-again and had eternal life.

B. Second, He worshiped Jesus.

C. His journey from physical blindness to sight also symbolized his transition from spiritual darkness to finding the light of the world.

1. He reached the climax of his knowledge of Jesus Christ and his faith in Him.
2. It is not enough to believe that He is “a man called Jesus,” or even “a prophet” or “a man of God.” “Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1 John 5:1).

D. John wrote his Gospel to prove that Jesus is the Son of God, and to present to his readers the testimonies of people who met Jesus and affirmed that He is God’s Son.

V39) Jesus statement here does not contradict his words in 3:17 or 12:47, when He said, “I did not come into the world to condemn the world.”

A. In verse 3:17 and 12:47 he is saying that He did come to to pass the final sentence of condemnation at this time but to give salvation to those who would believe in Him as their Savior.

B. The reason for our Lord’s coming was salvation, but the result of His coming was condemnation of those who would not believe.

V40) The Pharisees who were following Jesus heard what he said and it angered them, I’m sure.

A. “Are we blind also?” they asked, expecting a negative answer.

1. Jesus had already called them “blind leaders of the blind” (Matt. 15:14), so He had already answered their question.
2. They were blinded by their pride, their self-righteousness, their tradition, and their false interpretation of the Word of God.

V41) If these Pharisees had become aware of their blindness, they would have acknowledged their need of sight.

A. Since they did not realize they we blind sinners, they did not repent.

1. If they had repented, they would have had no sin because God would have forgiven them.

B. They denied being blind. They persisted in their self-righteous hypocrisy. They were spiritually blind and did not realize it.

I Am The Good Shepherd (10:1-42)

Chapter 10 is the discourse about the good shepherd. The title “Good Shepherd” is a very common phrase that people readily identify as Jesus Christ. The title emphasized His humanity, but the way Jesus used it, it was His claim to divinity.

Jesus is displayed as the true shepherd and ruler of His people in contrast to all false shepherds. There are multiple Old Testament passages that condemn false shepherds (Isa 56:9-12; Jere 23:1-4; Ezek 34; Zech 11). Comparing people to a shepherd and his sheep was common in the Middle East. Moses and David, who were leaders of Israel were both “shepherds” over Israel. There are several passages in the Bible that employ this motif (Ps. 23; Isa. 53:6; Luke 15:1–7).

Jesus developed this analogy in several ways. The connection with the preceding chapter is seen in Jesus’ contrast of the Pharisees with the man born blind. The Pharisees—spiritually blind while claiming insight (John 9:41)—were false shepherds. As the True Shepherd, Jesus came to seek and to heal. His sheep hear and respond to His voice.⁶⁶

The teaching of the Good Shepherd was prompted by the religious leaders having excommunicated the healed man from the synagogue (9:22, 34). Jesus found him and received him (9:35). The teaching is based on the practice of sheep herding, and multiple aspects are used to create a picture of Christ’s relation to His people.

He begins this chapter with the familiar “truly, truly” or “verily, verily”, I say to you. This repeated form is used 25 times in John. The term always introduced an important truth.

V1) The opening verses use the imagery of the concept of a sheep pen.

- A. It was usually a rough stone or mud-brick structure, only partially roofed, if covered at all, or very often a cave in the hills. It had only one opening through which the sheep could pass when they came in for the night. The pen served for the protection of the sheep against thieves and wild beasts. The thief, who would not have any right of access by the gate, used other means of entrance. He would not follow the lawful method of approach.⁶⁷
- B. We are taught the difference between a true shepherd and a thief and a robber.
 - 1. A true shepherd posted himself (or he would post a guard) at night by the gate to protect the sheep from thieves and animals of prey from entering.
 - 2. A thief or a robber would climb a wall or find another way into the safe enclosure. By not using the gate, they were not legitimate and would have an

⁶⁶ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 309). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁶⁷ Tenney, Merrill C. “Acts.” In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: With the New International Version*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 107. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981

alternative purpose.

3. Tenny states that there is a difference in meaning between a thief and a robber:
 - a. “Thief” implies subtlety and trickery
 - b. “Robber” connotes violence and plundering⁶⁸

V2) The shepherds would always enter at the gate, which was the lawful method of entry.

A. They had no concern of being recognized by others. They were the shepherd!

B. The contrast between the true shepherd and the thief is easily seen and understood.

V3) The shepherd has a right to enter the sheep pen. The watchman(guard) opens the gate, and the shepherd comes in.

A. The shepherd does three things:

1. The sheep hear the shepherds voice and they know he is with them.
2. The shepherd calls the sheep by name—The shepherd in the middle East usually named his sheep.
3. The shepherd leads them out of the pen—He alone has the right of leadership.

B. When the sheep leave the pen they are more vulnerable. Therefore, the shepherds presence, guidance, and protection becomes more necessary.

1. The 23rd Psalm truly epitomizes this.

V4) It was very common for multiple shepherds to put their sheep into a pen to gather at night.

A. Every morning the shepherds would separate their sheep from the others by their particular call.

B. The shepherd would lead them out as a single unit as the sheep followed their shepherd to the most desirable pasturage as he guarded them against any danger.

1. Notice sheep are led and not driven as cattle.

V5) The sheep would refuse to follow a stranger because his voice was unfamiliar. Even if an imposter should imitate the true shepherds call and tone, the flock would instantly detect the difference and would scatter in panic.

V6) Jesus used this figure of speech to describe the relationship between his disciples and Himself.

A. This spiritual lesson was missed by those who heard Jesus, even though they certainly understood the local shepherd/sheep relationship. In their blindness, they could not see Jesus as the Lord who is the Shepherd.

V7) Jesus shifted the metaphor from shepherd back to the gate. Not only does the shepherd lead

⁶⁸ Ibip p. 107

the sheep out, but he also leads them in.

A. When the sheep returned to the pen after a day of grazing, the shepherd stood in the doorway to inspect each one for thorns, scratches or wounds.

1. If any of the sheep needed attention, the shepherd attended to them.

B. After all sheep were accounted for and tended to, the shepherd laid across the doorway so no intruder, man or beast, could enter without his knowledge.

C. “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

V8) Jesus was referring primarily to the religious leaders of that day. He was not condemning every prophet or servant of God who ever ministered before He came to earth.

A. The statement “are thieves and robbers” (not “were”) makes it clear that He had the present religious leaders in mind.

1. They were not true shepherds nor did they have the approval of God on their ministry.

2. They did not love the sheep, but instead exploited them and abused them.

V9) Jesus’ primary purpose was and is salvation of His sheep. He is the door to supply all of our needs though His riches in glory.

A. He provides four things for His followers:

1. Shall be saved—rescue and redemption

2. Shall go in—entering into His enclosure and protection from the world

3. Shall go out—to share (sheep don’t live in a pen, believers are to go and share)

4. Shall find pasture—leads us to green pastures to be fed and still waters to drink

V10) The thief (Satan), cares only about feeding himself, not building up the flock. He steals sheep in order to kill them, thus destroying part of the flock.

A. But Christ has come to benefit the sheep. He gives life which is not constricted but overflowing.

1. The thief *takes* life; Christ *gives* life to the full.

B. The true shepherd functions not only as a door, but as the guide and provider to give His followers abundant life.

V11) Jesus testifies the He is the “good shepherd and that He is willing to die for His sheep.”

A. Jesus died on the cross for the sheep of the world.

V12) Jesus is showing the difference between Himself as the owner/shepherd and the religious leaders of the day as hirelings.

A. When the flock is attacked by a wolf, the hireling deserts them—he is concerned with his own safety and not the sheep.

1. The hireling may lead the sheep to graze, but he will not put himself at risk for them.
 - B. Without caring, loving and courageous leadership, the sheep will be scattered and will be easy prey for its enemies.
- V13) The hireling is only concerned about himself and his pay. He has no concern for the sheep.
- A. True shepherds are overseers who are concerned about his sheep and he/she serves as an overseer.
- V14) Jesus reiterated, “I am the good shepherd,” showing the difference between Himself and the hireling.
- A. In contrast with a hired workman, the Good Shepherd has an intimacy with and personal interest in the sheep.
 1. “I know My sheep” stresses His ownership and watchful oversight.
 2. “My sheep know Me” stresses their reciprocal knowledge of and intimacy with Him.
- V15) This intimacy is modeled on the loving and trusting mutual relationship of the Father and the Son.
- A. Jesus’ care and concern for the flock is evidenced by His prediction of His coming death.
 1. Some shepherds have willingly died while protecting their sheep from danger.
 2. Jesus willingly gave His life for His sheep—on their behalf as their Substitute.
 3. His death gives them life.
- V16) “The other sheep not of this flock” refers to Gentiles who would believe.
- A. His coming death would bring them also to the Father—They too will listen to My voice.
 1. Jesus continues to save people as they hear His voice in the Scriptures.
 - B. One flock and one Shepherd speaks of the church with believers from Jewish and Gentile “sheep pens” in one body with Christ as Head.
- V17) This is the third time Jesus refers to laying down His life (10:11,15, 17).
- A. Jesus’ sacrifice is the basis for our reconciliation to God and to one another.
 1. “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1John 3:13).
- V18) We learn two important aspects of Jesus’ death.
- A. First, His death was totally voluntary. The Father had given Him the authority that no one could have touched Him unless Jesus allowed it.

B. Second, His authority from the Father allowed Him to lay down His life and then take His life back.

1. Anyone can give their life, but only God can resurrect a life.

C. God's great plan was motivated by Jesus' love for His Father and His willingness to carry out His Father's purpose.

V19) Jews were once again divided over Jesus' words (7:43; 9:16).

V20) Many were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?"

V21) Others were saying, "People who are demon possessed do not make this kind of statements. Moreover, a demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?"

Jesus Asserts His Deity (10:22-42)

The events in this section occurred about two and a half months after those described in John 10:1–21. John put them together in chapter 10, because in both messages, Jesus used the imagery of the shepherd and the sheep.

John recorded this final confrontation of Jesus with the hostile Jerusalem crowd, followed by His withdrawal beyond Jordan (vv. 40–42) because of their attempt to kill Him.

V22) The Feast of Dedication is now called Hanukkah or the Feast of Lights. It commemorates the reconsecration of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in 165 b.c. after its desecration in 168 B. C. by Antiochus IV (Epiphanes).

V23) The eight-day feast took place in December during the winter. The feast reminded the Jewish people of their last great deliverance from their enemies.

A. Solomon's Colonnade was a long covered walkway on the East side of the temple.

B. Two months had elapsed since Jesus' last confrontation with the Jews (7:1–10:21) at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2), which was in October. Jesus again returned to the temple area.⁶⁹

V24) The Jews encircled him to frighten and intimidate Him. They wanted Him to make a categorical statement of His identity.

A. The crowd was demanding a clear declaration to dispel or to affirm if He was formally presenting Himself as the Messiah—Stop with all of the suspense, if you are the Christ then tell us clearly.

⁶⁹ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 311). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- V25) Jesus responded to them by stating that the miracles He had done was clear evidence that He had been sent from the Father.
- A. His response placed the burden of proof on those that questioned Him.
 - 1. They refused to believe although He had given them more than sufficient evidence of who He was.
- V26) Jesus did not match their expectations. Their problem was a lack of spiritual perception and faith.
- A. You do not believe because you are not My sheep is a simple statement of fact about their conduct.
- V27) The sheep that belong to the Jesus' flock are characterized by obedience, recognition of the shepherd and their allegiance to Him.
- A. Jesus' flock is responsive to His teaching. They listen to His voice. They have an intimacy with Jesus, they understand His message of salvation, and they follow Him. To follow Him means to obey the Father's will as Jesus did.
- V28) Jesus assures His sheep/followers of three things: (1) Eternal Life, (2) They will never perish, (3) No one will snatch them out of My hand.
- V29) My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all. That is, no one is strong enough to snatch any of Jesus' flock from the Father's hand (or from Jesus' hand, v. 28).
- V30) "I and the Father" preserves the separate individuality of the two Persons in the Godhead.
- A. He was saying, They have the closest possible unity of purpose.
 - 1. Jesus' will is identical to the Father's regarding the salvation of His sheep.
 - 2. Absolute identity of wills involves identity of nature.
 - 3. Jesus and the Father are One in will (also in nature for both are God).
- V31) The Jews fully understood what Jesus was saying. There was no ambiguity in His meaning to the answer to their question.
- A. So the hostile crowd picked up stones again to stone Him (8:59). This was not their first attempt to stone Him.
 - B. Stoning was the punishment prescribed for blasphemy according to the law of Moses (Lev 24:16).
 - 1. His opponents were preparing for such an execution.
- V32) Jesus wanted to know, "For which good works that the Father has done through Me are you going to stone Me?"
- A. Even in His question He is showing His oneness with the Father.
- V33) They claimed that they had no objection to His good works. It was not the quality of His

works but he nature of His claims. Yet His healings on the Sabbath had angered them (5:18; 9:16).

A. They said they objected because He, a mere man, claimed to be God. This was blasphemy, they said and the reason they were going to stone Him.

V34) This statement of Jesus does not in any way teach that believers are to think or to consider themselves to be gods.

A. Normally “the Law” refers to the first five books of the OT. But here it means all the OT, for Jesus quoted from the Psalms.

1. It was “your” Law in the sense that they gloried in their possession of it, and also in the sense that they should submit to its authority over them.
2. Psalm 82 speaks of God as the true Judge (Ps. 82:1, 8) and of men, appointed as judges, who were failing to provide true judgment for God (Ps. 82:2–7).
3. In Psalm 82:1, 6 “gods” refers to these human judges.
4. In no way does this speak of a divine nature in man.⁷⁰

V35) As seen in verse 34, Jesus argued that in certain situations (as in Ps. 82:1, 6) men were called “gods.”

A. The Hebrew word for God or gods is *’ēlōhîm*.

1. This word is used elsewhere (Ex. 21:6; 22:8) to mean human judges.

B. Jesus added to His argument the words, and the Scripture cannot be broken, so that no one could evade its force by saying an error was in the Scriptures.

1. This important text clearly points up the inerrancy of the Bible.⁷¹

V36) Jesus now completed His argument.

A. Since the inerrant Bible called their judges “gods,” the Jews could not logically accuse Him of blasphemy for calling Himself God’s Son since He was under divine orders (set apart) and on God’s mission (sent into the world).

V37) Jesus continually pointed to “His works” as signs to them, of who He was/is.

A. His works revealed the Father’s grace, love, mercy, and forgiveness.

B. Jesus called upon the Jews to consider His works as an indication and verification of who He was/is.

V38) Jesus now puts His accusers on trial by questioning them.

A. If you do not believe what I say, believe what I do.

1. He is presenting His works as validation of His relationship with the Father.

⁷⁰ Ibid p. 312

⁷¹ Ibid p. 312

B. Jesus continued, “The Father is in Me, and I am in the Father.” My works are irrefutable evidence of the close relationship between Me (Jesus) and the Father.

V39) Another attempt was made to seize/arrest Him.

A. They refused to accept His appeal to their reason.

B. His time had still not yet come and He eluded their attempt to arrest Him.

1. No information is provided as to how He eluded them.

V40) Because of their hostility, Jesus went across the Jordan to Perea, which was the location of John the Baptist’s ministry (1:28).

V41) Jesus’ ministry here was received much more favorably, perhaps because John the Baptist had prepared the people.

A. John, even though dead, was still having influence in people’s lives as they remembered his witness.

B. Though John never performed a miraculous sign, the people believed his witness about Jesus.

V42) By contrast, the hostile Jerusalem crowd had seen His signs and yet disobeyed. In Perea many trusted Jesus as Savior.

The Miracle at Bethany (11:1-44)

This climactic miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead was Jesus' public evidence of the truth of His great claim, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Each of the seven signs illustrate some particular aspect of Jesus' divine authority from God (see page 8 of your lecture notes). John selected this miracle as the seventh in the series recorded in his book because it was really the ultimate miracle of Jesus' earthly ministry. He had raised others from the dead, but Lazarus had been in the grave four days. This miracle at Bethany demonstrated His power over death—the great enemy of humanity. It was a miracle that could not be evaded or denied by the Jewish leaders.

- V1) Lazarus was a very sick man. He and his two sisters lived in Bethany.
 - A. Bethany was a village approximately two miles east of Jerusalem.
 - 1. Jesus frequently stayed at their home when He attended the festivals in Jerusalem.
- V2) It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair (John 12:1-10). John may be assuming that the original readers of his Gospel already had some knowledge of Mary, since the story had been earlier recorded by Mark in his gospel. (Mark 14:3–9).
- V3) Mary and Martha (Lazarus' sisters), assumed because of the Lord's ability to heal and His love for Lazarus and the family, that He would immediately respond to their word about Lazarus' illness and come to Bethany.
- V4) When Jesus received the message from the sisters, He responded by saying, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son may be glorified."
 - A. Jesus responded with optimism and assured the sisters that this situation had a most significant purpose.
 - B. Sickness among God's people will never result in death as our final destination. Death will ultimately be destroyed by the resurrection (vv 25-26)
- V5) John states that Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.
 - A. When we are sick or suffering, it doesn't mean that Jesus does not love us or that we have done something to deserve the malady.
- V6) I am sure that the disciples were amazed that Jesus did not immediately leave for Bethany and perplexed that He remained two more days in Peraea (John 10:40 portion of the country east of the Jordan River).
- V7) Jesus now says, "Let us go to Judea again." Bethany is just two miles from Jerusalem in the heart of Judea.

- V8) Jesus' disciples were not pleased about His directions to make preparation to return to Judea.
- A. They reminded Him (although, Jesus needed no reminder) that the Jews, just days earlier, attempted to stone Him to death.
 - 1. They did not think it wise to return given the clear and present danger and tried to change His mind.
 - 2. They were not only concerned about Jesus' life but their own life as well.
 - B. "Footsteps of righteous people are ordered by the Lord" (Ps 27:33).
- V9) Rather than giving them a direct answer, He stated a principle drawn from everyday life.
- A. Jesus said that you have 12 hours during the day to accomplish our task for the day. You should accomplish your task while it is day and you will not stumble.
 - B. He was thinking of His own task given to Him by the Father and the duration of time to complete His God-given purpose.
- V10) Jesus continued that if you do not have the light in you, then you are walking in the darkness and you will stumble.
- A. Jesus knew as long as He followed God's plan, no harm would come to Him until the appointed time.
 - B. The people needed to respond positively to Jesus while He was/is the Light of the world.
- V11) Jesus informed the disciples that their friend Lazarus had fallen asleep (died); but I am going to Bethany, so that I can awaken him from sleep (death).
- A. Jesus' explanation was to educate his disciples as to why He was doing this.
 - B. They listened to Him and showed their loyalty by their willingness to return to the area of danger if this is what He desired.
 - C. The great struggle continues to be God's will versus your/our will!
- V12) The disciples, as usual were thinking in the natural or physical realm. He was not dead, just asleep.
- A. They assumed Jesus meant that Lazarus was literally sleeping and Jesus was going to awaken him. They wanted to know if Lazarus was going to recover.
 - 1. Their conjecture was that the fever had left him and he was now recovering.
 - 2. Therefore, he was ready for company, so Jesus was going to visit him.
 - B. Like the disciples, how many times do you think we got it wrong?
- V13) We know Jesus meant Lazarus was dead. They thought He was speaking of literal sleep.

V14) Jesus knew they did not understand. To make sure they understood why they were going to Bethany. He shocked them with this bold statement. So He plainly told them, “Lazarus is dead.”

A. You can hear their inner thoughts, “Dead. I thought you said he was asleep. If he is dead, how can you possibly awaken him.”

V15) Jesus was glad that He did not go to Lazarus before he died.

A. He was not rejoicing that Lazarus had died, but Jesus knew Lazarus death had a great purpose.

1. Everything that happens in our life has purpose, according to God’s plan.
2. We have to take the time to discover that purpose for us for our life to have meaning.

B. But if Lazarus had not died, the disciples (and readers of ages to come) would not have this unique opportunity to have their faith quickened.

1. Lazarus’ death was so that they/us may believe.
2. Jesus knew Lazarus’ death and resurrection would produce positive belief, faith, and joy.

V16) “Thomas” means “twin in the Aramaic. The name occurs eight times in John’s Gospel and four other times in the NT.

A. When Thomas realized Jesus was determined to go to Bethany, he also spoke with determination—“Let’s us also go, so that we may die with Him.”

1. Thomas is to be commended for his dedication to Jesus. His loyalty is revealed by his readiness to share in Jesus’ suffering.
2. Not many would go, knowing that suffering and perhaps death awaited them.

Jesus’ Conversation with Martha and Mary (11:17-37)

V17) When Jesus arrived in Bethany, He discovered that Lazarus had died and was buried four days ago.

A. Lazarus died after the messengers were sent to Jesus. This would account for one day of the four. Jesus remained in Perea two more days (v6). The day of travel to Bethany accounts for the fourth day.

1. Remember the Jews counted a portion of a day as whole day.

B. Jesus does not appear to be anxious or concerned that Lazarus is dead.

V18) Earlier in this chapter the disciples had expressed great concern about returning to the greater Jerusalem area because of the Jews attempted execution of Jesus, by stoning.

A. Bethany was only about two miles from Jerusalem. So anything that would happen there would be known by the those in Jerusalem within an hour.

1. So the disciples concern about physical harm and possible death was very real.

B. Jesus was concerned not only about the faith of His own disciples, but also about the faith of Mary and Martha (John 11:26, 40).

C. Each experience of suffering and trial should increase our faith, but spiritual growth is not automatic. We must respond positively to the ministry of the Word and the Spirit of God.

D. Jesus had sent a promise to the two sisters (John 11:4), and now He would discover how they had received it.

1. How are you processing and appropriating the promises God has made to you?

V19) The family at Bethany must have been well known in Jerusalem, with connections within the Jewish hierarchy, since many “Jews” came to comfort Martha and Mary over the loss of Lazarus.

A. Remember the term “Jew” is always used by John in the sense of those who were hostile toward Jesus.

B. The “Jews” and all that had come to comfort the family were about to witness a miracle of unprecedented proportion.

C. Perhaps the reason Jesus waited for four days was to make sure everyone had arrived to comfort the family so that they could be present to witness this great miracle.

V20) Two sisters with two very different personalities.

A. Martha, was the activist of the two sisters. She went to meet Jesus, when she heard he was coming. Mary, the contemplative sister, waited at home.

1. Luke 10:39–42 provides a similar portrayal of their personalities.

V21) Martha’s greeting is a confession of her faith.

A. She really believed that Jesus could have healed her brother if He had been there.

B. She levies no criticism of Jesus, which seems to be implied that she knew her brother was dead before the messengers got to news to Jesus.

V22) Martha was quick to affirm her faith in Jesus Christ by stating “I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”

V23) Jesus responded to that faith by promising her that her brother would rise again.

A. He was obviously referring to the immediate situation of Lazarus’s immediate resurrection.

V24) Martha interpreted His words to mean the future resurrection in the last day (Dan. 12:2–3; John 5:28–29).

- A. Here is another instance in John's Gospel of people lacking spiritual perception and being unable to understand the words of Jesus.
- B. How many times do we miss what Jesus is saying to us because we lack spiritual perception?
- C. Martha was looking to the future, knowing that Lazarus would rise again and she would see him. Her friends were looking to the past and saying, "He could have prevented Lazarus from dying!"

V25) Jesus' reply is His fifth great "I am" revelation. Jesus moves the doctrine of the resurrection out of the future and into the present.

- A. Jesus did not deny what Martha said about the future resurrection.
 - 1. The resurrection of the human body is a cardinal doctrine in the orthodox Jewish faith.
- B. In His great "I am" statement, Jesus completely transformed the doctrine of the resurrection and in so doing, brought great comfort to Martha's heart.
 - 1. The Resurrection and the Life of the new Age is present right now because Jesus is the Lord of life (1:4).

V26) Martha was looking to the future, knowing that Lazarus would rise again and she would see him.

- A. Jesus wants their attention on the *present*: wherever He is, God's resurrection power is available *now* (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10).
- B. Jesus affirmed that believers would one day be raised from the dead. Then He immediately revealed the added truth that some believers would never die.
 - 1. How is this possible? The answer is found in 1 Thes 4:13, 18. When Jesus Christ returns in the air to take His people to their heavenly home, those who are alive at His coming shall never die. They shall be changed and caught up to meet Him in the air!

V27) Martha did not hesitate to affirm her faith in Jesus Christ, God's Son.

- A. She used three different titles for Jesus: (1) Lord, (2) Christ (Messiah), and (3) Son of God.
- B. The words "I believe" are in the perfect tense verb indicating a past action and its present fact. Testifying to a fixed and settled faith. "I have believed and I will continue to believe!"

V28) Martha was aware of the danger Jesus was in by coming to Bethany and Jesus probably wanted to have a private conversation with her without attracting a crowd, so she secretly

told Mary that Jesus wants to talk with you.

A. “The Teacher” is a notable title for it was unusual for a Jewish Rabbi to instruct a woman.

V29) Mary quickly went to Jesus. Perhaps, she was filled with anticipation as to what might happen.

V30) Jesus probably had not yet entered the village because of the hostile Jews that were present. Additionally, He wanted time alone with Martha and Mary to add His teaching before the miracle, knowing that this would increase the sisters faith.

V31) The Jews knew something was happening when Mary left abruptly and in haste. Since they had come to console the sisters, they felt it was only proper to follow her, assuming that she was going to the tomb.

A. There would be no private conversation between Jesus and Mary.

V32) Reaching Jesus, Mary fell at His feet. This is significant, for on a previous occasion she had sat at Jesus’ feet listening to His teaching (Luke 10:39).

A. Her greeting to Jesus was the same as her sister’s (v21). She felt the tragedy would have been averted if He had been present.

1. Her faith was sincere but limited.
2. They were both unaware that Jesus intentionally waited for Lazarus to die so He could perform the miracle of raising him from the dead.

V33) Jesus’ emotional life attests the reality of His union with people.

A. Deeply moved may either be translated “groaned” or more likely “angered.”

1. The Greek word *enebrimēsato* seems to connote anger or sternness. (This Gr. verb is used only five times in the NT, each time of the Lord’s words or feelings: Matt. 9:30; Mark 1:43; 14:5; John 11:33, 38.)

B. Why was Jesus angry?

1. Some have argued that He was angry because of the people’s unbelief or hypocritical wailing. But this seems foreign to the context
2. A better explanation is that Jesus was angry at the tyranny of Satan who had brought sorrow and death to people through sin (cf. 8:44; Heb. 2:14–15).
3. Also Jesus was troubled (“stirred” or “agitated,” cf. 12:27; 13:21; 14:1, 27) This disturbance was because of His conflict with sin, death, and Satan.⁷²

V34) Jesus asked Martha and Mary, “Where have you buried Lazarus?” They replied, “Come and see.”

⁷² Ibid p. 314

V35) Jesus' weeping differed from that of the people. His quiet shedding of tears differed from their loud wailing. His weeping was over the tragic consequences of sin. The crowd interpreted His tears as an expression of love, or frustration at not being there to heal Lazarus.

A. Jesus' weeping reveals His humanity. He has entered into all of our experiences and knows how we feel.

B. In fact, being the perfect God-Man, Jesus experienced these things in a deeper way than we do.

1. His tears assures us of His sympathy; He is indeed "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3).

2. He is our merciful and faithful High Priest, and we may come to the throne of grace and find all the gracious help that we need (Heb. 4:14–16).

V36) This hostile Jewish crowd emphasized Jesus' true humanity by the response of the people at Lazarus's tomb. Some were impressed by His open show of emotion and took it as a show of His love for Lazarus.

V37) Others, perhaps not so lovingly, wondered why Jesus had not presented Lazarus's death by performing one of His miracles.

A. They referenced the healing of the blind man in Jerusalem that had created such a sensation in the city, several months earlier.

The Raising of Lazarus (11:38-44)

V38) Jesus was deeply moved (groaning, disturbed emotionally) within when He came to the tomb.

A. Tombs were often cut into limestone making a cave in the side of a wall of rock. A stone was placed over the entrance.

V39) Jesus commanded that the stone door be taken away. To do so was to risk defilement. But obedience was necessary if Jesus' purpose was to be realized.

A. You can imagine how dramatic the scene was as the crowd watched and listened.

B. Mary was perhaps weeping and Martha objected because after four days the body would have begun decaying and a very foul odor would be obvious.

V40) Jesus reminded Martha of His earlier promise (vv. 25–26; v. 4). If she believed His word that He is the Resurrection and the Life and trusted Him, God would be glorified.

A. But unless the sisters had trusted Jesus, permission would not have been given to open the tomb.

B. What has Jesus requested of you that you are not obeying?

V41) After Jesus' reminder, Martha withdrew her objection and took her last step of faith and complied with Jesus' request to remove the stone that sealed the tomb.

A. You can feel the tension rising with anticipation of what is going to happen! What was Jesus doing?

B. Interestingly, Jesus did not ask God to resurrect Lazarus; He thanked Him for having already answered.

1. Jesus had such dependence on the Father that He knew this miracle was necessary to His mission and He knew the miracle would happen.

C. Only the resurrection of Lazarus would fulfill the expectation that Jesus had aroused in Mary and Martha.

D. Perhaps, we should spend more time thanking God rather than asking God!

V42) The Father and Son always has perfect communion and unity of purpose. Jesus was always conscious of this, but He prayed for the benefit of those present.

A. Many of the "Jews" had accused Him of working miracles by the power of Beelzebub.

1. Satan does not restore the sick to health or raise the dead for the glory of God.

B. Jesus demonstrated the power of the resurrection and ascribed all the glory to God.

C. He said in His prayer that the miracle was already complete, but He asked that Lazarus be raised from the dead as a convincing sign that He had been sent by God the Father and would cause the people to believe.

V43) Having completed the short prayer, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."

A. Why with a loud voice? Perhaps to draw attention to Himself and the miracle.

1. Augustine once remarked that if Jesus had not said Lazarus' name with force, all would have come out from the graves.

B. Tourville stated, "We can but vaguely imagine how Jesus' voice impregnated the stiff and decaying corpse and sent a thrill through the place of departed spirits that the man and his body came together to obey the command of the resurrection and the life (v25).

1. What a moment in time for the petrified Jewish mourners.⁷³

C. Jesus proclaimed earlier in His ministry "That a time would come when all who are in their graves would hear His voice, and shall come forth. They that have done good,

⁷³ Harris, Ralph W. *The Complete Biblical Library, The New Testament Study Bible John*. Springfield, MO 1988 p329

unto the resurrection of life; and those that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” (5:28, 29).

1. Obviously, this is not that event, but a reminder to you that this last day judgement is coming for everyone.
2. You do know that this is going to happen one day, your name being called?

V44) The response was identical to the command.

A. Although Lazarus had been dead for four days, he came bouncing out of the tomb, still firmly wrapped in his grave clothes. His hands, feet, body, and face were securely wrapped and bound.

B. Jesus said, ”Unbind him, and let him go.”

1. What a scene that must have been!

C. This event is a marvelous picture of God’s Son bringing life to people. He will do this physically at the Rapture for church saints (1 Thes. 4:16), and at His return for Old Testaments saints (Dan. 12:2) and Tribulation saints (Rev. 20:4, 6).

1. Presently, Jesus speaks and calls spiritually dead people to spiritual life.
2. “Who the Son sets free that are free indeed.”

V45) Many of the Jews who were there supporting the family, witnessed the miracle and believed on Jesus. How could you not believe?

V46) Why didn’t all of the Jews believe, instead of many? What greater proof could one ask for?

A. Jesus’ revelation of Himself always produces two responses.

1. For many of the Jews, this miracle was clear proof of Jesus’ claim. In response they trusted Him.
2. But others were only hardened in sin or confused. They went to His enemies, the Pharisees, and reported what had happened.

V47) This miraculous sign was so significant that the chief priests and the Pharisees called an emergency session of the Sanhedrin.

A. The council expressed its inability to solve the problem by continuing to do what they had been doing. They felt that Jesus was some kind of magician who by secret arts was deceiving the people.

V48) Official disapproval, excommunication, and their counter teaching were not stopping Jesus’ influence.

A. If His influence continued to grow and the masses followed Him, the outcome would be insurrection and the Romans would crush the Jewish revolt; taking away both our place; the temple and our nation.

V49) Caiaphas was the high priest that year (cf. 18:13–14, 24, 28).

A. Originally the high priest held his position for a lifetime, but the Romans were afraid of allowing one man to gain too much power. So the Romans appointed the high priest at their convenience.

1. Caiaphas held the office from 8 to 36 a.d.

B. His contempt was expressed in his words, “You know nothing at all!”

V50) His understanding and advice was that one (Jesus) must be sacrificed if the nation was to continue in Rome’s favor. The alternative was destruction of the Jewish nation in war (11:48).

A. Their rejection of Jesus did not solve the problem. The Jewish people followed false leaders into a war against Rome (66–70 a.d.), which did in fact destroy their nation and their temple.

V51) Caiaphas, who was presently the high priest had no idea that the words he spoke in v50 were prophetic and that the fulfillment would change the course of human and spiritual history.

V52) Caiaphas meant Jesus had to be killed, but God intended the priest’s words as a reference to His substitutionary atonement.

A. Jesus’ death would abolish the old system in God’s eyes by fulfilling all its types and shadows.

B. His death was not only for Jews but also for the world, thus making a new body of believers from both (Eph. 2:14–18; 3:6).

V53) The Sanhedrin decided to kill Jesus.

V54) After the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus no longer walked publicly among the Jews.

A. Jesus left Bethany and went to a village in the country that was approximately 15 miles north called Ephraim. It was about 17 miles from Jerusalem.

1. The little village provided a place for rest and it was close to the wilderness of Judea in case it was necessary to escape.

V55) It was nearing the annual Passover celebration of the Jews. Therefore, people from the countryside were making their way to Jerusalem to begin the purification process.

V56) Jesus had attended the national festivals in the past and had openly taught in the temple area.

A. The people were discussing among themselves if Jesus would be there and continue to teach the people. This had been His pattern of ministry?

1. As the crowds grew larger and gathered in the city of Jerusalem, they continued looking for Him, hoping He would be present.

V57) The religious authorities gave orders for anyone to report to them if they found out where Jesus was, so they could arrest Him.

Mary Anoints Jesus (12:1-11)

In chapter 12, John concluded his record of Jesus' public ministry, beginning with the account of Mary's anointing of Jesus which prepared for His coming sacrifice and death. This period was critical for Jesus because the forces for Him and against Him solidified and He had to make important decisions as to how He would respond. Thus far, He had followed the program that had been determined by the Father and declared by the Scripture and carried out by His experience. As the time for the fulfillment of His divine purpose approached, the tension increased as the realization of the coming events were very near. John presents a series of events that foreshadow the coming end. The first event was the feast held for Him in Bethany.

V1) After the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus no longer walked publicly among the Jews.

A. Jesus left Bethany and went to a village in the country that was approximately 15 miles north called Ephraim. It was about 17 miles from Jerusalem (11:54)

B. Passover was six days away and the time schedule became more definite and critical than previously. Jesus made the 14 mile journey from Ephraim back to Bethany where a dinner was given for Him.

V2) They had a dinner in honor of Jesus

A. Mary, Martha and Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead was at the dinner.

B. Mark 14:1-11 tells us the dinner was held at the home of Simon the Leper and the Passover was two days away.

1. The relationship of this family to Simon is not known, but it must have been close since Martha served.
2. Lazarus was reclining at the table with Jesus. Guests usually leaned on cushions with one arm and ate with the other.
3. Mary was very close listening to Jesus' words.

V3) Mary opened a pound of very costly perfume to anoint Jesus.

A. The pure nard was a fragrant oil prepared from the roots and stems of an aromatic herb from northern India.

1. It was an expensive perfume, imported in sealed alabaster boxes or flasks which were opened only on special occasions. It would have required a years wages from a common laborer to purchase that ointment.
2. Mary's lavish gift (a pint) expressed her love and thanks to Jesus for Himself and for His restoring of Lazarus to life. The house was filled with the fragrance.
3. This is one of John's many side comments which indicate that he was an

eyewitness of much of Jesus' ministry.⁷⁴

B. When she came to the feet of Jesus, Mary took the place of a servant. She undid her hair which is something Jewish women did not do in public.

1. She then anointed Jesus' feet and wiped His feet with her hair.
2. The house was immediately filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

V4) Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples, who would later betray Jesus felt compelled to question Mary.

V5) So he asked, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii (a years wages) and given to poor people?"

V6) John lets us know that Judas was not honest with his concerns because he was a thief and had frequently taken money out of funds that others had given to Jesus for His ministry, for his own benefit.

A. According to Mark (14:4–5) the other disciples joined Judas in his criticism and rebuked her harshly.

B. It is amazing how quickly evil spreads, and even leaders (the other disciples) can be caught up in Satan's traps.

V7) Jesus hearing what Judas had to say responded, "Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial."

A. Matthew recorded the additional statements that Jesus made concerning Mary's action.

1. "Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her" (Matt 26:13).

B. Jesus seems to confirm that the nard was traditionally used in burial preparations of the time—Jesus knew that His death is imminent.

V8) Jesus continues,

A. "You will always have the poor among you."

1. This was not a dismissal of concern for poverty or an encouragement to do nothing about poverty.
2. Instead, Jesus was saying that there are many causes for poverty and people will always have occasions to help the poor (Mark 14:7).

B. "But you do not always have Me."

⁷⁴ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 316). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

1. The opportunity to show love to Jesus on earth was limited, and coming to an end very soon.

V9) Jesus, being such a polarizing person and being just two miles from Jerusalem, it was impossible for His presence in Bethany not to be known. Therefore, a large crowd of Jews came to Bethany to see Jesus.

A. The crowd was much larger than usual because they also wanted to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

B. Given the natural curiosity of people they wanted to experience this moment.

1. Jesus and the former dead guy, together.

V10) Caiaphas and the other leaders concerns had intensified because of Jesus popularity.

A. The resurrection of Lazarus had caused a great stir among the people and had strengthened Jesus' popularity and increased the numbers of His followers.

B. Their concerns had been elevated to a new height and they were fearful of a riot. So they added Lazarus to the death list.

1. I am not sure how killing Jesus who had raised Lazarus from the dead and was now alive was going to calm things down?
2. Wouldn't that incite a riot? Wouldn't it be like throwing gasoline on a fire?

V11) The miracle of Lazarus' resurrection had caused many to believe that Jesus was the Christ. Obviously, this was disconcerting to the Jewish leaders.

The Triumphal Entry Into Jerusalem (12:12-20)

The scene shifts from a quiet dinner in Bethany to a public display on the streets of Jerusalem. John recounts the triumphal entry into Jerusalem only briefly. Luke gives the longest narrative of the event, while Matthew and Mark provide the most vivid account. Their writings differ in details, but they agree on the event itself and on how the crowd responded.

V12) When the pilgrims who had come for the Passover, heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they exploded with enthusiasm.

A. John highlights to crowds of people:

1. The large crowd that has gathered for the Passover.
2. The group of people who accompanied Jesus from Bethany to Jerusalem (v17).
3. The religious leaders who were greatly concerned about what Jesus might do at the feast (v19).

V13) They took palm tree branches and went out to meet Jesus as He was entering Jerusalem. They thought perhaps this would be the time He would declare Himself the Messiah.

A. This event has been referred to as Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter.

1. The palm branches were symbolic of rejoicing and triumph (Lev 23:40; Rev 7:9).

2. They applied Psalm 118:25-26, one of the Songs of Degree customarily sung by Passover pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem.

B. Waving their palm branches, symbols of victory, the people were shouting Hosanna! “Hosanna” in Hebrew means “Please save” or “Save now” (Ps. 118:25).

1. It came to be a shout of praise. Quoting Psalm 118:26, they ascribed messianic titles to Him: He who comes (lit., “the Coming One”; cf. John 11:27) and the King of Israel.

C. The crucifixion was only days away and a week before His resurrection.

V14) Jesus’ riding into the city on a young donkey was a sign of peace. He did not ride a war horse or carry a sword or wear a crown. He did not ride in a wheeled vehicle, as did the kings.

A. His manner of entry fulfilled Zechariah’s prophecy which contrasted Jesus’ coming (Zech. 9:9) with the coming of Alexander the Great (Tech. 9:1–8).

V15) Daughter of Zion is a poetic way of referring to the people of Jerusalem, the city built on Mount Zion. John called Jesus Israel’s King.

V16) The disciples, though close to Jesus and participants in these events, did not understand them.

A. They lacked the perspective of the Cross and the Resurrection (when He was glorified).

1. They were unaware that Zechariah’s prophecy had been written about Him.

2. Their faith was weak, they needed the ministry of the Holy Spirit (16:12–14).

B. We need to pray and seek God’s revelation so that we fully understand what God is doing.

V17) The group of people that came with Him from Bethany, who experienced the resurrection of Lazarus, were testifying about Jesus.

V18) The crowds of people went to meet Jesus because of the resurrection of Lazarus.

A. It was a day filled with excitement and acclaim about the Messiah.

B. Sadly and tragically the people had little if any spiritual perception and understanding as to what was really taking place.

V19) The massive and overwhelming reception of Jesus made the plans of the Pharisees to arrest and kill Jesus impossible.

A. If they tried this during the Feast, they thought “the people may riot” (Mark 14:1–2).

- B. With great consternation they acknowledged, “The whole world has gone after Him.”
 - 1. Unfortunately, most of those people did not really believe Jesus was the Messiah.

The Greeks Seek Jesus (12:20-36)

The original text indicates that these Greeks “were accustomed to come and worship at the feast.” They were not curious visitors or one-time investigators. No doubt they were “God-fearers,” Gentiles who attended the Jewish synagogue and sought the truth, but who had not yet become proselytes. Gentiles came to see Jesus when He was a young child (Matt. 2), and now Gentiles came to see Him just before His death.⁷⁵

V20) The Greeks made the journey to Jerusalem to participate in the Passover.

- A. Their presence could be symbolic of the Gentiles that would be coming to God through Christ.

V21) Why did the Greeks seek out Philip to inquire about meeting Jesus?

- A. Perhaps because Philip had a Greek name. Or he may have had some contact with Greeks from the Decapolis area, since he was from Bethsaida of Galilee.
- B. They were not seeking a sign, as most of the Jews were. They were wanting an audience with Jesus.

V22) Philip went to Andrew and informed him of the Greeks request. They went together to tell Jesus about the Greeks wanting to meet Him.

V23) There is no reference to whether these Greeks were granted time with Jesus, but the message that He gave in response to their request contains universal truth for all generations.

- A. Daily, Jesus had been moving toward His decisive hour. The coming of the Greeks confirmed that the hour had come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
- B. For most people, death is their humiliation. But for Jesus, death was His means of entry into glory. His willingness to die for others’ sins, in obedience to the Father’s will (Isa. 53:10, 12) brought Him eminence.

V24) I tell you the truth (truly, truly, verily, verily) introduces a formal affirmation.

- A. The analogy of a grain or kernel of wheat being planted and then “dying” in the ground will produce many harvests (fruit and seeds).
 - 1. It teaches that death is necessary for a harvest.
- B. A grain of wheat is not valuable unless it becomes something else.

⁷⁵ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 341). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

1. Jesus is willing to suffer for the cause God has set before Him.
2. He suggests that His value is substantially less if He is not willing to follow through on God's will.

V25) The person who attempts to preserve their life will lose it, while the person who readily sacrifices their life will live for eternity.

V26) Jesus explained what He meant in v25 when He said, "hate your own life."

- A. "Whoever serves Me, must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also."
- B. "Serve" and "Follow" are the two words that describe our obedience and action for the person who desires to keep their soul for eternity in heaven.
- C. Jesus describes three benefits for those who follow Him.
 1. Keep their souls unto eternal life (25)
 2. They have fellowship now and in the hereafter (26)
 3. The Father will honor them (26)

V27) Jesus turns from how this event would affect His disciples to explain how it affected Him.

- A. "My soul has become troubled."
 1. Later this anguish would be realized in the Garden of Gethsemane as recored in the synoptic Gospels.
 2. "Save me from this hour."
 3. "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me" (Matt 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42).
- B. At the same time, He recognized that His death was necessary to carry out God's plan of redemption—"For this purpose I came to this hour."
 1. Jesus understood His purpose even in His darkest hour.

C. Do you understand your purpose and your reason for being in God's kingdom?

V28) Father, glorify Your name!

- A. As followers of Christ, we must in difficulty embrace His will—desiring that His name be glorified, in spite of conflicting emotions.
- B. God responded by saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."
- C. Three times God the Father spoke from heaven:
 1. At Jesus' baptism
 2. Here in John 12:28 as He speaks of his impending death
 3. At His transfiguration

- V29) The crowd heard the sound of the Father's voice. Some thought it had thundered and others assumed an angel had spoken.
- A. The spiritually perceptive recognized something out of the ordinary was taking place, but to the unspiritual, it was only a noise
 - 1. But the natural person receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to them; neither can they know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14).
- V30) Jesus quickly let them know that the voice of the Father was for their benefit, not His.
- A. Jesus knows both the voice and the will of the Father. Do we?
- V31) Judgment would take place upon the world through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
- A. It was the Cross that revealed the world's hatred toward God, but the Cross also demonstrated God's love for the world (John 3:16,17).
 - B. Through Jesus' death on the cross and His triumphal resurrection over death and the grave, Satan, the ruler (prince) of the world would be cast down and defeated.
 - C. Five time in Scripture Satan is cast down:
 - 1. He was cast down from heaven before the creation
 - 2. At the cross He was cast out of his seat of power over believers
 - 3. He is cast out on the earth (Rev 12:9)
 - 4. He is cast into a pit of the abyss (Rev 20:3)
 - 5. He is cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10)
- V32) Jesus explained that when He is crucified and resurrected, His act of selfless love will cause humanity to be drawn to Him. How sad for those who do not receive Him!
- V33) With this statement, Jesus identified His death and how He was to die. The Cross is the most recognized and significant symbol in Christianity.
- V34) The crowd was confused by Jesus' statement.
- A. Jesus could not be the Messiah if He was to die by being lifted up on a cross, because the OT said that "Christ would abide for ever (Psalm 89:29,36; Isa 9:7; Ezek 37:25; Dan 7:13,14).
 - B. If Christ was to live forever, how then could He die?
 - 1. They were inclined to believe because of His miracles, but His teachings were hard for them understand and accept.
- V35) As the crowd thought on and debated the intellectual difficulties of Jesus' teachings, He spoke to them about the urgency of the hour (time).
- A. The Light (Jesus), would soon be removed.

B. The darkness of night was coming in which evil powers would hold sway over people.

1. “Therefore, walk with and in the Light, so that the darkness does not overtake you. If you walk in darkness you do not know where you’re going.”
2. Those who walk in the dark are unbelievers who stumble through life without knowing what life is all about and where they will spend eternity.
3. “The night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4).

V36) Jesus admonished them and spoke with urgency that “while you have the light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons and daughters of Light.”

A. “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the power/right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

1. How blessed and fortunate we are to call him Father and Lord and for Him to call us His child!

B. This completed Jesus’s public ministry as far as John’s record is concerned. Jesus departed and hid Himself.

1. Judgment would come to the nation that saw His miracles, heard His messages, and scrutinized His ministry, and yet refused to believe on Him.

C. May God help us not to duplicate their mistakes and unbelief!

Jesus and the Unbelieving Jews (12:37-50)

The key word in this section is *believe*; it is used eight times. First, John explained the unbelief of the people. They would not believe (vs 37–38, with a quotation from Isa. 53:1); they could not believe (v39); and they should not believe (vs 40–41, with a quotation from Isa. 6:9–10).

V37) John from the beginning of his Gospel (1:11) had sounded the theme of national unbelief.

A. John now explained that in spite of all of Jesus’ miraculous signs, they still would not believe in Him.

B. Their unbelief was irrational, as is today’s unbelief. Sin always produces the effect of unbelief.

V38) The Jews’ national, irrational unbelief had been predicted by Isaiah the prophet. The clearest OT passage concerning the suffering Servant (Isa. 53:1–12) began by stating that Israel would not perceive God’s revelation in and through the Servant. “Who has believed our message and seen His arm revealed?” implies that only a few have believed (quoting Isa. 53:1).

V39) John quoted from Isaiah 6:10 to explain that the nation as a whole was *unable* to believe.

V40) Because they constantly rejected God’s revelation, He had punished them with judicial blindness and deadened hearts.

A. People in Jesus’ day, like those in Isaiah’s day, refused to believe. They “would not

believe” (John 12:37); therefore they could not believe (v. 39).

1. Similar illustrations of God’s punishing of persistent sin by hardening are common (Ex. 9:12; Rom. 1:24, 26, 28; 2 Thess. 2:8–12)⁷⁶

V41) This verse ties Isaiah chapters 6 and 53 together as one.

- A. In Isaiah 6, the prophet saw God sitting upon the throne. In chapter 53, he viewed Christ upon the cross.
- B. Isaiah and John connected these two beings together as one. The One upon the throne and the One upon the cross are one and the same—God Himself!
- C. It was difficult for the Jews to associate their Messiah with suffering and death. This idea was a great stumbling block for them.
- D. Isaiah connected the glory and the suffering together, and John pointed to Jesus as the God whom Isaiah spoke of in both chapters.

V42) In spite of massive national unbelief, many individuals in high places did believe in Jesus, but for fear of being put out of the synagogue they did not openly confess Him.

V43) They feared peoples opinions and loved their praise more than God’s approval.

Jesus’ Exhortation (12:44-50)

When and where Jesus spoke these words is not indicated. This seems to be a general summary of Jesus’ manifestation of Himself to the nation.

V44) Jesus’ response of crying or calling out indicates the importance of this issue before the nation.

- A. “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.”
 1. Jesus is the perfect manifestation of God, the One who sent Him.

V45) People do not have two objects of faith: God and/or Jesus. When one sees Jesus, he sees the Father who sent Him

V46) Jesus came to lead people out of Satan’s kingdom of darkness into God’s kingdom of love and light.

V47) Jesus explained that if you reject my teachings that have come from the Father, that He (Jesus) would not judge you at this time.

- A. This time and aspect of His ministry was not as judge, but as Redeemer.

⁷⁶ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 318–319). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

V48) Jesus continued and stated that, "the ones who reject Him and His teachings, has one judge. The judge will be the words that I have spoken to you and these words will be your judge in the last days."

V49) Jesus reiterates that, "His words and actions are not self initiated, but declares it was the Father who sent Him and told Him what to say."

V50) Jesus concluded His remarks by saying that, "God's commands are eternal life. Therefore, these things that I teach are just as the Father gave them to me."

In addressing the Jewish national unbelief, John balanced his theological explanation with Jesus' strong exhortation to the nation to repent. In the words of Moses, these "are not just idle words for you—they are your life" (Deut. 32:47).

The Last Supper (13:1-38)

The next five chapters (13-17) could be described as Jesus' farewell message to His disciples. John's writing provides more of the content of Jesus' instructions to His disciples than Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Before Jesus began this last interaction with His disciples before His death, He washed their feet. The Passover Meal and Jesus' teaching would follow this historic event.

V1) John's account of the Passion begins with the preface of the Feast of the Passover.

- A. Jesus had been introduced by John the Baptist as the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29).
- B. The OT states that the Feast of the Passover was to be celebrated beginning at sundown the 14th day of the first month, followed on the 15th by the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:6-11; Lev 23:5,6; Deut 16:1).
- C. The first Passover had been a turning point in the redemption of the people of God, so the Cross would be the beginning of a new era for followers of Christ.
- D. Jesus knew that His time to be offered up and to die had come, and that He would soon return to His Father.
 - 1. John conveys to his readers that Jesus loved His disciples.
 - 2. The idea here is Jesus loved the present disciples at that time and the millions of disciples that would follow.
 - 3. His love did not end at His death, because His love is eternal.

V2) Tenney states that whether this meal was a pre-Passover meal or the Passover Meal itself has been debated for centuries. It appears that the meal took place on the same night that Jesus was betrayed and arrested. This would have been on Thursday night and the Crucifixion occurred on Friday, the day before Passover, which would have begun on Friday evening.

- A. Luke states that when the day came on which the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed, Peter and John were sent to arrange the meal that the Lord and his disciples ate that evening (Luke 22:7-14).
 - 1. Matthew (26:17-20) and Mark (14:12-17) agree that the meal was on the day on which the Passover lamb was killed, which preceded the Passover itself.
 - 2. John states in (18:28) that the Jewish delegates could not enter Pilate's hall on Friday morning because they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover.
- B. In that case, the Last Supper must have preceded the Passover by twenty-four hours.
 - 1. If, then, the Passover began on Friday night, the meal could have taken place on Thursday night but would not have been the standard Passover Feast.
- C. This question is complicated by the fact that the Synoptics imply that Jesus did intend to eat the Passover with His disciples (Matt 26:18; Mark 14:14; Luke 22:11).

However, no mention is made of the Passover lamb.⁷⁷

D. The Devil, Satan had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus.

1. During the Last Supper Judas would initiate and act upon his betrayal of Christ.

V3) John informs us that Jesus was not ignorant of the plot or unaware of the events that would transpire. Jesus knew that the Father had submitted all things to His authority. He had come from the Father and was returning to Him.

V4) The disciples had come to the banquet room from the streets. Typically, a servant would be present to wash the feet of the invited guest as they entered the room. There was no such servant present.

A. None of the disciples volunteered for such a task, for each would have considered it an admission of inferiority to all the others. Rather, Luke informs us (Luke 22:24) that the disciples were arguing among themselves which one of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

B. Jesus left the supper table, removed His outer garment which would have been in the way of what He was prepaying to do and picked up a towel. The towel was an emblem of a servant and served as an apron and a drying cloth. His action was a voluntary act of humility that rebuked the pride of the disciples.

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet (13:5-20)

V5) People did not wear socks and shoes that enclosed their feet. Sandals were the only protection from sharp stones and the dusty roads. The feet became the most unclean part of the body.

A. Washing the feet of guests was common courtesy, and the refreshing gesture was greatly appreciated among the recipients.

B. Jesus poured water into a basin, and began washing the disciples' feet and then dried them with the towel, He girded Himself with.

V6) Peter sensing Jesus' reversing of their natural roles, asked why He, Peter's Lord, should wash the feet of His servant Peter.

V7) Jesus informs Peter that he does not presently understand what is taking place. Jesus does assure him that at a later date he will grasp and appreciate the significance of the moment.

A. Sure seems like we get a lot of that in our Christian walk: You will understand it better by and by.

⁷⁷Tenney, Merrill C. "Acts." In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*: With the New International Version, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 135. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981

V8) No! You shall never wash my feet, Peter replied. Apparently, he did not feel that Jesus should act like a servant toward him.

A. Jesus had an immediate response, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”

B. What Jesus is saying is, “Unless I wash your sins away by My atoning death (cf. Rev. 1:5) you have no real relationship to or with Me” (cf. 1 John 1:7).

V9) Peter continued to miss the spiritual lesson, and interpreted Jesus’ words as literal.

A. He was certain of his desire to be joined to Jesus. Therefore he asked Jesus to wash his hands and head as well as his feet.

V10) Jesus quickly tells Peter, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, because they are completely clean; and you are clean.”

A. When we receive Christ as our Savior and Lord, we are forever clean.

B. Jesus added that not every one of you is clean, He was referring to Judas (cf. John 13:11, 18).

V11) Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him and informed the disciples that, “Not all of you are clean.”

A. Judas had entered into a contract to betray Jesus (Mark 14:1,10,11).

1. Judas needed a bath (spiritual cleansing); the other disciples merely needed their feet washed.
2. Washing the disciples feet indicated the disciples continuous need for cleansing as the laver in the OT tabernacle taught the need of cleansing before entering the presence of God.

V12) After providing a lesson in humility for His disciples, He took His garments and returned to the table.

A. He asked His disciples if, “They knew what He had done to them?” Before they could answer Jesus began to teach them in the following verses the ministering to and meeting other peoples needs through self-sacrifice is a Kingdom virtue that they must master.

V13) Jesus remarks that “You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am.”

A. Rabbis were called teacher by their students. But Jesus added the title of “Lord” to show His divinity as well.

V14) Jesus wanted to impart to His disciples His act of love and humble service.

V15) The “example” that Jesus provided does not necessarily imply the perpetuation of foot washing as an ordinance in the church.

A. The only other allusion to foot washing in the NT occurs in the 1 Tim 5:10,

where it does not refer to a regular custom but seems to allude to charitable ministrations to the poor.

B. Perhaps it was the basis for the Pauline exhortation to the Philippians in 2:5-8)⁷⁸

C. Many groups throughout church history have practiced literal foot-washing as a church ordinance. However, present culture in many lands does not call for the need to wash dust from the feet of one's guests.

D. The Lord's Supper was practiced by the early church as an ordinance and continues to be an ordinance of the church of today.

E. This passage emphasizes inner humility, not a physical rite. Not to follow Jesus' example is to exalt oneself above Jesus and to live in pride.

V16) Verily, verily or truly, truly is again stated to emphasize the coming statement.

A. Jesus lectures them that, "a slave is not greater than his master, nor *is* one who is sent greater than the one who sent him."

V17) Jesus tells them that God blesses His followers not for what they know, but what they do because of what they know. James said, "I will show you my faith by what I do." Blessings come through obedience.

V18) Jesus added that there would be no blessedness for one of the disciples.

A. His selection of Judas was not an accident or a failure in God's plan.

1. Jesus chose a betrayer among His 12 disciples (cf. 6:70-71) in order to fulfill the Scripture, Psalm 41:9 which Jesus quoted.
2. As David was betrayed by his trusted table companion Ahithophel, who then hanged himself (2 Sam. 16:20-17:3, 23).
3. Jesus' close companion, betrayed Him and then hanged himself.
4. Though Judas' deed was foreknown by God, he was fully culpable.

V19) The fact that Jesus knew all this in advance and that it fit the Scriptures helped the disciples after the fact to believe God sent Jesus

V20) Verily, verily or truly, truly is again stated to emphasize the coming statement.

A. Because Jesus was/is the Son of God and received His commission from the Father, so the disciples represented Jesus. Anyone who accepted the disciples was thus accepting Jesus, the One they represented, and in turn that person was also accepting the Father.

⁷⁸ Ibid p. 137

One of You Will Betray Me (13:21-30)

V21) Jesus was troubled in His spirit and knew the events that were hours away.

- A. Because Jesus was human, He was troubled over Judas' soon betrayal of His love and friendship.
- B. Being the divine Son of God, Jesus knew beforehand that it would happen.
- C. Jesus was aware of the spiritual hardness and deadness which sin had produced in Judas.
- D. The word testified and I tell you the truth emphasized the solemn announcement of Jesus' words.

V22) The disciples had no idea who Jesus was referring to. How could anyone in this small, intimate group of Jesus' disciples possibly betray Him? It was incomprehensible!

- A. Judas had been so discreet in his actions that none of the others suspected him.

V23) One of the disciples sitting (reclining) next to Jesus was identified as the one (John) whom Jesus loved.

V24) Simon Peter gestured to his friend John to ask Jesus which one of the twelve was He speaking of?

- A. Peter's inquiry demonstrated his persistent trait of curiosity but also his loyalty to Jesus.
- B. Peter being the most emotionally and spontaneous among the disciples may have contemplated some type of preventive action against the betrayer, if Jesus would name him.

V25) As John was leaning back on Jesus, he complied with Peter's request and asked Him, "Lord, who is it?"

V26) Giving the morsel to Judas was an uncaught sign of recognition to John and the others.

- A. This was Jesus' final extension of grace to Judas.
 - 1. A host's giving a morsel of bread to a guest was a sign of friendship.
 - 2. How ironic that Jesus' act of friendship to Judas signaled Judas' betrayal of friendship.

V27) After Jesus gave the morsel to Judas, Satan entered him.

- A. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do it quickly."
- B. Blume states, Do quickly is literally "do it more quickly," which may imply Jesus' words spurred Judas to act in God's proper timing.

V28) None of the disciples reclining at the table with Jesus grasped the significance of His words to Judas. Obviously, they missed the intent of the sop until later.

V29) John's explanation of how some interpreted Jesus' answer to the original question of "Who is the betrayer?" shows their lack of understanding.

A. They assumed Jesus was telling Judas to go and buy the items needed for the feast or to go and give something to the poor, because he had the money box.

B. Judas had deceived his fellow disciples but not Jesus.

V30) John informs us that after Judas ate the morsel he immediately left; and it was night.

A. John perhaps is highlighting the symbolic significance that Judas was leaving the Light of Jesus Christ (8:12; 12:35, 46) and going out into the darkness of sin (3:19).

Jesus' Time Had Come and He Gave A New Commandment (13:31-35)

V31) After the departure of Judas, Jesus knew the events leading to His death would come very quickly. Jesus alerts His remaining followers that the time has now come for the Father to be glorified through Him.

A. The tension that had been increasing between Jesus and the Jews and with Satan was coming to a crescendo.

V32) The words "glorified" and "glorify" occur five times in verses 31 and 32.

A. Jesus' unique glory was revealed in His death. The Father was also glorified in Jesus' death because God's love, His condescension, and His righteousness were made known (John 1:14; Rom. 3:21-26).

B. The words God will glorify Him at once looked ahead to the Resurrection and the Ascension.

V33) My children translates *teknia*, ("little children"; the diminutive of *tekna*, "children").

This term of love expressed Jesus' concern for them.

A. It is used only here by Jesus in this Gospel.

1. John used it seven times in his first epistle (1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21).

2. Paul used it once (Gal. 4:19).

B. Jesus announced once again that He would be gone and they would not be able to find Him (cf. Matt. 23:29; John 7:34; 8:21; 12:8, 35).

1. This was true in both His death and His Ascension.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 321). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- V34) The 11 disciples would survive in His absence by obeying His example of love.
- A. The command is new in that it is a special love for other believers based on the sacrificial love of Jesus: As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
 - B. Christians' love and support for one another enable them to survive in a hostile world.
 - C. As Jesus was the embodiment of God's love, so now each disciple should embody Christ's love.⁸⁰

V35) This love is a sign to the world as well as to every believer (1 John 3:14).

Jesus Foretells Peter's Denial (13:36-38)

- V36) As usual Peter had a quick response to Jesus' proclamation about going away.
- A. He wanted to know where Jesus was going (cf. Thomas' similar request; 14:5). Peter's love was such that he wanted to be with Jesus.
 - B. But Jesus replied that it was not possible right then for Peter to be with Him.
 - 1. Peter could not conceive of any situation that would make Jesus' words make sense to him.
- V37) Peter was certain that his love and courage were up to any challenge, including death. Therefore, he declared, "I will lay down my life for You."
- V38) Peter was not prepared for the response that Jesus would give in regards to his declaration.
- A. Peter did not know himself as well as he thought, nor did he know the satanic power at work against him (cf. Luke 22:31-32).
 - B. Jesus' prediction of Peter's defection (you will disown Me three times) must have completely shocked the other disciples. They may have wondered if Peter was the traitor.

⁸⁰ Ibid p. 321-322

Matters of the Heart (14:1-31)

The disciples were completely bewildered and discouraged. Jesus had said He was going away and that He would die, that one of the Twelve was a traitor, that Peter would disown Him three times, that Satan was at work against all of them, and that all the disciples would fall away. The cumulative weight of these revelations must have greatly depressed them.

To comfort the disciples, Jesus gave them several exhortations along with promises. This chapter opens and closes with our Lord's loving admonition, "Let not your heart be troubled" (14:1, 27). It is not surprising that the Apostles were troubled after all that Jesus disclosed in the previous chapter. To encourage them, Jesus tells them that He is going to prepare for them/us and that He will return for them/us. He wants them to know of heaven and that heaven is a real place. It is not a product of one's religious imagination. Heaven is the place where God dwells and where Jesus sits today at the right hand of the Father. Heaven is described as a kingdom (2 Peter 1:11), an inheritance (1 Peter 1:4), a country (Heb. 11:16), a city (Heb. 11:16), and a home (John 14:2). Within the Upper Room, the vision of a new community was being shaped. In the last few hours of His life on earth, Jesus sketched for His friends a picture of a future that they/we are to experience. It's important to realize that this revelation is for us and all believers of every age!

V1) Let not your heart be troubled—Set yourself at ease and maintain your trust in God and in Me.

A. The disciples were troubled because of several depressing occurrences.

1. Jesus told them He was leaving, departing from them (13:33).
2. He implied that He would suffer death by crucifixion (12:32, 33).
3. He stated that one of them would betray Him to the authorities (13:21).
4. He said all would forsake Him and Peter would deny Him (13:38).
5. They knew that Jesus was troubled when He spoke of the betrayal but they were unable to correctly interpret what was taking place (13:21).
6. He informed them that they could follow Him until later (13:36).

B. Jesus uses the word "heart" as the deepest recess of the soul. It usually signifies the emotions, which reflect the attitude and will of the person. One's heart is the center of their personality. Each believer is responsible for the condition of his heart

1. To be troubled is a human reaction to adverse circumstances.
2. It is not a sin to be troubled, because Jesus was troubled (13:21).
3. By a firm trust in God the Father and Jesus the Son, they could relieve their soul-sorrow and be sustained in the coming tests.
4. We must deal with our troubles from and with a Biblical perspective.⁸¹

V2) With threatening circumstances hours away, Jesus spoke with absolute assurance of God's provision for them that they would have an eternal dwelling place with the Father and Him.

⁸¹ Harris, Ralph W. *The Complete Biblical Library, The New Testament Study Bible* John. Springfield, MO 1988 p393

- A. The imagery of a dwelling place (rooms) is taken from the typical house of the day in which sons and daughters had apartments under the same roof as their parents.
- B. Jesus' departure had to do with making ready the place where He could welcome them for all eternity.
- C. Three statements provided the reality of heaven.
 - 1. In My Father's house
 - 2. Many dwelling places (mansions)
 - 3. A place for you

V3) If I go, I will come back!

- A. Jesus' return is as sure as His departure. Where He is, is where He wants us to be!

V4) You know the way to the place where I am going. Throughout His ministry, Jesus had been showing them the way.

- A. He had made it very clear both privately and publicly that He had come from the Father and that He would return to Father.
- B. Their way to the Father would be through Him. And not just for them, but for all humanity.

V5) Thomas' statement (We don't know where You are going) and his question (So how can we know the way?) reflected the perplexity of the Eleven (Peter's similar question; 13:36).

- A. He was totally honest in his questions. He did not suppress his feelings but voiced his despair.
 - 1. He had previously declared his willingness to follow Jesus and to die with Him if necessary, when He proposed the journey to Bethany (11:16).
- B. They would remain puzzled until His death and resurrection and until the advent of the Spirit. They had all the information but they could not put it together.
- C. Thomas is noted for his skepticism and his questions, yet he should also be remembered for amazing confession of faith when he answered "My Lord and my God" (20:28).

V6) This is the sixth of Jesus' seven "I am" statements in the Gospel of John (6:48; 8:12; 10:9, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1). (See page eight of your lecture notes.)

- A. Jesus did not claim to know a way, some type of truth, and a formula for living life. He declared that "He is the way, the truth, and the life!"
- B. As the Father is Truth and Life, Jesus is the embodiment of God so people can come to the Father—Jesus is the only way to reach the Father.

- C. Jesus stressed that salvation, contrary to what many people think, is *not* obtainable through many ways.
 - 1. Only one Way exists (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5).
 - 2. Jesus is the only access to the Father because He is the only One from the Father (1:1–2, 51; 3:13).

Oneness With The Father (14:7-15)

V7) The first sentence in this verse may either be a promise (“If you really knew Me, you will know My Father as well”) or a rebuke (If you really knew Me, you would know My Father as well).

- A. The Lord seems to be rebuking them for a failure to understand His person and mission (cf. 8:19).
 - 1. The dialogue in the next two verse indicates a failure on the disciples’ part to recognize that the Father was in the Son.
- B. By seeing Jesus they were seeing the Father. Jesus was the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person (Heb 1:3; Col 1:15; I Tim 6:16).
- C. From now on, you do know Him is a promise, which looks beyond the Cross and the Resurrection (20:28, “My Lord and my God”).

V8) Philip expressed a universal desire of humanity: to see God (Ex. 33:18).

- A. Philip was probably longing for a theophany (Ex. 24:9–10; Isa. 6:1) or some visible display of God’s glory.
- B. Aren’t we all! Just show us the Father, Jesus, and that will be enough to prove everything you have said.

V9) Jesus’ statement, Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father (12:45), is one of the most staggering claims He ever made. The Father is in Jesus and Jesus perfectly reveals Him (1:18).

- A. Therefore, no theophany was necessary, for by seeing Jesus they were seeing the Father!

V10-11) The proof of the union of Jesus and His Father is threefold.

- A. They should believe Jesus because of His character (I am in the Father [cf. v. 20] and ... the Father is in Me);
- B. Because His words are the Father’s (The words I say to you are not just My own (cf. 7:16; 12:49–50; 14:24);
- C. Because the miracles reveal God’s working through Him (the Father, living in Me ... is doing His work.... believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves; cf. 5:36).

D. One of the key elements in John's Gospel is the stress on the signs as gracious pointers to faith (cf. 5:36; 10:25, 38; 11:47; 12:37; 20:30–31).⁸²

V12) Jesus was assuring the disciples that they were going to be used in great and mighty ways for the glory of God. This same promise is still active to believers today.

A. The apostles would not necessarily do more stupendous miracles than Jesus did but their outreach would be greater. Peter in one sermon had 3,000 converts.

B. This was possible because Jesus had gone to the Father and had sent the Spirit.

V13) The power of the disciples originated in prayer. Jesus was most emphatic when He declared that whatever they/we should ask in His name, He would do.

A. "In My name" is not a magical formula of invocation. But the prayers of believers, as Christ's representatives doing His business, will be answered.

B. John expanded this teaching in his first epistle. He wrote, "If we ask anything according to His will ... we have what we asked of Him" (1 John 5:14–15).

V14) To ask Me for anything in My name means to ask according to His will ("in My name" in John 15:16; 16:23–24, 26).

A. Prayers in the New Testament are usually addressed to God the Father, but prayer addressed to the Son is proper also (e.g., Stephen's prayer to the "Lord Jesus" [Acts 7:59]).

B. The goal of answered prayers is to bring glory to the Father.

V15) The disciples' obedience to Him would/will be the test of their love to Him.

A. The natural outgrowth of love is a desire to conduct one's life in obedience to the Lord's commands.

B. Christ has set the pattern of love and obedience (John 14:31); His disciples are expected to follow.

The Promise of the Spirit (14:16-31)

This is the first of several passages on the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room Discourse. John, to this point has said little about the Holy Spirit. The words to Nicodemus (3:5–8) were private and 7:39 pointed ahead to Pentecost.

V16) Jesus prayed to the Father to send the Holy Spirit.

A. Jesus said, "He would ask the Father, and He will give them/us another Helper/

⁸² Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 323). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Comforter.”

1. “Another” means another of the same kind that Jesus was.
2. The disciples did not need to be concerned that some circumstances such as Jesus’ crucifixion would separate the “other Helper/Comforter” from them.

B. This Comforter/Helper would do for the disciples in the future what Jesus had done for them while He was with them.

1. The Holy Spirit would “abide” (be, stay, remain, continue) with them.
2. He, the Holy Spirit would not leave them alone or helpless.

C. This verse supports the doctrine of the Trinity. Just as the account of Jesus’ baptism by John, the three members of the Godhead are evident here.

1. Jesus said “I”—the Son
2. He would ask the “Father”—God
3. Send the “Comforter”—The Holy Spirit

V17) Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit will be (fut. tense) in them? Because in OT times the Spirit came on some believers for special enablement, but after Pentecost He would indwell every true believer permanently (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13).

A. Merrill Tenney writes: “The ministry of the Spirit, however, would be directed primarily to the disciples. He would direct their decisions, counsel them continually, and remain with them forever. He would be invisible to all and unapprehended by the world at large since the world would not recognize Him. To use a modern metaphor, He would not operate on the world’s wavelength. His presence was already with the disciples insofar as they were under His influence. Later, He would indwell them, when Jesus Himself had departed. This distinction makes the difference between the OT experience and the post-Pentecostal experience of the church. The individual indwelling of the Spirit is the specific privilege of the Christian believer.”⁸³

B. Jesus revealed the Spirit’s relationship to believers. These are three excellent reasons that our hearts should not be troubled (v1).

1. Jesus informed us that the Helper would abide with the believer as a companion for the journey (v16)
2. The Spirit of Truth would abide with believers as a defender of their spiritual welfare (v17)
3. The Spirit would be in believers as the energizer of power from on high.⁸⁴

V18) Jesus assured His disciples that His returning to the Father would not leave them alone

⁸³ Tenney, Merrill C. “Acts.” In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: With the New International Version*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 146. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981

⁸⁴ Harris, Ralph W. *The Complete Biblical Library, The New Testament Study Bible John*. Springfield, MO 1988 p403

or in a defenseless condition. They should have no fears of being alone as fatherless children.

V19) “After a little while” refers to the hours just ahead until his death, burial, and resurrection.

A. Jesus would appear to them after His resurrection and ultimately they/we will live with Him for all eternity.

B. Because Jesus has power over death and continues to live ensures that all believers will live forever with Him.

V20) “In that day” refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit to the believers on the Day of Pentecost.

A. It would bring the realization of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit which are united in purpose and operation and that there would be a new and enhanced relationship between them and the followers of Christ.

B. Moreover, the Spirit’s coming would be a confirmation of Jesus’ exaltation to the Father’s right hand to His present ministry as Advocate and Intercessor (John 15:26; Acts 2:33; 5:31-32).

V21) Jesus reiterated His declaration of v15 because of its importance—Love is the basis of relationship with God.

A. God has manifested His love for us in the gift of Jesus (1John 4:9-10).

B. Our love for Him is manifested in our obedience to Him and His Word (1John 5:3).

C. Jesus continues that the Father would love the obedient disciple, Jesus Himself would love them, and that He would make Himself known to them.

V22) Judas (not Judas Iscariot) was probably the same man called Thaddaeus (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18).

A. He was puzzled that Jesus would manifest Himself to them and not to the world (John 14:19a).

B. The disciples had expected Jesus to establish His Messianic Kingdom on earth at this time. Judas was confused as to how He could do this and confine His manifestation to just them?

1. If Jesus revealed Himself only to them, how could He defeat the enemies as the Messiah was to do?

V23) However, Jesus did not directly answer his questions, He replied by repeating and further explaining His earlier statement.

A. Jesus repeated the truth that the condition of receiving the revelation of Him depended

upon the disciples love and obedience to His words.

B. “We will come to you” refers to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This happened in a very intimate way on the Day of Pentecost.

V24) To rebel against Jesus’ word is to rebel against God the Father who sent Him. Jesus’ words were not His own, as He had previously said(12:49; 14:10).

V25) What Jesus said in the days of His earthly ministry was only part of the revelation that they were to receive.

A. Three things were needed for the apostles to understand Jesus’ person and mission:

1. His death had to occur.
2. He had to rise again to vindicate His claim and demonstrate His victory.
3. The Spirit had to come (He would be sent by the Father ... in My name, i.e., in Jesus’ place and for Him) and interpret the meanings of Jesus’ words and deeds.⁸⁵

V26) The Spirit, Jesus said, “that the Father will send in My name will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

A. Blume says, This verse is addressed to the apostles. The context limits the “all things” to the interpretation and significance of His person and work. The Spirit worked in their minds, reminding them of His teaching and giving them insight into its meaning (cf. 2:22; 7:39; 20:9).⁸⁶

V27) Jesus knew that His followers would not be exempt from conflict and trials just as He had not been.

A. The peace He spoke of came from the calmness of His confidence in God.

1. Jesus had this peace because He was sure of the Father’s love and approval.

B. The peace that Jesus describes is available to all believers! We are not to be troubled or filled with fear. This type and level of peace is not available from the world.

V28) As Jesus concludes this part of His discourse with His disciples, He reminded them that He would soon return to His Father and He did not want their faith to be disrupted by His departure.

A. Had the disciples been more mature in their love for Jesus, they would have been glad for His departure. But their love was still selfish and immature at this point.

B. Jesus was in His humiliation role on earth as the suffering-servant. By returning to the

⁸⁵ Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 324). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁸⁶ Ibid p. 324

Father He would be exalted in glory (13:31–32) and He will come back (14:3).

C. Jesus assured them that they would see Him again. Why rejoice because He returned to the Father? Because His return made possible His wonderful intercessory ministry on our behalf, our great High Priest in heaven (Heb. 2:17–18; 4:14–16).

1. We have the Spirit within us, the Savior above us, and the Word before us! What tremendous resources for peace!⁸⁷

D. The phrase “my Father is greater than I” raises a question. Does it mean the Son is inferior to the Father?

1. No, for Phil 2:6 points out that in His incarnate existence Jesus “thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”
2. In His Incarnation, Jesus deliberately subordinated Himself. He had been “in the form of God” took upon Himself the “form of a servant” and the “likeness of humanity” (Phil 2:6,7).
3. This voluntary humbling did not affect His essential deity.⁸⁸

E. Arians and Jehovah’s Witnesses argue from the statement, The Father is greater than I, that Jesus is a lesser god. But this would make Jesus a created being or would lead to polytheism, both of which are clearly unbiblical. The Father and the Son share the same essence (1:1–2; 14:9; 20:28). The Father and the Son are “One” in purpose and essence (10:30). Thus the Father is greater in office or glory than the Son was in His humiliation.⁸⁹

V29) Jesus had spoken prophetically numerous times about His death and resurrection. When these events took place, after their initial shock, confusion and disbelief, the disciples would remember Jesus’ words and it would greatly help their trust and their faith in Him.

V30) Jesus informed the disciples that His teaching time was concluding because Satan, the prince of this world (John 12:31; 16:11), was moving his forces against Jesus through Judas (13:2, 27).

A. Jesus wanted the disciples to know that Satan had no hold on Him or nothing in Him.

1. Sin leads to death (Rom. 5:12, 21a; 6:16), and sin and death give Satan a hold over people (Heb. 2:14–15; Rev. 12:10).
2. Jesus was/is sinless, Satan could not/cannot claim Him for his kingdom.

⁸⁷ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 354). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁸⁸ Harris, Ralph W. *The Complete Biblical Library, The New Testament Study Bible John*. Springfield, MO 1988 p409

⁸⁹ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 324). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

3. Satan thought Jesus' death was a victory for him, but actually it was Jesus' victory over Satan (John 16:11; Col. 2:15).

V31) Jesus concludes by telling His disciples that He wants the world to know that He loves the Father.

- A. He demonstrated His love by doing exactly what the Father ... commanded (John 10:18; 12:49–50) including being “obedient to death” (Phil. 2:8).
- B. Jesus said, “Get up, let us go.” It was now time to leave the Upper Room to make their way to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus is the Vine—Followers Are Branches (15:1-27)

Jesus knew that this group of disciples would constitute the formation and development of a new community that would be called the Church. The Church would have a definite function to fulfill the mission and purpose of God. Jesus wanted them to be prepared for the change that His departure would bring to their lives. Therefore, Jesus addressed three relationships that involved the disciples: (1) their relationship with Him, (2) their relationship with one another, and (3) their relationship with the world.

The Disciples Relationship To Jesus (15:1-11)

V1) This is the last of the seven “I am” statements recorded by John (see page 8 of your lecture notes).

A. One necessity in gardening/farming is to plant the proper vine/tree/plant to assure the proper quality of the fruit—No fruit can be better than the vine that produces it.

B. In this allegory Jesus declared Himself to be the true vine.

1. Unless the follower of Christ is vitally connected with Him, the quality of their fruitfulness will be unacceptable.
2. There can be many branches, but to bear the right kind of fruit, they must be an integral part of Jesus, who is the true and real vine.

C. Jesus declared that God the Father is the vinedresser/husbandman/farmer.

1. Success in having an abundant harvest depends on the knowledge and skill of the vinedresser.
2. The relation of the believer to God is that of the vine to the owner of the vineyard. He tends it, waters it, and endeavors to protect it and cultivate it so that it will produce its maximum yield (Tinney).

V2) The branches comes from the central vine. “In me” signifies the believers in vital union and communion with the life source and fruit-producing supply.

A. There are only two options for all branches.

1. Removal - The non producing branches that are dead are to be cut away and removed from the life support because of their inability to produce fruit.
 - a. If a dead branch is allowed to remain it can cause disease and decay to attack the life source, the vine.
2. Pruning - Cutting back the branch that is alive and producing will allow it to produce an even greater harvest.

B. Notice the vinedresser’s close examination of every branch.

1. He knows the producing and non-producing branches. He knows what to leave and what to remove.
2. He wants to insure that the vine is healthy and stimulating growth of all the branches.

C. It is essential that we as believers (branches) remain firmly attached to Jesus (vine).

V3) In the Greek, clean is the same word as prune (purgeth) in verse two. Pruning conveys the idea of cleaning—Cleaning the vine by removing non-productive branches.

A. Jesus informed the disciples that they were already spiritually pruned/clean.

1. Being exposed to Jesus' teaching for three years, they heard and received His message and they became pruned/clean through His words.
2. Also, in John 13:10 after Jesus washed the disciples feet, He informed them that they were clean/pruned.
 - a. Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, and is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you (Judas)."
 - b. Judas was an example of a branch cut off and removed.

B. The means by which pruning or cleaning is done, is the Word God.

1. The Holy Scriptures condemns sin, inspires holiness, and promotes growth in the lives of the followers of Christ.

V4) To continue to produce necessitates constant union with the source of fruitfulness.

A. Abide implies that the believer is already in Christ. The ideas of stay, and remain continuously are expressed in abide.

B. To "abide in" Christ is to maintain an unbroken fellowship and personal communion with Him.

C. It is Christ's desire to abide in the believer. However, His abiding is contingent upon the believer's welcome and continuing cultivation of His personal presence.

V5) The ability to produce fruit has been implied in the preceding verses, it is now distinctly declared.

A. Fruit bearing is not only possible but certain if the branch remains in union with the vine.

1. The way to produce an abundant harvest is to maintain an unrestricted love and fellowship with Jesus Christ, the Vine.
2. All fruit produced by the follower of Christ, belongs to Him.
3. Jesus receives the glory for deeds of righteousness produced by the believer.

V6) Jesus clearly states that a person that does not abide in Him is thrown away and destroyed.

A. Jesus abiding in the believer is abundantly clear. The question is, "Will the believer continue to abide in Christ?"

B. The branch that is cutoff/removed from the vine dies. Therefore, the believer who severs their relationship with Jesus Christ also dies.

- C. The severed branches are of no value and they are cast into the fire for destruction. Likewise, the former believer is removed from Christ and is destined for destruction.

V7) The requirements for answered prayer is “If you.” The connection is maintained by relationship with Christ and being obedient to His Word.

- A. To remain in Christ and to allow His words to remain in oneself means a conscious acceptance of the authority of His word and constant contact with Him by prayer.
- B. Tenney states, “The prayer request must be related to a definite need and must be for an object Jesus Himself would desire. He was not promising to gratify every chance whim. But so long as the believer was seeking the Lord’s will in their life, Jesus would grant every request that would help accomplish this end.”⁹⁰
- C. Blume says, “Effective prayer is based on faith in Christ and on His words remaining in believers. Christ’s words condition and control such a believer’s mind so that his prayers conform to the Father’s will. Since his prayer is in accord with God’s will, the results are certain—it will be given you (cf. 1 John 5:14–15).”⁹¹

V8) The proof of our discipleship is bearing fruit and doing the will of the heavenly Father. God is glorified when His followers produce abundant fruit for His kingdom. As Jesus glorified God by His life, the followers of Christ are to glorify God with theirs.

V9) Jesus informed His followers that God had loved Him, and that He loved them. Love is the relationship that unites the disciples to Christ as branches are united to a vine and Christ wants His followers to abide/remain/stay in His love.

V10) Obedience to the Father’s commands is the same for a disciple as it was for the Son.

- A. Active dependence and loving obedience are the proper paths for all of God’s children to remain/abide in the love of Jesus Christ and God the Father. Jesus never planned on us failing!

V11) Jesus concluded his teaching on the allegory of the vine and branches as it related to their mutual relationship. He wanted them/us to have an abundant life and joyous existence.

- A. Jesus lived a life of joy and completeness because of His love for the Father and His obedience to His purpose and will.
 - 1. Jesus wanted them to duplicate His life so that His joy would be/remain in them. His desire for them was that their joy will be full and complete.

⁹⁰ Tenney, Merrill C. “Acts.” In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*: With the New International Version, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 152. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981

⁹¹ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 326). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Disciples Relation to Each Other (15:12-17)

V12) Jesus knew the success of building the kingdom of God depended upon the disciples attitude toward each other. Consequently, He gave each one of them an essential command that they must love one another just as He had loved them.

A. Christians grow by caring for and nurturing each other.

1. The standard for that love is Christ's example of humble sacrificial service: as I have loved you.

V13) Jesus stated that the measure and degree of love that He has for His followers and that His love would be demonstrated by His sacrificial death.

A. The most a person can do for their friend is to die for them; such a death is a clear demonstration of love.

1. Jesus demonstrated His love by dying for His friends, those who obey Him.

B. John fully understood the meaning of Jesus' statement and repeated it in his first epistle.

1. We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1John 3:16).

V14) Jesus again defined friendship in terms of obedience.

A. Our relationship with Christ, and the body of Christ is much, much more than a casual acquaintance. Rather, it is a commitment to Christ and to each other in that it is based upon mutual esteem and deep affection (14:21).

B. Abraham was called God's "friend" (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23) because he willingly obeyed Him.

V15) Jesus elevated His followers to a higher position than that of servants/slaves.

A. Friendship is based upon mutual respect and the understanding of being equals.

1. A servant/slave does not have the same close relationship with his master, as friends have with one another.
2. A servant/slave does what they are told without knowing and understanding their master's mind or business. They are never given a reason for what they have been told to do.
3. The caliber of relationship that Jesus had with His disciples, the role of servant/slave did not apply. They were confidants with Jesus and He had shared the knowledge that the Father had given Him, with them.
4. Jesus called His disciples friends because He had disclosed His Father's mission and purpose to them.

V16) Students sometimes choose their teachers and mentors. Jesus reversed this order.

A. The disciples had not become followers of Jesus by their intentions or by mere chance; they had been chosen, selected, and called by Him.

B. Jesus selected the twelve and endued them with power for a specific and special mission.

1. His selection was by God's grace, not because of their merit.
2. Here, Jesus is calling them to ministry.

C. The allegory of them being the branches will later become reality in their lives.

1. They would go into all the world and win souls, plant churches, train and establish believers.
2. They would go and bear fruit and the fruit of their labors would indeed remain/last.

D. Whatever you ask in My name! Again, Jesus emphasized the need for prayer to fulfill their/our purpose

1. He chose them for a mission, and His Father would answer their requests in order to accomplish the assignment.
2. The effectiveness of prayer is linked to fruit-bearing, which, in turn, is linked to obedience (vs 10,14).

V17) Jesus repeated the command to love one another.

The Disciples' Relation to the World (15:18-27)

V18) Jesus alerted His disciples to the fact of the world's hatred toward them. He warned His followers that because the world hated Him, they would also hate them.

A. The world in John's Gospel is the system of organized society hostile to God, which is under Satan's power (14:30).

1. Believers should not be surprised by this hostility (1 Peter 4:12-13).
2. Jesus was hated from His birth (when Herod the Great sought to kill Him) to His death on the cross.

B. Conversely, being friends with the world is to be God's enemy (James 4:4).

V19) One reason the world hated Christians then, and now, is because of our stark differences. Light and darkness, righteousness and unrighteousness are diametrically opposed to one another (1 Peter 4:3-5; Rom. 12:2).

A. When a believer leaves the kingdom of darkness and is transferred into the kingdom of God's through Jesus Christ Son (Col. 1:13), they have a different joy, purpose, hope, and love.

1. Believers have certainty, truth, and a standard for living.
2. They have been chosen out of the world system by Christ and they now belong to Him (15:16).
3. Since believers do not belong to the world and its system, the world hates them.

V20) Jesus reminds the first disciples of what He had told them earlier that, “They would be persecuted just as He had been.”

A. He had already assured them that their lives would have meaning, purpose, and permanent value—But it did not grant them immunity from attacks and persecution.

1. He could promise them only that which He Himself had received.

V21) Jesus tells them why this will happen—Because the world (non-believers) did not know God the Father who had sent Him. Therefore, they would be persecuted.

V22) Jesus came as God’s revelation, but they rejected His claims and standards.

A. He exposed the inner corruption and hypocrisy of humanity and they reacted violently to this teaching and ministry; the same reaction continues today.

B. The statement, they would not be guilty of sin (v. 24), must not be taken absolutely as 16:9 shows (3:19; 9:41). Before Jesus’ coming, people might have pleaded ignorance as an excuse for sin (Acts 17:30). But now that the Light has come, those who willfully reject it have no excuse.⁹²

V23) Jesus makes it very clear that if “you hate Him, you also hate the Father.”

V24) Jesus pointed out that His works were evidence of being sent by the Father. “No one could perform the miraculous signs You are doing if God were not with Him” (3:2).

A. The works He did were predicted of the Messiah in the Law and Prophets.

B. Tragically, the Jews rejected Him as the Son of God. They would not have been guilty of sin had they received Him.

1. But the nation as a whole rejected both Jesus and the Father because in their sins they loved darkness rather than light (3:19).

2. Their rejection of Him and their actions against Him could not have been attributed to ignorance of His words or a lack of evidence substantiating them.

V25) Jesus tells the disciples that this is being done to fulfill prophecy.

A. He quotes from Psalm 69:4, Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; Those who would destroy me are powerful, being wrongfully my enemies; What I did not steal, I then have to restore.

B. Ironically, the people who professed to be champions of the Law were fulfilling the prophecy concerning the enemies of God’s servant.

⁹² Ibid p. 327

V26) In response to the attitude of hatred there must be a continuing witness to the love and grace of God through Jesus Christ.

A. Jesus again refers to the Helper/Comforter that He had partially described that is yet to come (14:16,26 and later in 16:7).

1. He tells them that that the Holy Spirit will testify about Him because He is the Spirit of Truth (16:13) that has been sent from the Father just as He (Jesus) was sent from the Father..

V27) This divine work of the Holy Spirit (Comforter/Helper) would not be done in isolation from the followers of Christ and the church.

A. The apostles and all followers of Christ were/are to be witnesses to the facts and truth that they have learned and observed.

1. They/we have been commanded to testify.
2. As the apostles witnessed, the Holy Spirit persuaded, and people were saved.

B. The same combination of human obedience to the divine command (Acts 1:8) coupled with the witness and power of the Holy Spirit is needed in every generation.

Jesus Discusses the Preparation of the Disciples for Their Coming Assignment (16:1-33)

He linked this discourse with the preceding section of His final admonishment by intensifying the warning of persecution. He included teaching on the promised Holy Spirit, His death and resurrection.

Jesus' Warning (16:1-4)

V1) Jesus took the time for His intimate instruction in chapters 13-16 to prepare the disciples for the persecution that would be launched against them.

A. The purpose of making known "these things," described in 15:18-27, is to prevent the disciples from being "trapped" or "stumbling."

B. God does not want any of His followers to be trapped by the darkness of this world that would cause one to stumble when it comes to our relationship with Him and our obedience to His Word.

V2) He was specific in the fact the Jews would excommunicate them from the synagogue and make them an outcast. Nothing could have been worse for a faithful Jew.

A. The persecution would intensify and extend to other regions beyond Israel. They would be killed and people would believe that they were doing God a service.

V3) Jesus attributed their actions to their spiritual ignorance of not knowing God the Father or Christ the Son.

A. It is appalling to attack the things of God and the people of God thinking you are doing God a favor.

B. As the spirit of deception intensifies, we will continue to experience an enormous increase of spiritual ignorance that will produce horrifying persecution.

1. Jesus, Paul, John, and Peter inform us of the hideousness of impending persecution.

V4) Jesus gave this warning to His disciples about coming persecution in order to strengthen their faith. It was to be a source of encouragement.

A. By recognizing His knowledge of the future they would grow in their confidence in Him.

1. Jesus did not give them this warning before because the world's hatred was directed against Him.

2. For three years He shielded them with His personal presence, but now they would have to continue the Father's mission without His physical presence.

The Holy Spirit's Work (16:5-15)

V5) Jesus had been preparing them for His departure and ascension back to the Father. However, no one was inquiring as to where He was going.

V6) It is the prospect that Jesus is going to leave them rather than the persecution, that appears to trouble them and bring anguish and sorrow to their spirits.

A. Perhaps sorrow was the reason they had not asked Jesus, “Where are you going?”

1. As Blume stated, “It might have been preoccupation with their own problems that prevented their understanding of the crucial nature of the time and the momentous significance of the events (His death, burial, resurrection, and Ascension).”

B. Preoccupation with your personal problems can, if you are not very careful, circumvent your spiritual perception and action toward the things of God.

V7) Jesus wanted them to know that their sorrow would be replaced with confidence and power through the personal presence of the Holy Spirit.

A. The departure of Jesus would be painful and difficult for the disciples, but it was absolutely necessary to fulfill God’s plan.

B. Jesus clearly stated that until He ascended back to the Father, the Helper would not come—But I am returning and I send Him to you.

V8) The role of the Helper (*paraklētos*) in relation to the world that has rejected and continues to reject the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is briefly announced and explained in vv 9-11.

A. Verses 8-15 describe the three major functions of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

1. To the World—Conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment
2. To the Disciples—Direction and truth
3. To Jesus—Revealing Him more perfectly to and through those who represent Him.

B. Tenney states that, “The key to the first aspect of the Holy Spirit’s ministry is the word “convict.” The KJV translates it “reprove” but the rendering is not strong enough.”

C. The word is a legal term that means to pronounce a judicial verdict by which the guilt of the culprit at the bar of justice is defined and fixed.”

1. The Spirit does not merely accuse humanity of sin, He brings to them an inescapable sense of guilt so that they realize their shame and helplessness before God.
2. The Spirit is the prosecuting attorney who presents God’s case against humanity. He creates an inescapable awareness of sin so that it cannot be dismissed with an excuse or evaded by taking refuge in the fact that “everybody is doing it.”⁹³

⁹³ Tenney, Merrill C. “Acts.” In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: With the New International Version*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 157. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981

- V9) The primary sin that runs through the Scriptures, and especially in the Gospel is unbelief. Unbelief is the source from which all sin originates.
- A. Jesus insisted that sin was fundamentally repudiation in His message, mission and purpose.
- V10) The Holy Spirit would convict people of righteousness. Humanity realizes their unrighteousness as the Holy Spirit reveals Christ's righteousness.
- A. There must be an awareness of the holiness of God before a person will recognize their own sinfulness.
 - 1. He enforces the absolute standard of God's character, to which all thought and action must be compared.
 - B. The crucifixion (lifting up) of Jesus on the cross which in the world's eyes was the demonstration of Jesus' unrighteousness, was the means of His elevation to heaven by the Father.
 - C. The Spirit convicts humanity of their incorrect views of Jesus when the gospel with its stress on the Resurrection is proclaimed (1 Cor. 15:3–4).
 - 1. Jesus' departure to the Father made possible the believer's righteousness.
- V11) The Holy Spirit's convicting work concerns judgment. Judgment always occurs when an act or thought is evaluated by an absolute principle.
- A. When human sin is confronted by the righteousness of Christ, its condemnation is self-evident.
 - B. The death and resurrection of Jesus were a condemnation of Satan (12:31; Col. 2:15), the prince of this world (John 14:30).
 - 1. By Jesus' death, He defeated the devil, who held "the power of death" (Heb. 2:14).
 - 2. Though defeated at the Cross, Satan is still active (1 Peter 5:8).B
 - 3. However, his "execution" is coming (Rev. 20:2, 7–10).
 - C. People in rebellion should take note of Satan's defeat and fear the Lord who holds the power to judge. The coming judgment (both Satan's and man's) is proclaimed, the Spirit convicts people and prepares them for salvation (Acts 17:30–31).
- V12) There was so much more that Jesus wanted to explain to them but He knew they were not yet mature enough to understand all that He wanted to reveal. They were being distracted by all of the events that Jesus had already explained to them that was eminent.
- V13) The second function of the Holy Spirit when He comes would be to lead the followers of Christ into the full comprehension of all that He would reveal to them.
- A. He would continue to expound upon the person of Jesus Christ and their development

in the teachings that Jesus had already revealed to them.

B. The Spirit, Jesus said, would not teach the disciples from His own initiative but would teach only what He hears from the Father. The Father would tell the Spirit what to teach the apostles about the Son.

C. The Spirit would teach what is yet to come. This statement helps one understand the promise, He will guide you into all truth. This was a promise to the apostles that their partial understanding of the person and work of Jesus as the Messiah would be completed as the Spirit would give them insight into the meanings of the soon-to-come Cross and the Resurrection as well as truths about Jesus' return (1 Cor 2:10).

1. The NT books are the fulfillment of this teaching ministry of the Spirit.

V14) The third function of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ.

A. His chief purpose is to magnify the person of Jesus Christ the Son of God, and bring revelation knowledge to all His followers.

V15) Jesus stated that all the Father has is His. All of creation came to be through God's Son, so everything in it belongs to Him (1:1–3). He is suggesting that God's heavenly home belongs to Him since He and the Father are one (14:2, 11; 17:11).

A. He will disclose to you that God's work in the world will become the work of believers. They will be empowered to show people why they should believe and perform signs like Jesus (Acts 1:7, 8).

Jesus' Death and Resurrection Foretold (16:16-22)

Jesus' instruction of His disciples shifted from the Spirit's future work to what the immediate future would hold for them. Jesus will one day return, but in the interim there will be sorrow, pain, and spiritual warfare that the apostles' would encounter. When the battle is over victory, joy, and peace would be their/our portion.

V16) "A little while" refers to the stressful time before His death. "Again" refers to the period between Jesus' burial and resurrection.

V17) Because sorrow had filled the disciples spirits, they were unable to understand what Jesus meant in v16.

A. The disciples were confused about the time interval. Because they kept asking among themselves indicated that considerable dialogue took place among the disciples without arriving at an answer.

B. They could not reconcile Jesus' statements because He said: (a) In a short time they would not see Him, (b) they would see Him, and (c) He was going to the Father.

1. Only His death, resurrection, post-resurrection ministry, and Ascension would bring clarity to them.

V18) The disciples continued to admit their lack of understanding as to what Jesus was saying to them. Their lack of spiritual perception was obvious.

A. Jesus had already explained to them the events that were to take place. In John 14, He told them that He was going to the Father and that He would prepare a place for them so they could be with Him for eternity.

B. In these verses, He spoke as if they would not see Him, but afterward they would see Him—They were very perplexed.

V19) Jesus knew their lack of understanding and that they were hesitant to expose their ignorance of what He was saying to them by asking Him questions.

A. The master communicator, teacher, rabbi did not clarify His words. He knew that in just days illumination from the Holy Spirit would provide complete understanding to His closest followers.

V20) Jesus explained to them what was going to take place in the short hours ahead.

A. “I tell you the truth” introduces a solemn prediction that their coming grief, (weeping and lament) would be followed by joy. His death would be bitter agony for them but the world would be so happy that He was crucified.

B. The death of the Messiah, which would cause them to weep and mourn would also bring them gladness: your grief will turn to joy. How?

C. His resurrection and the Spirit’s revelation would enable them to know that He had to die so that they could have forgiveness of sin.

1. Later the church (all Christians) would rejoice in His death.

V21) Jesus illustrated the truth of pain replaced by joy by the pain of childbirth followed by the joy of new life when a child is born.

A. The disciples were entering the process of pain and grief, but the light of joy was just ahead— “Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:5)

V22) Jesus assured them that their present grief would be turned to great joy when He saw them again after His resurrection—This joy will never be taken away from you/us. Hallelujah!

The Promises of Prayer (16:23-33)

The central theme of these verses is prayer: “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24). Jesus had mentioned prayer many times in His ministry, and He had set the example for prayer in His own life for His followers. In His Upper Room message, Jesus emphasized prayer (John 14:12–14; 15:7, 16; 16:23–26). He made it clear that believing prayer is essential for living an effective Christian life.

V23) Because of His ascension to the Father, He would not be physically present with them so

that they could ask Him questions. But Jesus provided them with a powerful admonishment as to how to get their questions answered.

A. Ask the Father anything “in my name” and He will give it to you.

1. This term is used three times in this chapter, verses 23, 24, 26.
2. The term is also used in 14:13, 14, 26 and 15:16.

B. Before one can use the name of Jesus effectively they must have an intimate relationship with Him—If you do, then you can request in the name of Jesus with confidence that God will accomplish that which you ask.

V24) Jesus reminds them that they had not asked in His name for anything.

A. He admonishes them to ask in His name and they will receive so that their joy would be full. Answered prayer brings complete joy (15:11; 16:22) because God is at work in them.

V25) Jesus was a master communicator but up to this point He had spoken to His followers in figurative language. However, He informs them that this is going to stop and in His post-resurrection appearance He will tell them plainly/clearly of the Father.

V26) After the Ascension, the disciples had intimacy with the Father and a greater clarity and understanding of their relationship with Him.. Now the disciples would have direct personal access to the Father by/through the name of Jesus Christ through Jesus (14:13–14; 15:16; 16:24).

A. Jesus would no longer need to pray on their behalf since they could ask for themselves. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:16).

1. This privilege does not negate the promise of Christ’s intercessory prayer work in behalf of His followers (Rom. 8:34).

V27) The relationship Jesus had established with the disciples became the foundation for their personal relationship with God the Father. Because they had committed themselves to Him and had believed, they were secure.

A. These same truths are applicable to all believers today!

V28) Jesus summarized His mission in one sentence: (1) His Incarnation (I came from the Father), (2) His humiliation (entered the world), and (3) His resurrection, Ascension, and exaltation (now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father).

V29) This very direct statement from Jesus provided the clarity to help the disciples understand what He was saying.

V30) This brief statement seemed to eliminate their need to further question Jesus.

A. The teaching was so plain that recognizing Jesus’ omniscience (You know all things)

and divine origin (You came from God) was their only proper response.

B. How about you? What do you believe?

V31) Jesus was skeptical of the resolve and commitment of their faith. He knew their limitations much better than they did. Jesus' response was a question of their faith, not a declaration of it.

A. Their faith did not become strong and complete until after the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the advent of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

V32) You will be scattered is a fulfillment of Zechariah's words which spoke of the Shepherd (the Messiah) smitten by decree of the Lord Almighty, which resulted in the scattering of the sheep (Zech 13:7).

A. In spite of the disciples' loyalty, faith, and love, they soon failed Him miserably. His prediction, You will leave Me all alone, was fulfilled by all His disciples deserting Him (Matt. 26:56) when He was arrested and by Peter's denial (John 18:17, 25–26).

B. Yet the Father had not forsaken Him; I am not alone for My Father is with Me (8:29; Psalm 23:4; 73:25–26).⁹⁴

V33) Jesus wanted His disciples to know with certainty that they were to be calm, at peace, and have full confidence concerning His death and resurrection. He did not want them filled with disillusionment.

A. He spoke to them the provision of peace that He had earlier spoken (14:27).

B. Followers of Christ have a dual existence: we are in this world, but not of this world.

1. In oneness with Jesus, His disciples have peace, but the world exerted hostility and persecution against them.
2. The world system, the enemy of God and His people, opposed Jesus' message and ministry (cf. 1:5, 10; 7:7).

C. Jesus won the victory over the system; He has overcome the world. As the "strong man" who came and ruined Satan's kingdom (Matt. 12:25–29), Jesus is the Victor.

B. Jesus wanted the disciples to remember this fact and to rejoice in His victory.

1. Take heart! means "Be courageous." Because He won, they, in union with Him, can win also (Rom. 8:37).

⁹⁴ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 330). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Jesus' Great High Priestly Prayer (17:1-26)

Jesus' prayer in John 17 is intimately linked with His teaching in the Gospel of John. His prayer serves as a summary of the major themes and message of the Gospel. Jesus concluded chapter 16 with the words, "I have overcome the world." Throughout His ministry Jesus' work was done in obedience to the Father's will. As He prayed to His Father, He prayed first for Himself (John 17:1-5). He was preparing Himself for the sufferings that lay ahead. As He contemplated the glory that the Father promised Him, He would receive new strength for His sacrifice. Second, He prayed for His apostles (vv. 6-19). He prayed about their security, joy, unity, and their future glory! Finally, He prayed for future believers (vv. 20-26), so that we would know all that He has done for us, provided for us, and all that He will do for us and ultimately make heaven our eternal home.

Jesus Prays for Himself (17:1-5)

V1) As Jesus began His high priestly prayer, John recorded Jesus' gesture, "lifting His eyes to heaven." This was a typical gesture of prayer by the Jews.

A. Jesus approached God in prayer because of their Father-Son relationship.

1. Believers today have the same right of access to the Father (Heb 4:16).

B. He began His prayer by calling God, "Father" and acknowledged "the hour has come."

1. He knew what was hours away—His suffering and death!

C. He asked His Father to "glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You."

1. Jesus had lived His life to fulfill God's purpose and proclaim His message.

2. He asked the Father to return Him to the place He had before His descent to earth.

V2) Jesus stated, "You/God gave Him authority over all people/flesh." This indicated that Jesus' prayer request was in accordance with the Father's plan.

A. God the Father had ordained the rule of the Son over the earth (Ps. 2).

1. The Son has the authority to judge (John 5:27), to take up His life (10:18), and to grant eternal life to all those whom the Father gave Him.

2. Five times in this prayer, Jesus referred to His own as those the Father gave Him (17:2, 6, 9, 24).

V3) Jesus defined eternal life as a relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son.

A. This relationship is eternal, and not temporal.

V4) Jesus asserted that He had finished His mission and had glorified the Father, having completed the work that had been assigned Him.

A. Although the cross was in the future, it was certain that He would be obedient.

1. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Phil 2:8).

- B. The hardships and difficulties had been many and what was just ahead was terrifying to say the least, but Jesus never once missed the opportunity to do the Father's will.

V5) Jesus concluded His prayer to the Father with the repeated request that, "The Father would glorify them together as they were before the world was."

- A. Jesus asked God the Father to raise Him to the same position He had prior to entering the world (1:1-4).

- 1. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the spoils with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors (Isa 53:12).

Jesus Prays for His Disciples (17:6-19)

V6) Jesus prayed for His disciples before He chose them (Luke 6:12), during His ministry (John 6:15), at the end of His ministry (Luke 22:32), and later in heaven (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25).

- A. Jesus prays again for His disciples here. This prayer of intercession reveals Jesus' concern and love for His disciples.

- B. Jesus acknowledged that He had manifested the name of the Father to those that were given to Him by the Father, and that they had been faithful to keep His word.

- C. Just as the original disciples were spiritually taken out of the world, so must the 21st century follower of Christ be separated from the world.

V7) Although the disciples did not fully understand all that Jesus had taught, they did embrace that His teaching and all that He did was given to Him by the Father.

V8) The disciples in their initial encounter with Jesus believed that He was the Messiah. Their development and understanding of who Jesus was had grown progressively during their three years of ministry with Him.

V9) Jesus' intercession was for the eleven who were present with Him. He reminded the Father that these eleven followers had been under His care.

- A. His concern was not for the world, but for those who belonged to Him and the Father.

V10) "All I have is Yours, and all You have is Mine," reveals Jesus' claim to unity, intimacy, and equality with the Father—Each has full title to the possessions of the other.

V11) Jesus would soon depart to the Father and leave His disciples in the world. They had to stay in the world to carry out God's plan in spreading the good news of redemption and in planting the church.

- A. Since the disciples would be in the world, Jesus prayed for their protection. Jesus asked the Father for His continued divine protection of the disciples during the

turbulent days that were ahead of them.

B. Jesus knew the hostility against Him and the Father would now fall on the small group of apostles, and ultimately on all of Jesus' followers.

C. Jesus prayed to promote the unity of the believers, patterned after the unity of the Father and the Son: so that they may be one as We are One.

1. The unity here seems to be that of will and purpose. By being protected from the world, they would be unified in their desires to serve and glorify the Son.

V12) Jesus prayed that "While I was with them, I kept them in your name which You had given me."

A. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus kept the disciples through His love and power—Just as we are today!

B. He had guarded and protected them so that not one of them perished but Judas, the son of perdition, so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled.

C. Was Judas an example of a believer who "lost his salvation" or is he is an example of an unbeliever who pretended to have salvation but was finally exposed as a fraud?

V13) Jesus said to the Father, but now I come to pray, not just for the safety of the disciples but that they would have joy in the conflict that was eminent.

A. The words of comfort spoken by Jesus to His disciples would be of great benefit to them.

1. Following His crucifixion, they would recall His words and experience the full measure of His joy.
2. Joy came to them because they knew from His words that He had conquered the evil one and brought eternal life to them.

V14) Because the disciples had received the message of God from Jesus, it differentiated them from the world.

A. Jesus' intercession for the disciples continued with a reminder that they had received the Father's word and because of it, the world hated them.

B. Know with certainty that the satanic evil world system hated them and continues to hate all followers of Christ in every age.

V15) God's plan was not to remove the disciples from danger and opposition by taking them out of the world, but to preserve them in the midst of conflict. He wanted them to be kept from Satan, the evil one.

A. Today, Christians must not take themselves out of the world but remain in meaningful contact with it, trusting in God's protection while they witness for Jesus.

V16) Just as Jesus did not belong to the satanic world system, neither do believers. They/We belong to the heavenly kingdom.

A. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13, 14).

V17) Jesus prayed for the disciples to be sanctified or "set apart for special use." Believers are to be distinct from the world's sin, values, and goals.

A. We are to live our lives for God's glory, mission, and purpose.

V18) Jesus is our model, He was sent into the world on a mission by His Father.

A. Followers of Christ are also sent into the world on a mission by the Son. We are to make the Father known.

B. Jesus' prayer for the disciples was not limited to the immediate apostles, this passage is similar to the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20). All Christians should view themselves as missionaries, whose task is to communicate God's truth to others.

V19) Jesus, for the sake of the disciples provided the model of what sanctification looked like. He wanted them/us to be sanctified to the truth.

Jesus Prays for Future Followers (17:20-26)

V20) The final portion of Jesus' prayer was for future believers who would come to Him through the message of the apostles.

A. In the Church Age, all Christians come to Christ directly or indirectly through the apostles' witness.

1. Jesus knew His mission would succeed. He would die and be raised, He would send forth the Spirit, the apostles would preach, people would be converted, and the church would be formed.

V21) Jesus now prays for the unity of all believers

A. Just as He and the Father are one, He wants all believers to be united with Them. By doing so, it would convince the world that He had sent Christ and that Christ has sent them.

V22) Jesus continued praying that the glory which God had given Him, He had also given to the disciples.

A. His emphasis was again on the unity and oneness of the believers as the Son and Father were one.

- B. All believers belong to the one body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) and their spiritual unity is to be manifest in the way they live.
 - C. The unity Christ desires for His church is the same kind of unity the Son has with the Father; just as You are in Me and I am in You.
 - 1. The Father did His works through the Son and the Son always did what pleased the Father.
 - 2. This spiritual unity is to be patterned in the church.
- V23) The goal of the unity of believers with each other and with God is twofold: (a) that the world will believe in the Son's divine mission (know that You sent Me), and (b) that the world will sense that God's love for believers is deep, intimate, and lasting as is His love for His unique Son.
- V24) The communion and fellowship which disciples have with Jesus in this life will increase in eternity.
- A. The goal of a believer's salvation is future glorification which includes being with Jesus (14:3; Col. 3:4; 1 Thes. 4:17).
 - B. Jesus' great desire is that His disciples enter into His glory (Heb. 2:10).
 - 1. This glory was what Jesus had from the Father and would again have (17:5).
 - C. His testament was sealed by His death and resurrection. Because His will is identical to the Father's (4:34; 5:30; 6:38), it will certainly come to pass.
- V25) Jesus' prayer for believers ends with a call to the Righteous Father. Jesus' praise of the Father for His work of revelation (Matt. 11:25–26). The Father is righteous and the world is wrong because they do not know You.
- V26) Jesus has known, revealed (John 17:6), and glorified (v. 4) the Father, and so should His followers.
- A. The essence of God is love (1 John 4:8). Jesus made the Father and His love known to the world by His death.
 - 1. The Father made known His love for the Son by raising Him to glory.
 - B. Jesus' purpose in revealing the Father was so His followers would continue to grow in that love (that the Father's love for the Son may be in them) and to enjoy the personal presence of Jesus in their lives (that I Myself may be in them).
 - C. Jesus' petitions for believers are four: preservation (John 17:11), sanctification (v. 17), unity (vv. 11, 21–22), and participation in Jesus' glory (v. 24).
 - 1. This prayer is sure to be answered (11:42; 1 John 5:14).

The Betrayal in the Garden, Jesus' Trials Before the Priests and Pilate (18:1-40)

The private ministry of Jesus with His disciples that took place in the upper room where they ate the Last Supper has now ended. The public drama of Jesus' betrayal, arrest, religious and civil trials takes place in chapter 18. The redemption of lost humanity is set in motion and will culminate in the pursuing chapters. Going forward, we will encounter the worst of humanity and God will respond by giving His very best. The Apostle Paul said it well, "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).

In the arrest of Jesus at Gethsemane, John omits the directions of Jesus to His disciples as to their conduct in Gethsemane; the Passion of His soul; the reproof to His sleeping disciples; the kiss of Judas; the reference of Peter to the twelve legions of angels; the protest of Jesus against His seizers; the healing of Malchus recorded by Luke; the episode of the fugitive youth related by Mark. On the other hand, he gives prominence to the fact that Jesus went voluntarily to meet His apprehenders; that the multitude fell to the ground at the sight of His majesty; that He surrendered Himself prisoner, while securing a free exode to the disciples. He names Peter as the one who drew the sword, mentions the name of the servant, Malchus, who was wounded by him, and, with the words, "who drew the sword," refers the saying of Jesus, "shall I not drink the cup?"⁹⁵

The Arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane (18:1-11)

V1) Jesus left the upper room where He ate the Last Supper with His disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley, to the east.

A. The Kidron is a valley which starts north of Jerusalem and passes between the temple mount and the Mount of Olives on its way to the Dead Sea.

B. Jerusalem was filled with pilgrims attending the Passover, and Jesus wanted to get away from the crowded city to a quiet, private place.

1. He knew that Judas would come for Him there, and He wanted to pray and have His disciples pray for Him.
2. The forth-coming events that would lead to His crucifixion was now before Him.

C. Wiersbe states, "Human history began in a Garden (Gen. 2:8ff), and the first sin of man was committed in that Garden. The first Adam disobeyed God and was cast out of the Garden, but the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) was obedient as He went into the Garden of Gethsemane. In a Garden, the first Adam brought sin and death to mankind; but Jesus, by His obedience, brought righteousness and life to all who will trust Him. He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8).

⁹⁵ Lange, J. P., & Schaff, P. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John* (p. 546). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

History will one day end in another garden, the heavenly city that John describes in Revelation 21 and 22. In that garden, there will be no more death and no more curse. The river of the water of life will flow ceaselessly and the tree of life will produce bountiful fruit. Eden was the Garden of disobedience and sin; Gethsemane was the Garden of obedience and submission; and heaven shall be the eternal garden of delight and satisfaction, to the glory of God.⁹⁶

V2) Perhaps, Judas returned to the upper room where they had eaten the Last Supper. Not finding them, he thought they may have went to the garden as Jesus often did.

A. Jesus often went to this Garden with His disciples, to rest, meditate, and pray (Luke 22:39).

V3) It appears that Judas arrived with Roman soldiers, officers and guards from the chief priest and the Pharisees, accompanied by a mob to search the gardens for Jesus (v 12). They were equipped with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

V4) Jesus knew all things and was conscious of the events that were unfolding behind the scenes and was not taken by surprise.

A. Rather than fleeing the garden in the darkness of night and waiting for His enemies to find Him, Jesus went to His enemies and asked them, “Whom do you seek?”

V5) They answered Jesus’s question by responding, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

A. Jesus replied to them, “I am He.” This response is a tone of deity, for the Jews would remember that these Greek words were the very expression of the Greek Septuagint of Exodus 3:14, in which is the title of God Himself, “I am that I am.”

1. Others feel it is an ambiguous phrase of Jesus just identifying Himself.

B. John acknowledged that Judas was present, but omits his kiss of betrayal that Matthew, Mark, and Luke all include.

C. John also omits Jesus’ prayer for, “This cup to pass from Me. But not My will but God’s will be done.”

V6) When Jesus answered them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

A. The words Jesus spoke were with such power of His deity that His enemies “fell to the ground.”

1. Perhaps it was a manifestation of divine power, or an exhibition of the majesty of Jesus Christ.

a. “When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell” (Ps. 27:2).

⁹⁶ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 1, p. 372). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

B. It could be a foreshadowing of the time when all humanity shall prostrate themselves before Him!

V7) After they all got up off the ground and had sufficiently recovered from their surprising fall, Jesus asked them the second time, “Whom do you seek?” They stated again, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

V8) For the second time Jesus said, “I am He.”

A. The “he” is not in the Greek; therefore, the title of deity is more evident, “I am.”

B. He declared who He was and there was no need for Judas to come with them to identify Him with a kiss.

C. Demonstrating His love for His followers as the “Good Shepherd” he stated, “If you seek me, let these others (His followers) go their way.”

1. He promised the Father that He would protect them in His High Priestly Prayer (17:12) and He fulfilled His guarantee in the voluntary surrender of His life.

V9) He did not lose any of His sheep but fulfilled His Father’s will for the apostles (6:38) and fulfilled His own prophetic Word (6:39).

V10) Peter, realizing that Jesus was in danger, was courageous enough to risk his own life by coming to Jesus’ rescue.

A. He justified his earlier claim that he would never deny Christ, but in fact, would die for Him (John 13:37; Mark 14:29-31).

B. The adrenaline was flowing wildly and Peter was so excited that he missed his aim and cut off Malchus’ right ear rather than his head.

1. Malchus might have been the special deputy of the high priest.

V11) Jesus’ command to Peter showed His disapproval of Peter’s sudden and violent intervention.

A. Earlier that same night Jesus had rebuked Peter. Now He rebuked him again, this time for not understanding God’s will.

1. With Jesus’ constant teaching about His approaching death the disciples did not understand His need to die (Luke 24:25, 26).

B. The cup which the Father had given Jesus refers to the suffering and death He would experience under God’s wrath against sin (Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15; Ezek. 23:31–33).

1. The words, “the cup the Father has given Me” indicated that Jesus knew all the things coming on Him as part of God’s sovereign plan.

- C. His rhetorical question to Peter was designed to prod Peter's thinking. Jesus had come to do the Father's will and so He must now embrace it.

Jesus' Hearing Before the Priests and Peter's Denial (18:12-27)

- V12) Although Jesus sought out His captors in the garden and willingly surrendered to them, they bound Him as they arrested Him.
- A. The officers secured their prisoner by binding Jesus, and identifying Him as the prisoner. This added to Jesus humiliation and perhaps because of Peter's attempt to fight.
 - B. The other Gospels record Jesus' protest of the manner in which the Jews and Romans came to take Him (Matt 26:55; Mark 14:48; Luke 22:52).
- V13) They took Jesus first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was presently serving as the high priest.
- A. According to the Jewish law, the high priestly office was for life, but the Romans did not like the concentration of power in one person so they frequently changed high priests.
 - B. Annas was succeeded by five of his sons and by his son-in-law Caiaphas (Acts 4:6; Luke 3:2).
 - 1. Annas remained the power behind the throne; a preliminary investigation was carried out by him before Jesus' formal religious trial.
 - 2. Caiaphas was the high priest the fateful year of Jesus' death.
- V14) John reminded his readers of Caiaphas' unconscious prophecy (John 11:49–52) that one man should die on behalf of the people.
- A. Caiaphas was selfish, his words malicious and his conduct was wicked.
- V15) Simon Peter and another disciple, who was probably John, followed the arresting officers back across the Kidron valley into Jerusalem.
- A. The unnamed disciple John, was known by the high priest and therefore was allowed to enter with Jesus, into the court of the high priest.
 - 1. It is not certain how John was acquainted with the high priest.
 - B. Tenney states that, "The family might have had business relationships or possibly marital ties. Salome, the mother of John, was a sister of Mary, Jesus' mother (John 19:26; Mark 15:40), and would have been equally related to Elizabeth, whose husband, Zechariah, was a priest (Luke 1:36). The author does exhibit a considerable knowledge of Jerusalem and the events that took place there."⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Tenney, Merrill C. "Acts." In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 172. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981

- V16) Through John's influence, Peter obtained entrance into the courtyard of the high priest.
- V17) The slave girl who was the door keeper asked Peter, "if he was one of Jesus' disciples." Peter immediately answered, "I am not."
- A. Peter's denial before the servant girl was a striking contradiction to his earlier boast to lay down his life for Jesus (13:37), and his show of offense in cutting off Malchus' ear (18:10).
- B. I wonder how John would have responded if he was questioned?
1. More importantly, how will you respond when questioned?
- V18) Peter stood by the fire with the slaves and the officers warming himself in the cold spring evening. Jerusalem was about 2,500 feet above sea level. This little detail about the cold evening is another indication that the author of this book was an eyewitness.
- A. Luke states that Peter "sat by the fire" (Luke 22:56).
1. Peter was trying to appear that he was indifferent to the trial and sat with his face toward the fire—But straining to hear everything he could.
- V19) The questioning was a preliminary hearing to determine grounds for a formal trial.
- A. The case was to present Jesus as a leader of a revolt against Rome and a false prophet among the Jews and his followers as soldiers.
- V20) Jesus responded that He had no secret cult or organization. He had an inner circle of disciples, but the content of His teaching was not private. He taught in the open and in public places such as synagogues and the temple.
- V21) Jesus was calm, patient, and dignified before His accusers. He was aware of their false intent, yet He spoke simply, candidly, and without fear. He knew that He had the right to refute the charges against Him.
- A. He stated that the people were very familiar with His teachings, and if there was a question concerning what He taught, they should ask those who have heard His teachings.
- B. Jesus did not have two kinds of truths or teaching.
1. Therefore, they should produce witnesses if they had something substantial against Him. He was innocent unless proven guilty.
 2. They had no clear accusation so they sought some way to trick Him.
- V22) One of the Levitical guards struck the first of many blows that would follow that day. He chided Jesus, reminding Him that He was addressing the high priest.
- V23) Jesus' response concerned not the manner of His speech (Is that any way ...?) but the substance of His teaching (If I said something wrong ...).

- A. It was easier to evade the truth or to silence the One who spoke the truth than to attempt to answer the truth.
 - 1. Truth has a self-evident power of persuasion and those who oppose it find it difficult to deny.
- B. Jesus pressed this point and exposed their hypocrisy. They knew the truth but they chose to embrace their error. They saw the light but loved darkness (3:19).

V24) Following this preliminary interview, Annas sent Jesus on to his son-in-law Caiaphas the high priest.

- A. Thus far, Annas has been referred to as the high priest though he was the deposed high priest (vs 19, 22).
 - B. Annas had been high priest from A.D. 6 to 15. The Romans had removed him from office yet he still held considerable power behind the scenes.
 - 1. Five of his sons succeeded him as high priest. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas - the high priest who was in office at the time of Jesus ministry. He ruled from 18-36 AD.
 - 2. See your lecture notes on verse 13.

V25) As the inquiry before Annas continued, Peter remained in the courtyard warming himself by the fire on the the very cool night.

- A. He had first been accused and questioned by the doorkeeper in v 17, if he was a disciple of Jesus. He denied that he was.
 - B. It is now around 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning and Peter is asked again, "if he is one of Jesus followers?" For the second time, he denied that he was.

V26) The third and final denial was prompted by a question by a relative of the man Malchus, whom Peter had tried to kill in the garden.

Jesus Before Pilate (18:28-40)

Long before the Jewish leaders had Jesus arrested in the Garden, they had determined to kill Him (John 11:47-54). However, the Jewish council did not have the authority to execute prisoners; so it was necessary to get the cooperation and approval of Rome. This meant a visit to the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate.

John, does not provide any information about the early morning session of the Jewish council. Caiaphas, the high priest demanded Jesus to tell them whether or not He was the Son of God; and on the assertion the He was, Jesus was condemned on a charge of blasphemy (Mark 14:60-64). The penalty for blasphemy under Jewish law was death. But because the high priest had no authority to execute a death sentence, it was necessary to transfer the case to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor.

V28) Normally the governor lived in Caesarea, but during the great feasts it was prudent for him to come to Jerusalem in case a riot or insurrection took place.

A. Passover was particularly dangerous because emotions ran high as the Jews remembered their deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

B. The Jews would not enter a Gentile house (in this case the governor's palace), they would be ceremonial unclean until evening and could not eat the Passover Meal. But they could go into the courtyard or under the colonnades.

1. It is ironic that the Jewish leaders were concerned with ritual uncleanness while they planned murder!

C. Pilate came out to the Jews (probably to a courtyard) and began an informal inquiry.

1. "Early morning" implies around seven or eight o'clock. This provided enough time for the last hearing of the Jewish council after sunrise. It was illegal to pronounce a death sentence at night.

V29) Pilate joined the Jewish delegation in the courtyard and his initial question was the normal inquiry that would begin an informal hearing, "What accusations do you bring against this man?"

V30) They answered Pilate, "If this Man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him to you."

A. The high priest knew that Jesus was not guilty of any crime under Roman law and that they had no evidence to support their charge.

V31) Pilate quickly dismissed their presence and their charge against Jesus and told them to "Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law."

A. The Jews responded to Pilate and said, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death."

B. Blume comments, "The Jews' reply to Pilate revealed the hostility between them. (Pilate was hated by them for his harshness and the fact that he was a Gentile ruling over them. Pilate despised them and eventually in the year a.d. 36 they were able to get Pilate recalled to Rome.) At this time, Pilate refused to be their executioner. He knew what was going on. He had seen the Triumphal Entry a few days earlier. He knew that envy was the cause of their accusation against Jesus (Matt. 27:18). So Pilate decided to play a game with the Jews with Jesus' life as the prize. He refused to do anything without a sufficient charge."⁹⁸

V32) John explained why Jesus was delivered by the Jews to the Romans. Jewish executions

⁹⁸ Blum, E. A. (1985). *John*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 337). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

were normally by stoning, which broke bones. The Roman method of execution was crucifixion. By involving the Roman government, and if Jesus was found guilty, it would insure His death would be by crucifixion.

A. It was necessary for three reasons for Jesus to be crucified by the Romans at the instigation of the Jews:

1. To fulfill prophecies (e.g., that none of His bones be broken; cf. 19:36–37)
2. To include both Jews and Gentiles in the collective guilt for the deed (Acts 2:23; 4:27)
3. By crucifixion, Jesus was “lifted up” like “the snake in the desert”(John 3:14). A person under God’s curse was to be displayed (hanged) on a tree as a sign of judged sin (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).⁹⁹

V33) Pilate, puzzled by the Jewish leaders attitude, returned and had a private interview with Jesus (vv. 33–38a). He knew that the Jews would never turn over one of their fellow Jews to the Romans, that they so deeply hated. Therefore, he perceived that there was something different and unique about this situation.

A. According to Luke (23:2), they accused Jesus of three things:

1. Subverting the nation
2. Opposing payment of taxes to Caesar
3. Claiming to be “Christ, a King.”

B. Pilate’s first question to Jesus was, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Was Pilate asking sincerely or sarcastically?

C. Pilate was having difficulty reconciling the calm and confident actions and attitude Jesus displayed, rather than the expected disposition of a rebel.

V34) Jesus responded to Pilate’s question by asking him a question, “Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?”

A. Since he had shown significant interest in Jesus to interact with Him personally, Jesus wanted to ascertain how sincere his interest might be. Jesus wanted to know if he was seeking information for himself, or was he just following legal protocol to appease the Jewish hierarchy?

V35) His reply irritated Pilate. He was accustomed to his questions being answered, not challenged.

A. His reply with a question expressed his indignation—“I am not a Jew, am I?”

1. Of course he was not interested in Jewish questions, but only in matters pertaining to civil government.

B. It must have troubled Jesus to have Pilate tell Him that it was the Jews, His own

⁹⁹ Ibid p. 337

people, and their own religious leaders who had accused Him.

1. In his prologue, John had sounded the same theme, “He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him” (1:11).

V36) Jesus replied that Rome need not fear a political insurrection. He was not a zealot or a revolutionary leader; He had no military support and did not relate to any geographic locality.

A. His kingdom is different. It is not of this world; it is from another place -- heaven. Therefore, it comes not by rebellion but by submission to God.

1. Its source was not from men’s acts of violence but from a new birth from heaven which transferred a person out of Satan’s kingdom into God’s kingdom (Col. 1:13; John 3:3).

B. Jesus did not deny that “king” could be His proper title.

V37) Since Jesus spoke of a kingdom, Pilate returned to the central question: “So You are a king?”

A. Jesus assented by confirming Pilates’s conclusion: “You say correctly that I am a king.

B. Jesus declared, “For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

V38) Pilate responded to Jesus with a question: “What is truth?” This question has echoed down through the centuries.

A. Was Pilate being facetious, sarcastic, cynical, or sincere? Only he knew.

B. He returned to the Jews and told them, “I find no fault in Him.”

1. He did not see Jesus as a dangerous person and he had broken no Roman law.

V39) Pilate understood the political overtones in the situation and knew that he had to take some type of action.

A. He suggested following the custom of releasing a prisoner at the Passover, and asked them if they wanted him to release Jesus, the King of the Jews?”

V40) Pilate miscalculated the response of the crowd. Assuming Jesus was popular with the multitudes, they would say yes and he would release Jesus.

A. However, the crowd responded negatively and they cried out saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas.” Barabbas who was guilty of murder and insurrection.

Jesus' Trial Continues (19:1-42)

This chapter continues with the trial of Jesus. Pilate orders Him scourged, the soldiers place a crown of thorns on His head, He is crucified, and buried by Joseph of Arimathea. The scourging, the mocking, the crown of thorns and purple robe, the ridiculing in hailing Him King of the Jews, and the physical blows on His face—these were all part of Jesus' deep humiliation as He was identified with human sin as the Servant of the Lord (Isa. 50:6; 52:14–53:6).

The Scourging of Jesus and the Crown of Thorns (19:1-16)

V1) Pilate's attempt to release Jesus by comparing Him to Barabbas, the murderer failed.

A. He attempted another form of compromise by having Jesus scourged. He had hoped that the crowd would be satisfied with the cruel and degrading scourging and call for His release.

B. The Roman scourge consisted of a wooden handle to which several rawhide thongs were fastened. Into each thong, small butterfly shaped pieces of metal or bone were fixed. Wielded by a powerful arm, the scourge was a deadly weapon, which in a few strokes would strip the flesh from a man's back. Frequently, death followed immediately so that the victim did not survive for crucifixion.¹⁰⁰

C. The Psalmist depicts the agony of Christ's terrible lashing by stating, "The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows" (Ps 129:3).

V2) After the scourging, the soldier's mocked the Jews and Jesus by putting a crown of thorns on His head and placed a purple (the color of royalty) robe on Him.

V3) The mocking intensified as they came up to Jesus and greeted Him mockingly saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and then slapped His face.

V4) Jesus has now been tried six times: (1) before Anna; (2) before Caiaphas; (3) before the Sanhedrin in formal sessions; (4) before Pilate; (5) before Herod Antipas; (6) before Pilate the second time.

A. Pilate brought Jesus from the judgment hall where He had been scourged and mocked. Again, he declared to them, "I find no guilt/fault in Him."

B. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, but his desire for personal advantage was stronger than his desire for justice—He wanted to please the Jews.

V5) Pilate presented Him to the Jewish crowd wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.

A. Jesus was a bloody, pathetic figure from the scourging that He had received and the crown of thorns that had been firmly pressed into His scalp.

¹⁰⁰ Tenney, Merrill C. "Acts." In *John and Acts*, vol. 9, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version*, edited by Frank E. Gæbelein, p 176-177. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981

B. Pilate then said, “Behold, the man!”

V6) The Jewish officials demanded the He be crucified!

A. Pilate knew that there was no reason for Him to be executed. He did not want to be the executioner so he told the Jews to take Him and crucify Him if that is what they wanted to do.

B. He proclaimed yet again, “I find no guilt/fault in Him.”

V7) The Jews responded to Pilate and told him that their Jewish law stated that Jesus must die because He said that He was the Son of God (Lev 24:13-16).

V8) Jesus’ claim to being the Son of God was blasphemy to Judaism. For Pilate and his pagan mythology, their deities frequently engaged humanity.

A. Pilate’s fear level increased with the Jewish charges—He did not want to be guilty of fighting against the gods.

B. Matthew recorded that Pilate’s wife sent him strange words: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent Man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of Him” (Matt. 27:19).

C. Was Pilate and his wife’s fear and concern based on superstition or was something else going on?

1. Perhaps the solemn majesty of Jesus with His claims of truth began to convict his conscience.

V9) Pilate’s fear had increased because of his observation and the warning that arrived from his wife.

A. He asked Jesus where He came from, and had hoped that Jesus’ answer would provide clarity to the question of His deity.

B. Jesus remained silent and did not respond to Pilate’s question.

V10) Pilate was angered by Jesus’ refusal to answer his question and reminds Him of the power that he possesses. He quickly informed Jesus that he has the power and authority to release Him or to have Him crucified.

V11) Jesus’ final words to Pilate was His response to his reminder of his authority.

A. “You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”

B. Two interesting points:

1. Jesus did not say, “from my Father” but used the general term “from above.”

2. He stated, “he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.” This reference is to Caiaphas and the Jewish hierarchy who had initiated the trial.

V12) Jesus’ response to Pilate’s authority made him more determined to release Him. Therefore, Pilate took additional actions to have Jesus set free.

- A. The Jews accused Pilate of being no friend to Caesar if he released Jesus, who said, “He was a king” and by this statement He opposed Caesar.

V13) Pilate yielded to the Jewish pressure and brought Jesus out and sat down at the judgment seat called The Pavement.

- A. The Pavement could have been in the Castle of Antonia, which housed the Roman garrison in Jerusalem. The castle stood on a rocky height of land, which accords with the Aramaic “Gabbatha,” meaning “ridge” or “height.”¹⁰¹

V14) The “preparation” refers to the preparation for the Sabbath (John 19:31) which would begin at sundown that day (Friday). Being the Passover Sabbath, it was an especially holy day. But it was also the preparation for the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, which followed immediately after the Day of Passover, and which was sometimes called the Passover Week.

- A. It is likely that John used Roman time, so that “the sixth hour” would have been 6 a.m.

1. Mark tells us that Jesus was crucified “the third hour,” which, in Jewish calculation, would have been about 9 a.m.

- B. Although Pilate had surrendered to the pressure of the Jews, he shows his contempt for them and declared, “Behold, your king.”

1. Pilate did not believe Jesus was their King, but to spite the Jews he called Jesus the King of the Jews.

- C. John viewed this as significant, for Jesus would die for His people as the King of His people, as the Messiah.

1. John is the only Gospel writer who mentioned this incident.

V15) The crowd joined with their leaders and demanded, “Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!” They wanted nothing to do with such a man and His claims.

- A. Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?”

- B. The response of the chief priests was astonishing, “We have no king but Caesar.”

1. The leaders of the nation, who long sought independence from Rome had declared their allegiance to the pagan emperor and rejected God’s Son, their Messiah.

¹⁰¹ Ibid p. 178

- C. When Israel asked to have a king, and God gave them Saul, the nation rejected God the Father (1 Sam. 8:5–7). When they asked for Barabbas, they rejected God the Son.

V16) Pilate surrendered to the demands of the Jews and gave them Jesus to be crucified.

The Crucifixion (19:17-30)

Pilate released Jesus to the execution squad to crucify the Son of God. The culmination of the crucifixion caused it to be midnight in the middle of the day. God's plan and purpose for the redemption of humanity is being fulfilled!

V17) John made no attempt to describe the process of crucifixion. He was aware that his readers had a thorough understanding of its brutality!

A. They led Jesus away carrying His own cross. These words fulfill two OT types.

1. Isaac carried his own wood for the sacrifice (Gen. 22:1–6)
2. The sin offering used to be taken outside the camp or city (Heb. 13:11–13).

B. Jesus was made sin. “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

C. The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha, was probably called this because the hill with its stony barren top looked like a skull.

V18) They crucified Jesus by attaching Him to the cross by nails through His hands and feet along with two thieves and placed Him between the two criminals.

A. There was not a more horrible way to die. The pain was excruciating and death could take as long as seven to ten days.

V19) Pilate, to further frustrate the Jews wrote the inscription which named His crime, “Jesus the Nazarene, the king of the Jews.”

V20) Many of the Jews, as they were moving in and out of Jerusalem preparing for the Passover, read the inscription pertaining to Jesus. To make sure everyone understood the charges against Jesus, Pilate had it written in three languages.

V21) The chief priest understood the implication of the title that Pilate had ordered to be written and they wanted him to immediately change it from, “The King of the Jews”; but that He said, “I am King of the Jews.”

V22) Pilate denied their request and responded, “What I have written I have written.”

V23, 24) Tenney states, Usually the clothing of a crucified man became the property of the executionists. Jesus' simple wardrobe was composed of five items: (1) a turban headdress; (2) an outer robe; (3) a sash or grille, the folds of which would provide pockets; (4)

sandals; and a (5) fairly long tunic, woven in one piece, that was an undergarment. The first four were easily divided among the four legionnaires, but the fifth would be of no value if cut into four pieces. So the tunic was awarded to one of them at the cast of the dice.¹⁰²

A. This event was a fulfillment of prophecy in Psalm 22:18.

1. Verse one also contains the words that Jesus spoke from the cross.

V25) The soldiers had carried out their harsh brutality and cruelty of the crucifixion and then gambled for His clothing. John directed the attention from the brutality to a scene of love and compassion.

A. Four women standing by the cross watched with love, but filled with grief. (1) Mary, the mother of Jesus (2) His mother's sister, Mary Salome, the mother of James and John (3) Mary, the wife of Clopas, is uncertain (4) Mary Magdalene

B. The grief and horror of Jesus' mother at the crucifixion must have been indescribable.

1. Her anguish fulfilled a prophecy of Simeon: "A sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:35).

V26) Seeing her sorrow Jesus honored His mother by consigning her into the care of John, the beloved disciple.

A. Jesus' response to his mother is not as abrupt as it sounds to us when He says "woman."

1. "Woman" was a polite and kind form of address.
2. Jesus also said, "woman" when he spoke to his mother at the wedding at Cana (2:4).
3. He used "woman" when He spoke to Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection (20:15).

V27) Jesus informed John to, "Behold his mother." John immediately took her into his own home.

V28) Knowing that everything was in order, prophecy had been fulfilled and that His mother would be properly taken care of Jesus said, "I am thirsty" to fulfill the Scriptures (Ps 42:1-12; 63:1).

V29) The paradox of the One who is the Water of life (4:14; 7:38-39) dying in thirst is striking. The soldiers gave Him a sour vinegar wine, which fulfilled Psalm 69:21.

V30) After Jesus took a very small amount of the vinegar wine and said, "It is finished!" He bowed His head and died.

¹⁰² Ibid p. 181

The Preparation for Jesus' Burial (19:31-42)

The Son of God is dead! Hope, faith, dreams, and expectations are not just derailed, but shattered and destroyed. Burial must take place quickly for the Passover was soon to begin.

V31) Because of the Law (Deut. 21:22–23) a body was not to remain exposed on a tree (or cross) overnight and certainly not on a Sabbath. A person so executed was under God's curse and his body if left exposed would defile the land (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).

A. The smashing of the lower leg bones caused death to occur fairly quickly by shock, loss of blood, and inability to breathe (the chest cavity would bear the pressure of the body's weight after the legs were broken). Without this procedure, a person could live for many hours or even days.

B. In the only known archeological find of a crucifixion, which was discovered in 1968, the skeletal remains revealed that the lower legs had been shattered by a single blow.¹⁰³

V32) The soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men who were crucified with Jesus.

V33) When they came to Jesus, they realized that He was already dead.

V34) To make sure that Jesus was dead, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear.

A. When the spear penetrated the flesh, the result was a flow of blood and water.

B. Blume states, "This flow has been interpreted in various ways.

1. Some have seen this as evidence that Jesus died of a broken heart so that His pericardium was full of blood and serum."
2. Tourville states, "Others see a symbolic or sacramental significance of the stream which the blood speaks of the price He paid for the sin of the world (John 1:29; Col 1:20) and the water signifies the power of His sacrifice which cleanses us from our filthiness (John 3:5; 1John 5:6; Titus 3:5,6)."
3. Blume continues, "More likely, it indicates that Jesus was a real human who died a real death. Possibly the spear struck the stomach and the heart, which accounted for the flow.

C. John, the one who saw this (v 35) saw saving significance in the sign.

1. At the time of the writing of this Gospel, Gnosticism and Docetism were current problems. These ideologies denied the reality of the Incarnation and of His death. But the blood and water are firm answers against those heresies.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Blum, E. A. (1985). John. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 340). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid p. 340

- V35) John affirmed the truthfulness of his testimony because he was an eyewitness and could give details of what took place, based upon his own personal knowledge of the events.
A. John's Gospel indicates the Jesus fulfilled OT prophecies concerning the Messiah.
- V36) Things happened the way they did in order to fulfill specific Scriptures and types.
A. First, Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, did not have any of His bones broken (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12; Ps. 34:20).
- V37) Second prophecy, people in the future will look on the pierced One (Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7).
- V38) After a crucifixion, the Romans usually left the dead body to the beasts of prey or threw it into a common pit. This lack of proper burial was the final humiliation in a crucifixion.
A. Joseph of Arimathea was rich (Matt. 27:57) and was waiting for the kingdom of God to come (Mark 15:43). Arimathea was about 20 miles northwest of Jerusalem.
1. Though a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council, he was "a good and upright man who had not consented to their decision" (Luke 23:50–51).
B. All four Gospels inform us that He went to Pilate and asked permission to take Jesus' body and give Him proper burial. Pilate granted him permission.
- V39) Nicodemus, was also involved with Joseph, in providing a proper burial for Jesus. Both Joseph and Nicodemus had been secret disciples, they now became known followers of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
A. Nicodemus brought a large quantity of myrrh and aloes that weighted approximately 100 pounds.
1. The myrrh was likely imported from Arabia, and it may have been tapped from trees and used in a powdered form.
2. The aloes were probably imported from India and used for embalming His body and linen grave cloth.
B. Matthew reports that the magi brought myrrh as a gift for the infant Jesus, marking the beginning of His life (Matt 2:11); now, myrrh marks His death.
C. Perhaps Nicodemus now understood the teaching of Jesus in (3:14) that He would be lifted up and that a person could look in faith to Him and live.
- V40) Following the burial custom of their people, the Jews, (their normal process was to wash a body and cover it with cloth and aromatic oils or spices) they wrapped Jesus' body in linen cloth filled with the spices provided by Nicodemus.
A. The burial of the body had to be done hastily and completed before sundown, because the Sabbath would begin.

V41, 42) John, is the only Gospel writer that mentions that a private garden owned by Joseph was in close proximity to the crucifixion site.

A. The Jewish days of preparation for the Sabbath was concluding, and the Sabbath and Passover would begin in a couple of hours. Therefore, they quickly buried Jesus in Joseph's own rock-hewed tomb (Matt 27:60).

B. The other Gospel writers inform us that the women watched the burial of Christ and they took note of where He was buried so that they could express their love and devotion to Him by bringing spices and perfumes to the tomb after the Passover (Matt 27:61; Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55, 56).

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ (20:1-31)

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the essential part of the Gospel message (1 Cor. 15:1–8) and a key doctrine in the Christian faith. It proves that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 2:32–36; Rom. 1:4) and that His atoning work on the cross has been completed and is effective (Rom. 4:24–25). The cross of crucifixion and the empty tomb is God’s proof of telling us that the debt of sin has been paid and our relationship with Him is complete and secure.

The Empty Tomb (20:1-18)

V1) The first day of the week (Sunday), Mary Magdalene and other women (cf. we in v. 2) went to the tomb.

A. Her devotion to Jesus, living and dead, was based on her gratitude for His delivering her from bondage to Satan. She had been an observer at the cross and now was the first person at the grave.

B. This tomb had been secured with a large stone (Mark 16:3–4) and had been sealed by the authority of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate (Matt. 27:65–66).

1. The women were amazed to see an open and apparently empty tomb.

V2) Mary Magdalene ran and told Peter and John (the beloved disciple, John 19:26) that a terrible thing had occurred. They assumed that grave robbers had come and taken the body of Jesus.

V3) Peter and John sprinted as fast as they could to Jesus’ tomb.

V4) John outran Peter and arrived at the tomb first.

V5) John stooped down and looked into the tomb, and saw the linen wrappings lying there.

A. John acknowledged that he did not go into the tomb. Why? Not sure, perhaps for fear of defilement.

V6) Peter, upon arriving immediately behind John, rushed into the tomb and saw the linen wrappings as did John.

A. The grave-clothes are not carried away as they naturally would have been if the body had been stolen.

V7) Peter noticed that the face cloth which had been on Jesus’ head, was not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.

A. Peter must have been thinking, “Why would a grave robber have left the clothes in this order?”

V8) John decides to enter the tomb and saw and believed.

V9) To us, it seems incredible that the followers of Jesus did not expect Him to come out of the

tomb alive. After all, He had told them many times that He would be raised from the dead.

A. Early in His ministry He had said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19).

1. After His resurrection, the disciples remembered that He had said this (John 2:22); however, His enemies remembered it as well (Matt. 27:40, 63–64).

B. He compared Himself to Jonah (Matt. 12:40), and on two occasions clearly announced His resurrection after three days (Matt. 16:21; 20:19). On Thursday of His last week of ministry He again promised to be raised up and meet them in Galilee (Matt. 26:32, Luke 24:6–7).

V10) After such an amazing discovery, interestingly, Peter and John simply returned to their homes.

V11) But Mary Magdalene remained at the tomb weeping, overwhelmed and devastated by what she thought happened. As she wept, she decided to also look inside the tomb.

V12) As she did, she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.

V13) Mary, consumed by her grief did not notice anything unusual.

A. Two angels, one sitting where the feet of Jesus had been lying and the other sitting where His head had been lying—Didn’t seem unusual?

B. They asked her, “Why are you weeping?” She casually answered, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”

V14) Something caught Mary’s attention and she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not recognize Him. Why not?

A. First, she had no expectation of seeing a living Jesus. She had come to the tomb where a crucified Jesus had been buried.

B. Some suggest that Jesus’ appearance was changed; (2) others say she had a temporary “blindness” as did the Emmaus Road disciples who “were kept from recognizing Him” (Luke 24:16) until His act of disclosure. (3) Others say that possibly the tears in her eyes kept her from recognizing Him.

V15) Jesus asked Mary the same question the two angels did, “Woman, why are you weeping?” And added a second question, “Whom are you seeking?”

A. Mary, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

V16) When Jesus called Mary Magdalene by name, she immediately recognized Him.

A. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus calls His sheep by name (John 10:3) and “they know His voice” (10:4).

B. Mary, in her Hebrew language said, “Rabboni!” (which means, Teacher).

V17) Mary had embraced Jesus and in her enthusiasm of knowing He was alive, refused to let Him go.

A. Jesus responded to her and said two things:

1. First, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father;
2. Secondly, go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’ ”

V18) Mary Magdalene did as Jesus told her and went and told the disciples, “I have seen the Lord and this is what He said to me.”

Jesus Among His Disciples (20:19-29)

V19) It was Sunday evening on the day of Jesus’ resurrection and the door was closed where the disciples had gathered, for fear of the Jews. Remember, they were almost arrested with Jesus

A. With the doors closed and securely locked, Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

B. This was Jesus’ first appearance to the disciples as a group.

V20) He showed them His nail pierced hands, and where the sword was thrust into His side, and the disciples fright quickly turned to rejoicing when they knew it was the Lord.

V21) Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you.”

A. He recommissioned them as His apostles, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” He was sending them with His authority to preach, teach, and perform miracles.

V22) He knew they would need spiritual power along with His authority, so He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

A. The image and wording of breathing on them recalls God’s creative work in making Adam (Gen. 2:7).

B, This reception of the Spirit was in anticipation of the day of Pentecost and should be understood as a partial limited gift of knowledge, understanding, and empowerment until Pentecost, 50 days later.

V23) He continued and said, “If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.”

A. Only God can forgive sin (Mark 2:7). The disciples and the church are here given the authority to declare what God does when a person either accepts or rejects His Son.

V24) Thomas was absent when Jesus appeared to the other disciples.

V25) The other disciples explained to Thomas that they had seen the Lord.

A. Thomas refused to believe that Jesus was alive until his criteria of proof was met:

“Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

V26) Eight days later all of the disciples and Thomas were together. The place they had gathered was secured and the door had been closed.

A. Miraculously, Jesus appeared in their midst and said, “Peace be with you.”

V27) Jesus asked Thomas to do what he needed to do to stop unbelieving and to begin believing that He is alive as He said He would be.

A. This was a forthright challenge to Thomas for him to have a personal commitment.

B. Has your commitment of belief and faith been challenged?

V28) Thomas’ responds, “My Lord and My God,” is monumental! It is the high point of the Gospel.

A. Here was a skeptical man, confronted by the evidence of Jesus’ resurrection. He proclaimed that Jesus, the Man of Galilee, is God manifest in the flesh—Herein lies the hope of humanity!

V29) Jesus’ response to Thomas, “Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed” provided great encouragement for all believers going forward.

A. This blessing comes to all who believe on the basis of the proclaimed gospel and the evidences for its validity.

B. Believers living today, are not deprived by not seeing Him physically; instead, they are the recipients of His special blessing:

Why This Gospel Was Written (20:30-31)

V30) John informed his readers that Jesus performed many other miracles in the presence of His disciple (John was one of those disciples) that was not written in the book he authored.

A. Thirty-five different miracles are recorded in the four Gospels and John selected seven to highlight in his Gospel (see page 8 of your lecture notes).

V31) John explained His purpose in writing this Gospel, that people might contemplate and perceive the theological significance of Jesus’ miracles and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God—If you believe and receive you may have life in His name!

The Epilogue: Jesus Appears at the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-25)

John's purposes in this final chapter reveals how Jesus reinstated Peter after denial, and to correct a serious error about the Lord's return. The chapter also provides additional clues as to the identity of the author.

- 1) The disciples had gone to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. The celebration turned into a tumultuous series of events: the Triumphal Entry, the expectation of a new kingdom, a betrayal by Judas, a trusted friend, near arrest, denial of Jesus by their leader Peter, the agonizing crucifixion of Jesus, the Resurrection, and the manifestations of the risen Lord. Understandably, they were confused and unsure of the future.
 - A. An angel had promised that Jesus would meet with His disciples in Galilee (Matt. 28:7). The Sea of Tiberias is another name for the Sea of Galilee;
 - B. It was significant evidence for Jesus to manifest Himself in a different location and at a later time (cf. Acts 1:3).
- 2) John names seven of the remaining eleven disciples that had gathered at Galilee.
- 3) Peter decided that he was going fishing. After all, he had a family to support and nothing was happening with Jesus at the present time.
 - A. The other seven invited themselves to join him. They fished all night, but caught nothing.
- 4) As the sun was rising, Jesus stood on the beach waiting for them to return from the fishing trip.
 - A. The disciples from their distance or lack of light did not recognize that it was Jesus waiting on the shore.
 - B. Jesus is always near, standing and watching over His follower.
 1. Unfortunately, we do not always recognize Him.
 2. Not sure why that is. Too many distractions, I guess.
- 5) Jesus yelled out to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered Him, "No."
- 6) Jesus instructed them to, "Cast your net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch."
 - A. In response to his authoritative voice, they did as He said. So they cast the net on the right hand side, and then they were not able to haul the net in because of the great number of fish.
- 7) It appears that John connected the events and was the first to recognize the stranger on shore. An authoritative voice instructed them to do something that would seemingly be a waste of time, but they did it anyway and a miraculous catch was made.

- A. The disciple that Jesus loved (John) said to Peter, “It is the Lord.”
- B. When Peter heard the it was the Lord Jesus, he put his clothes on (because he was working in his under garments, like a bathing suit for fishing) and jumped into the lake and apparently swam to Jesus (v11).
 - 1. This would be typical of his impulsive nature.
- 8) Because of the great catch, the other disciples who were nearby in a smaller boat came to help drag the full net of fish to shore, which was about 100 yards away.
- 9) When everyone arrived at the shore, Jesus had a charcoal fire cooking, fish and bread.
- 10) Jesus knew they would be hungry after fishing all night so He asked for some of the fish they had just caught to make sure all the disciples had plenty to eat and were satisfied.
- 11) Peter helped pull the overflowing net to shore. Surprisingly, the net was not torn.
 - A. The numbering of the catch of 153 fish, has given rise to all kinds of allegorical and symbolic interpretations. However, no attempts are really credible.
 - 1. I read no more into 153 fish, then I do into the 2,000 donkeys in 1 Chron 5:21.
 - B. John probably mentioned the number as a matter of historical detail. With a group of men fishing, the common procedure would be for them to count the fish they caught and then divide them equally among the fishermen.
 - C. The spiritual lesson taught here is that great blessing comes to one’s efforts when you follow and obey the word of the Lord.
- 12) Jesus invited them to come eat breakfast with Him. Everyone knew it was Jesus, so nobody asked, “Who are You?”
- 13) Jesus served them the bread and fish.
 - A. Their meal together stamped an indelible impression on their minds. Years later in his preaching, Peter spoke of himself as a reliable witness who ate and drank with Jesus after His resurrection (Acts 10:41).
- 14) This was Jesus’ third appearance to the apostles after His resurrection. John named the first two appearances in John 20:19, 24.

Peter is Questioned and Restored (21:15-23).

- 15) Peter, just days earlier had denied he knew Jesus while by a fire in the courtyard. Now, beside another fire on the shore, he had the opportunity to be redeemed.
 - A. After they had finished breakfast, Jesus asked Peter, “If he loved Him more than these?”

1. Peter replied, Yes, Lord; You know that I love you.”
 2. Jesus said, “Tend to My lambs.”
- 16) Jesus asked him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Shepherd My sheep.”
- 17) Jesus said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me?”
- A. Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Tend My sheep.”
 - B. Three times after Jesus’ arrest, Peter denied knowing Christ. He now affirmed that He loved Christ!
- 18) Truly, truly (I tell you the truth) introduces a solemn prediction of Peter’s coming crucifixion.
- A. In his old age, Peter was tied to a cross and had his hands stretched out and according to tradition was crucified upside down.
 1. A life lived for God and ultimately sacrificed for the glory of God!
 - B. Obedience to Jesus’ command, “Follow Me,” is the key issue in every Christian’s life.
- 19) After Jesus had questioned Peter and informed him of what kind of death he would glorify God, Jesus said to him, “Follow me!”
- 20) Peter, having been informed about God’s plan for his life, wondered what the future held for his friend John, the disciple whom Jesus loved.
- 21) Peter asked Jesus, “Lord, what about John? What is going to happen to him?”
- 22) Jesus replied to Peter, “If I want John to live until I return, it is of no concern to you.”
- A. Jesus continued, “Peter you follow me!”
 - B. Jesus did not want Peter to be concerned about God’s will for others, or the times and seasons. He wanted each of His followers to commit themselves to God’s commands for their life.
- 23) A false rumor about Jesus’ words to Peter started circulating. They were saying that Jesus said, “John would not die.” We know that this was/is incorrect.
- A. What Jesus did say to Peter was that, “If I want John to remain alive until I return, that is not your concern.”
 - B. This event clearly shows the possibility of misunderstanding God’s promises. Christians must seek to understand God’s Word accurately.

C. Jesus' last words recorded by John in this Gospel refer to His return. He gave no indication when His return would take place.

24) John's Gospel ends with information about its composition. The beloved disciple is identified as the author of the book.

A. He testified to these things, and that he wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

25) The final verse—with its statement about the world not having room for all the books that could be written about Jesus' deeds.

A. The Gospels record only a small sample of Jesus' words and works. A person can read Jesus' words recorded in the Gospels in only about three hours.

B. If all that the infinite Son of God said and did in His Incarnation were pondered, the resulting commentary would be endless.