



THE GOSPEL OF JOHN



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INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR

The apostle John, the brother of James and son of Zebedee and Salome, **Mark 1:19-20**, is the author of this Gospel. Although John doesn't specifically identify himself in the letter, the early Christians and most scholars associate him with the 'beloved disciple,' who was a close companion of Jesus, **John 13:23 / John 18:15-16 / John 19:25-27 / John 21:20**. The name John means, "the Lord is gracious." He is also the author of 1,2,3 John and Revelation.

DATE

There has been some speculation concerning the date of John's Gospel; some suggest a date somewhere between A.D. 80 and 90. However, it could have been written earlier, possibly between A.D. 60 and 70.

THE BOOK

Some suggest that the four faces mentioned in **Ezekiel 1:10** and **Revelation 4:7** represent Jesus in the four Gospels.

Matthew represents the face of the lion, which implies Jesus' kingship. Jesus is from the line of Judah.

Mark represents the face of the ox, which implies the servant, service. The serving Jesus.

Luke represents the face of the man, which implies humanity. Jesus is the Son of Man.

John represents the face of the eagle, which symbolises Jesus' deity. Jesus is the Son of God.

Matthew was written for Jews, and he uses the words 'as it is written' throughout his Gospel. Note the genealogy goes back to Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, **Matthew 1:1-17**. His point is to remind the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah in fulfilment of the Jewish Law.

Mark is writing to the Romans, and he simply talks about what Jesus is doing and how busy He is, which is exactly what the Romans were doing: building roads, etc., they were busy people.

Luke was written for the Greeks, and he uses the term 'Son of Man' throughout his Gospel. Notice his genealogy goes back to Adam; his point is that Jesus is for the whole world, **Luke 3:23-38**.

John is writing to those in Asia, and he uses the term 'Son of God' throughout his Gospel. His point is to demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ through signs, eight miracles and eight 'I AM' statements.

THEME

John's Gospel is unique in that John has a specific purpose. John wants his readers to know that Jesus is divine, **John 20:30-31**. He is the Messiah who came down from Heaven. He is God in the flesh, **John 1:1-3 / John 1:14**. And everything in this book wraps itself around that grand theme.

PURPOSE

Like a lawyer presenting a case, John brings up the evidence to support the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, **John 1:41 / John 1:49**, God's Son, **John 3:16**, and that by submitting to His will and believing only in Him, men and women can have eternal life. John presents the case by showing us who Jesus is.

He shows us the claim that Jesus Himself made, that the Father made and that others made about Jesus. He shares with us eight of Christ's 'I am' statements, **John 6:35 / John 8:12 / John 8:58 / John 10:9 / John 10:11 / John 11:25 / John 14:6 / John 15:1**.

He also shares with us eight signs of Jesus which proved who He was, **John 2:1-11 / John 4:49-53 / John 5:1-18 / John 6:1-14 / John 6:16-21 / John 9 / John 11 / John 21:1-14**, all which were done in an effort to bring people to faith in Christ and who He was, **John 20:30-31**.

It isn't enough to say that He was 'a good teacher,' **Luke 18:18-30**. It is not enough to say that He is Lord, **Matthew 7:21**, until we submit to the fact that Jesus, who came to Earth, was born of a virgin, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross, is God Himself.

OUTLINE

Incarnation Of The Son Of God. **John 1:1-18**
Presentation Of The Son Of God. **John 1:19-4:54**
Confrontations With The Son Of God. **John 5:1-12:50**
Instruction Given By The Son Of God. **John 13:1-16:33**
Jesus' final prayer. **John 17:1-26**
Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion and burial. **John 18:1-19:42**
Discovery of the empty tomb and resurrection appearances in Jerusalem. **John 20:1-31**
Jesus' appearance by the Sea of Galilee to Peter and others. **John 21:1-25**

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

'In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.' **John 1:1-3**

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

In this text, Jesus is identified as being the eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God, and who is God in the flesh, **John 1:1-2 / John 1:14**. John's message is to convince men and women that Jesus is divine, **John 20:30-31**.

John presents Jesus as the Word of God, as the light from God, and as the only way to have eternal life with God. He begins by showing us that Jesus is the eternal Word. In the beginning was the Word, **John 1:2**.

In **John 6:68**, Jesus spoke some hard things to His disciples. Some of those disciples then decided to walk with Him no more. Jesus is the eternal Word, and the words He speaks give eternal life.

We must have access to the teaching of God through Jesus and His disciples before we can go to Heaven, **John 7:17**. Jesus, as the eternal Word, shows us the power of His message.

John tells us that Jesus existed before creation. ‘In the beginning, was the word,’ **John 1:2**. In Greek, the word ‘was’ means literally ‘already was.’ It is not as though the beginning arrives and then Jesus arrives, too. In the beginning, the Word of God, Jesus, already was. Jesus, as God, has always existed, **Psalm 90:2**.

In **Genesis 1:26**, God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.’ In **Genesis 2:7**, we read, ‘The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.’ The ‘Us’ used to describe God is the plural personal pronoun. Who is the ‘Us’? It is Jesus the Son, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit.

Colossians 1:15 shows us that Jesus was God’s agent in creation. All things were made by Him. God created all things through Jesus, His Son. In **Revelation 5:5**, we learn that He is the root and offspring of David. How can He be both the root and the offspring? As the root, He is the Creator of all life. As the offspring, Jesus was born to Joseph and Mary, who were of the seed of David. Christ existed before creation.

John affirms his absolute conviction concerning the deity of Jesus. In **John 1:19-20:29**, he presents the evidence which compelled him to that conviction. Only John describes Jesus as the Logos, **John 1:1 / John 1:14 / 1 John 1:1-2 / Revelation 19:13**. The apostle is saying, ‘Jesus is the complete and perfect expression of deity,’ **John 14:19**. John is responding to Gnostic errors, which greatly threatened the church.

Gnosticism was widespread when John wrote his Gospel and letters, and the Gnostics spoke much about ‘the Logos’, their ‘Logos’, but it was much less than God, a mere emanation of deity. John asserts that ‘the Logos was God’, **John 1:1**. John is also responding to pagan ideas about God.

Pagans applied the term ‘apatheia’, from which we get the word ‘apathy’ towards God. They thought of God as totally indifferent to man. John stresses not only Jesus’ absolute deity but also His true humanity, **John 1:14**.

He portrays a God totally involved in human life. John rebuts Gnostic error by showing that Jesus is not a created being, not an archangel or lesser god, but that He is Deity, **John 1:3 / John 10:30-33 / Colossians 2:9**. He rebuts pagan error by showing that God is passionately concerned about man actually became man, ‘the word of God became a human being and lived among us’, **John 1:14**.

The combination of ‘thought’ and ‘word’, between which the Greeks didn’t make the distinction we do. Therefore, logos is never merely an utterance but a concept message, **John 8:43**.

In Hebrew thought, once a word is spoken, it has a kind of existence of its own, **Isaiah 55:10-11**. Once ‘the word of the Lord’ has been spoken, its effects continue. The ‘Word of God’ is the self-revelation of God to men, the essence of His being rather than mere sounds, **John 5:37-38**.

John appears to use ‘logos’ to denote the eternal truth revealed to men by God, previously, in the Old Testament, now in Jesus, **John 1:17**. Jehovah’s Witnesses claim that Jesus was the first being created by Jehovah. John refutes this idea by insisting that He existed before all created things, **John 1:3 / John 8:58**. The beginning is the earliest possibly conceived moment.

However, one sees the start of it all, if indeed such a start occurred, that is what this term refers to. The word, ‘was’, **John 1:1-3**, emphasises that the Word was in existence before the earliest conceivable moment. He was the origin and source of all things, **Revelation 3:14**.

The word ‘Word’ expresses the idea that God and the Word are not separate beings, but of the same essence, together with the Spirit. The Logos was not a new concept to the Jews or Greeks. To the Jew, the ‘Word of the Lord’ is God creating and revealing, **Genesis 1 / Psalm 33**.

The Gentiles, however, understood this Logos to be the Divine Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Speaking of Jesus, Paul writes, ‘Who, being in the very nature of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped’, **Philippians 2:6**.

Christ did not have to grab at being God as He was (and IS) God. **Colossians 2:9** reiterates this by saying, ‘For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.’ Jesus is God, as **John 1:2** shows us. ‘He was in the beginning with God.’ The Gospel of John presents Jesus as being divine.

In **John 10:30**, Jesus said, ‘My Father and I are one.’ They are one in purpose, one in nature, and one in person. Both are God. Both have the goal and mindset of saving mankind. Christ humbled Himself and died on the cross. Jesus did not consider it robbery to give up His equality with God, **Philippians 2:5-7**.

He gave that up, came to Earth, and lived as a man. Yes, He was still God. But He also took a human form upon Himself and became the incarnate Son of God. This proved that He is God.

When Thomas saw the nail prints in Jesus’ hand and the hole in His side, he said, ‘My Lord and my God!’ **John 20:28**. Christians are looking for the glorious hope and appearance of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, **Titus 2:11-14**.

Of course, one of the most powerful passages is **Hebrews 1:7-11**, where God said to the Son, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever.’ God the Father called the Son ‘God,’ thus proving that Jesus is divine. We must understand that belief in Christ is the only way that people can have eternal life, **John 1:12**.

We must believe in Jesus, but there is an important point here. Believing in Jesus does not automatically make a person a child of God. It gives the right to become a child of God, **John 1:12-13**.

Believing puts us in the arena of those who can become children of God by doing what He says. Belief alone will not save us, but it gives us the right to become what we are not.

We are not children of God at the point of belief alone. The only time that the phrase ‘faith only,’ ‘faith alone’ occurs in the Bible is when God said that we are not justified by faith alone, **James 2:24**.

In Jesus’ day, people called Him ‘Lord,’ but they were not doing what He said, **Matthew 7:21**. This is why He asked, ‘Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but do not do the things I have said?’ **Luke 6:46**. Jesus is the author of salvation ‘to all those who obey Him,’ **Hebrews 5:8-9**.

We must commit to Jesus and do all He says we must do to become children of God. Belief gives us the ability to become that which we are not yet. We are not children of God at the point of God, but we can become such if we submit to Christ’s will and continue to obey Him.

Jesus is presented as being ‘the Lamb of God.’ John the baptiser sees Jesus approaching, and then says, ‘Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,’ **John 1:29**. In **Revelation 5**, there is a bittersweet scene. John has a scroll that will unleash the wrath of God on the ungodly heathens who are persecuting Christians. But there is a problem.

No one can open the scroll, which causes John to weep bitterly. Then the Lamb whose throat was cut appears, **Revelation 5:6**. He had been prepared ‘before the foundation of the world,’ **Revelation 13:8**. Jesus came forth to unleash God’s power, anger, and wrath against people. Because of the great sacrifice that Jesus made, God’s plan was unfolded.

Without the blood that comes from a sacrifice, there can be no forgiveness, **1 Peter 1:17-20**. **Hebrews 9:22** tells us that without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission of sins. **Hebrews 10:3-4** adds to that by saying that the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins.

WHERE IS THE SAVIOUR, THEN?

Hebrews 10:12 answers this question when it says, ‘this Man, Jesus, after He had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down at the right hand of God.’ Jesus, therefore, is seen as the beautiful sacrifice Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

John says that ‘He was with God in the beginning’, **John 1:2**, which further explains the previous one. It ensures no misunderstanding and provides a link between creation and ‘He’, that is, the redemptive one.

The Word and God were completely unified before time. The eternity of the Logos, ‘In the beginning was the Logos.’ The deity of the Logos, ‘the Logos was God.’ The word ‘God’, ‘Theos’, generally refers to the Father, but John insists that ‘Theos’ applies to Jesus.

He stresses the characteristics of deity evidence in Jesus. He said deity is an eternity of existence, **John 8:58 / John 17:5**. Deity is Omniscience, **John 6:61-64 / John 11:14**. Deity is Omnipotence, powerful over nature, disease, death, **John 2:1-11 / John 5:1-9 / John 11:38**.

John also says, ‘through Him, the Logos,’ all things were made, without Him nothing was made that has been made,’ **John 1:3 / Colossians 1:13-17**. Look again at what it says, ‘without him was not anything made’.

Gnostics spoke of many being lesser than God, ‘mediating the creative activity of the supreme God.’ Some today claim that Jesus, before He came into the world, was a created being. John refutes both heresies.

The words, ‘all things’, **John 1:3**, ‘pavta’, literally translated, would refer to the infinite detail of creation. The words ‘were made’ in this case refer to the whole of creation, with emphasis on ‘whole’. It’s interesting to compare this verse with **Genesis 1:1**, which states, ‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.’

John states that Jesus is the creator, while Moses believes God was. This seems to be a contradiction and leaves the following possibilities. Moses in Genesis is wrong, John in his account is wrong, or Jesus and God are one and the same. It would seem apparent, after studying the two passages given earlier, **Philippians 2:6**, and **Colossians 2:9**, that the third option is the only viable one.

Jesus is the ‘prototype’ of mankind and all creation. Everything was created in His perfect image, not a physical but an emotional image, the character, the real you the soul of man, **1 Thessalonians 5:23**.

Hebrews 1:2, gives a demonstration of creation through Jesus and or Jesus, ‘but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.’ See also **1 Corinthians 8:6** and **Matthew 28:18-20**.

Luke 10:19 presents Christ as capable of creating all things. **Matthew 26:53** implies that Christ had the power available to Him if he had twelve legions of angels, that’s seventy-two thousand, ‘through him’, the Logos was not a created being, **Genesis 1:1 / Colossians 1:15-17 / Hebrews 1:1-8**.

‘In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.’ **John 1:4-5**

The word ‘life’ occurs thirty-six times in the Gospel, eleven times prefaced by ‘eternal’, **John 1:4**. But most often ‘life’ in this book refers to eternal life, **John 6:51 / John 10:18**. Note the past tense, ‘in him was life’. His life brought all created beings and things into existence, **John 1:4**.

This is distinguished from mere earthly existence, **John 4:14 / John 6:27**. It involves two parts: quantitative, eternal life, **John 5:28-29 / John 11:25-26**, and then qualitative, life in the present, **John 3:36 / John 5:24-25 / John 6:47 John 6:54 / John 10:10 / John 11:25-26**.

Jesus is the source of life, **John 1:4 / John 3:16 / John 11:25 / John 14:6 / John 20:31**. Several words are used in Greek for the English word ‘life’.

1. Pauche, referring to the animal or physical life of our bodies, the type we share with all living creatures.
2. Bios, referring to the physical existence, but on a higher level than 'Pauche'.

The word biology is derived from this word. The meaning can refer to the physical processes, such as digestion, etc.

3. Zoe, Zoology is derived from this word.

It originally referred to the lower form among man and the animals, being primarily concerned with inward processes. Later at the time, this was penned, it referred to the meaning of life, the emotional and spiritual inward characteristics of life. This is the word used here in its highest possible elevation, the relationship between God and man. Luke used the word in his gospel in relevance to Lazarus, **Luke 16:25**.

John uses 'Zoe' instead of 'Bios' to emphasise the intricate, deep meaning of life. He uses this term thirty-five times in his writings to give life a special uplifting shade when in reference to life as a child of God. As agents of creation, all life came through Christ, is sustained by Him, and is responsible to him.

The word 'light' is very interesting. The following is necessary to perceive light: an origin of light, something the light can emanate from, and an organ to detect that light.

The 'light' is a synonym for 'truth', **John 3:19**. Just as Jesus is the source of spiritual life, so He is the source of all spiritual guidance, **John 1:9 / John 8:12**. The inextinguishable light, **John 1:5**.

John paints a picture of Christ as the emanator of the light, and the spiritual desire, the organ of perception. The light of Jesus is past, present and future. The Logos is the provider of our life and light.

John says, 'The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it', **John 1:5**. Jesus has already been identified as the light. A new character, namely, darkness, has now been introduced. This has been used symbolically to depict the following.

1. Moral sin.
2. Affliction, disease, problems, famine, etc.
3. The thought of punishment.
4. Physical and Spiritual death.
5. Groping in darkness.

The darkness has thus been identified as the life taker, the power behind badness, Satan. Light in darkness can always be seen. Perhaps it may not be recognised, but it can be seen. His influence is in the sinful world, but that darkness has never been overcome or understood; the light is always there, regardless of people's attitudes towards it.

Likewise, Jesus and all the goodness He represents in a world of badness is visible and doing all it can, that is, shining, in an attempt to make itself understood, **John 1:5**.

The word, 'understood,' 'katalambano' refers to comprehension. This may have been the better word to have used; in fact, many translators have used it. It means to comprehend, grasp, seize or take possession of, **John 1:10**, the world knew him not, **John 1:11**, received him not.

In the battle between light and dark, good and evil, the light will win, as all the darkness in the universe is not enough to put out one iota of light. The word 'overcome', **John 1:5**, literally means, 'to lay hold of'; it can mean either 'comprehend' or 'overpower'. Both ideas are true. A sin-darkened world did not grasp the light and the truth Jesus brought.

Also, the world could not overpower the light of truth in Jesus. John depicts an ongoing conflict between light and darkness, **John 12:35 / John 3:19 / John 8:12**. The verse is somehow terribly sad. Although a victory for light is inevitable, the losses on that road are frightening. That light tries so hard, but the darkness just cannot grasp it. In **John 1:1-5**, we see the relationship of the ‘Word’. John had five things in mind when he used the word ‘Word’.

1. God expressed.
2. The real personal God, that is one in essence and Spirit, and yet a distinct personality.
3. That which reveals the hidden God.
4. The visible image of God, as in **Hebrews 1:1-3**.
5. The Word is the concept of reality.

JOHN THE BAPTISER

‘There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.’ **John 1:6-14**

Another character is now introduced, John the baptiser, **John 1:6**. As the verse suggests, he was no ordinary man, but one sent from God as a witness to the light that was now available to all men, **John 1:7**. One of the great themes of this book is the word ‘witness’, testimony.

The Apostle calls witnesses to testify to the deity of Jesus, **John 1:7-8**. Later, he will call the Father to witness, **John 5:37 / John 8:18**. Jesus himself, **John 8:14 / John 8:18**. Jesus’ works, **John 5:36 / John 10:25**. The Old Testament Scriptures, **John 5:39**.

John the Baptist is the first ‘witness’. The purpose of his testimony was ‘that we might believe through him’, **John 1:7**. The function of the messenger was not to draw attention to himself but to the one who sent him, **John 1:8 / Matthew 3:3 / Isaiah 40:3**.

John was conceived to a childless couple, Elizabeth and Zachariah, a priest, **Luke 1:5-25**. They had no other children, and due to advanced age, they were considered barren. However, Elizabeth continued to pray for divine intervention and the gift of a son.

Elizabeth and Mary, Christ’s mother, were related, **Luke 1:36**. Mary conceived six months after Elizabeth, and on hearing Mary, the child within Elizabeth leapt for joy, **Luke 1:41**. The baby was born, and the whole community shared in the couple’s joy.

The baby was given the name John against tradition, but in accordance with the angel who had given Zachariah the news of the coming baby’s directions. Very little is told of his childhood, except ‘and the child grew and became strong in spirit and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel,’ **Luke 1:80**.

John was the one to ‘prepare the way for the Lord’, **Luke 3:4**, and he had been prophesied about in **Isaiah 40:3-5**. He was the spiritual form of Elijah that had been promised before the coming Messiah, **Malachi 4:5-6**. This Gospel doesn’t deal with the birth of John, as Luke had already done so in his account. The more important facets of the spiritual man are dealt with.

‘He came as a witness to testify concerning the Light, so that through him men might believe’, **John 1:7**. The word, ‘Witness’, ‘martus’, is the same as the word for martyr, and is used by John some fifty times. The writer uses seven witnesses in this book, and they are as follows.

1. The witness of the fore-runner, **John 1:7**.
2. The witness of the Father, **John 5:31**.
3. The witness of the works, **John 5:17**.
4. The witness of the Scripture, **John 5:39**.
5. The witness of the Christ, **John 8:14**.
6. The witness of the disciples, **John 15:27**.
7. The witness of the Spirit, **John 15:26**.

This idea of many witnesses ties in and contrasts with the law, which demanded two or three witnesses, **Deuteronomy 19:15**. John says you want three, I will give you seven. The reason for John’s appearance is made quite clear in the second part of the verse, **John 1:7**. Note also the use of the term ‘all’, which emphasises salvation for all mankind, not just a select few.

It is important that people realise that John was not the Christ. As a result, that fact was emphasised to promote a good understanding of the nature of John. The Logos made flesh, rejected and received, **John 1:9-14**. This is the message in a shortened format that John had come to deliver.

Jesus, the true light, was coming, **John 1:9**. The use of the term ‘true,’ ‘genuine,’ ‘alethenos,’ light, may imply that others before Him had set themselves up as the Christ. Indeed, it is commonly accepted that many had in the past. The words ‘was coming’ seem to give the idea of pre-existence. A progressive occurrence was already happening, although the Christ had not yet revealed himself, **Luke 1:78**. Dayspring from on high and his visitation among men. Since Jesus has been coming into the world, **John 1:9**, we detect that a progressive revelation to mankind was in progress. As time goes by, God reveals more about his plan of redemption.

Consider the increase in the knowledge man has of God as man went through one age to the next. As we are in the final age, ‘the last days’, before the judgement, we are privileged to see the maximum about God before He finally reveals Himself.

The purpose of the light is to ‘enlighten every man’. It’s an abuse of this term to apply it, as Quakers do, to the inner light of conscience. This ‘light’ is Jesus, who brought ‘the light’ to the world, but which many rejected, **John 1:10 / John 3:19 / John 9:39**. Jesus came when the time was right, **Galatians 4:4**.

The word ‘received’, **John 1:10-11**, means ‘welcomed’, **John 14:3 / Isaiah 53:1**. God was not surprised at man’s refusal to know the Lord. The word ‘world,’ **John 1:10**, ‘kosmos’ tells of the entire creation, down to the last-minute detail. This is almost a repeat of **John 1:5**, and reflects the same terrible sadness.

John 1:11 is a reference to the Jewish people. Not only was he of the most precious and respected bloodline in the land, but He was also the figure of many prophecies.

The people of the time had a set picture of what the Messiah was to be, that is, a powerful military and political figure. However, when a humble figure arrived, even though he fulfilled all prophecy, he was either not recognised or considered too different to follow.

As a result, the Lord’s people rejected the given Saviour and to this day watch and wait for a Messiah that has already come, completed His earthly task and is now left, **Romans 9:1-5**.

Believers are given ‘power’, ‘exousia’, right or privilege to become children of God, **John 1:12**. Becoming a child of God is not dependent on human merit nor due to any human impulse or act, but originated by man, but by God.

John 1:12 could be considered a contradiction of the previous one. First, we heard how he was not received, but now he has been. It is thus clear that those who did receive were not ‘His people’. Now God has exposed Himself to all mankind, and all can receive Him. The word ‘receive’, **John 1:12**, ‘lambano’ means to take or receive.

So how does one receive this Jesus? The Bible gives many examples of conversion taking place. See, for example, **Acts 2:37-39 / Acts 6:38 / Acts 9:1-18 / Acts 18:8**, and other passages mainly in the Book of Acts. There are conditions for salvation, and when all are complied with, the sinner is still saved by grace. This conversion is the process whereby one receives Christ.

The idea of being ‘born’, **John 1:13**, indicates a development process that has started, conception to birth and must continue, birth to death. Birth and baptism followed teaching and soul-searching.

Now that this baptism has occurred, life will, as a newborn baby, be dependent on others until self-reliance occurs, and eventually, other babies will, in turn, become reliant on the former. A period of growth and development with a slow change of priorities occurs.

No human other than the one involved can play a higher-level role in this birth. Yes, others may teach, but any pressure will or at least could result in one trying to enter but not having a relationship with God.

The decision to be reborn must be the unpressured decision of the applicant. The two thoughts are developed later by John, the new birth, **John 3**, true children of Abraham, **John 8**.

John 1:14 deals with the humanity of Jesus. The nature of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. By this, we mean His inner characteristics. Jesus as a man. The term ‘anthropos’ refers to man in general and does not specify sex, thus mankind. The term ‘anthropos’ is also used in **John 8:40 / 1 Corinthians 15:21**, and **Romans 5:15**.

Remember that Jesus, as we know Him didn’t exist as Jesus in the past; it’s only when the Word became flesh that He became Jesus, **John 1:14**. The word ‘aner’ does specify the sex of the person. This word can also refer to husband, and this makes it obvious that Christ is a man, **John 1:30 / Acts 2:22**. Notice that nobody calls him this except Christ Himself just before his death.

Only Stephen uses this name after His resurrection, **Acts 7:56**. When Jesus calls Himself the Son of man, the Greek term ‘anthropos’ is always used. This is used even though Christ was the son of a woman with no masculine interference.

JESUS IN THE FLESH WAS HUMAN

The words, ‘became flesh’ literally mean putting on flesh for a short time. **John 1:14** and **Philippians 2:5-11** are best used together, **1 John 4:2**. When He ascended, He didn’t lose His humanity. **Philippians 2:5-7** tells us that Christ didn’t have human characteristics before He came to earth.

In **Acts 17:30-31**, the word for man is ‘aner’, indicating our judge is a man. It is interesting to see that in **1 Timothy 2:5**, our mediator is man, using the Greek word ‘anthropos’, Jesus Christ. Jesus was subject to all human needs, processes and temptations while on the earth. He was thirsty, hungry, tired, etc.

REASONS WHY JESUS HAD TO BECOME A MAN

1. That we might know God, **1 Timothy 3:16 / John 14:9**, ‘He who has seen me has seen the Father’.
2. To take away sin, **1 John 3:5 / Luke 19:10**, ‘For the Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost.’

3. To destroy the works of the devil, **Hebrews 2:14**, ‘he might destroy Him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil.’

4. To prepare us to be His people, **Titus 2:11-14**, ‘to purify for himself a people that are His very own.’

Jesus is two natures in one person. Firstly, He is not two persons in one body; secondly, He does not have two personalities or two wills, such as a spiritual and fleshly will.

The human spirit is the offspring of God, **Genesis 1:26**, ‘Let us make man in our own image, in our likeness.’ This gives or suggests an intellect, an emotional ability and the ability to account for ourselves. **Acts 17:29** and **Hebrews 12:9** are also useful in this regard.

Philippians 2:7 tells us, ‘Jesus, made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.’ Like us, Jesus depended on the power of the Holy Spirit, **Matthew 12:28** / **Acts 1:2** / **Mark 1:2**. Jesus was led by the Spirit. The divine and the human work together. It was not an either-or situation. It was God feeling compassion, etc.

There was a unified personality. **Romans 8:32** tells us He was delivered to be crucified. **Hebrews 5:8** tells us the Son learned obedience by suffering. **Romans 1:4** tells us that the Son was raised from the dead. If we were to deceive ourselves into speaking of a dual personality, then we are forced to attribute the different characteristics of Jesus to one or the other personality.

There is a necessity for both the divine and the human. To help in understanding this, we can look at the nature of man, **1 Thessalonians 5:23**. Man’s body dies but man’s soul lives on, and the Spirit survives death. So, Jesus died physically on the cross, but that aspect of Him which is God cannot die.

Jesus came to provide a mediator, **1 Timothy 2:5**. A Mediator is equally related and understanding of both sides of a dispute. To give value to His death and to shed His blood, if He were all human, He could not atone for sin; if He was all divine, then there would be no relationship to sin. We couldn’t have a merciful and faithful high priest, **Hebrews 2:15** / **Hebrews 4:15** / **Hebrews 7:25**. To be merciful, he needs an understanding of man’s sin.

Now notice the word ‘dwelt’ in **John 1:14**. This means to pitch a tent, a verb found only here and in **Revelation 7:15** / **Revelation 12:12** / **Revelation 13:6** / **Revelation 21:3**. This is probably an allusion to the tabernacle and the temple, God’s presence manifested there, **Exodus 40:34-35** / **1 Kings 8:10** / **Colossians 2:9**.

The word ‘beheld’ or ‘seen’, **John 1:14**, means to view attentively, to contemplate. John and others had watched Jesus attentively when He was among friends and enemies, those who loved and those who hated Him, those who had observed Him living, dying and living again. As a result, they had been forced to conclude that he was ‘the only Son from the Father’, **John 1:14**.

The word ‘glory’, **John 1:14**, ‘doxa’, means His own, not borrowed or reflected. In Old Testament times, this indicated beauty, the majesty or splendour of God, or the saints. or the kingdom. The words ‘only begotten’, **John 1:14**, ‘monogenes’ is used five times by John to describe Jesus and Isaac in relation to Abraham, **Hebrews 11:17**. Jesus is God’s unique Son. This came to mean and means one of a father, one of a kind or the only one like it. The word ‘monogenes’ is used in relation to Jesus as the only son. There is none like Him.

God gave us the only Son he had, **John 1:12-14**; we are children of God as opposed to the Son of God. He is the Son eternally, back and forward. We are sons by faith. He is a Son by nature, but we are sons by our choice, God’s grace and adoption, **Galatians 3:26** / **Romans 8:15-17**.

The relationship of Jesus to God. Jesus is the one and only representative of God, **John 3:16**. Jesus and God are eternally united, **John 1:18**. Jesus is a great and most valuable gift to God to man, **John 3:16**. Jesus is the object of our faith.

He is the Son of God, **John 3:18**. Jesus is the object of God's love. Sent His Son to us, indicative of His love for us, **John 4:9**. The word, 'Grace', 'charis' and 'truth', 'alethenos', **John 1:14**, are corresponding Hebrew terms that mean, unfailing love and faithfulness, **John 1:17**.

JOHN THE BAPTIST DENIES BEING THE MESSIAH

'John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, "He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me."'" Out of his fullness, we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.' **John 1:15-18**

An acknowledgement of Christ's superiority over John the Baptist is made here, for normally the oldest was superior, **John 1:15**. The idea of one coming after but being before is foreign to some if the eternal element of Christ is not understood. John displays great humility here.

Blessing upon blessing, grace upon grace, without which all our righteousness is but filthy rags, **Isaiah 64:6**. The word, 'fullness,' **John 1:16**, 'pleroma', is of God and emphasises the total, absolute or complete grace of God. The fullness of God in Christ, the fullness of Christ is the church, and the fullness of the church is the Christian.

1. 'For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.' **Colossians 1:19 / Colossians 2:9**.
2. 'The church, which is his body, the fullness of him.' **Ephesians 1:23**.
3. 'Attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ'. **Ephesians 4:13**

The word 'grace', 'charis', **John 1:16**, is very common in the New Testament, being used about one hundred and seventy times. It is also common in the period of secular Greek.

Most translations use 'grace for grace' instead of 'one blessing after another'. The word appears many times in this chapter. It is used in a variety of different senses, and it appears as if the writer is playing on the word.

On the occasion, however, it is well translated as 'receive one blessing after another', and could have read 'benefit on benefit'. The idea is to get or receive some blessing or benefit that was not deserved.

In **John 1:17**, a contrast is developed; the Law foreshadowed salvation by grace, Jesus Himself, the 'Lamb of God,' **John 1:29**, provided it. The law, given by Moses, resulted in bondage. One breath of it resulted in condemnation. Grace is given to us who do not deserve it, as a result of love.

The law was about to be introduced by God through Moses, and three-thousand souls died on the very day it was introduced. What happened when grace and truth appeared through Jesus? **John 1:17**. The law could only highlight people's sins, but the law couldn't save people from their sins; Jesus can, **Titus 2:11**.

When the law was introduced on that day at Sinai, when the Mosaic age began, three thousand souls died, but what happened when grace and truth came through Jesus? What happened on the day of Pentecost when Peter preached grace and truth?

Don't you find it incredible that when the Mosaic age began, three thousand souls died, but when grace and truth appeared, **Titus 2:11**, when the Christian age began, three thousand souls were saved? **Acts 2:41**.

We can read into that as much or as little as we want. I'm just going to say that I don't believe in coincidences. I don't believe that the number of souls being saved at three-thousand is just some random number. I believe this was another reminder to those Jews who didn't get saved on Pentecost of the consequences of not being obedient to God and His ways.

Jesus Christ is both the fullness of the Law and that love that results in grace, which is unmerited favour. This is not an indication that the Law was not successful; on the contrary, it performed its function by looking after God's people until the awaited Christ came.

If we had no law, how would we be able to recognise sin? **Romans 7:7**. The law was good, but once it was broken, it was irreparable, like a beautiful cut glass bowl.

John goes on to tell us that the invisible God has now been made known, **John 1:18**. This is His essential nature; the Father is invisible, **John 4:24 / Colossians 1:15**. Note also that John called Jesus God here again. Though some ancient manuscripts read 'Son' instead of 'God,' the correct reading seems clearly to be 'God.'

Jesus, God's unique Son, is 'in the bosom of the Father', which describes intimacy, the closeness of fellowship and nearness, **Deuteronomy 13:6 / Luke 16:22**. The words, 'made him known', **John 1:18**, are from the verb meaning to draw something out to where it can be seen. In Jesus, the invisible God is made fully visible.

'No one has ever seen God but God the only son, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known', **John 1:18**. No one has seen God, which is not a contradiction to **Exodus 24:10**, or **Job 42:5**; they saw but not in the same sense. Like a blind man explaining about a visit to Europe, he may say he saw some great cities.

God is an invisible Spirit; therefore, as yet no man has seen Him, but in Christ, we have a manifestation of God; therefore, we can say that we have seen God in manifested form.

The first eighteen verses in John's Gospel show Jesus as light, life, grace and truth. It indicates that He is available to all purely at the individual's discretion and choice.

JOHN DENIES BEING THE MESSIAH

'Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah." They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." Finally, they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" Now the Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, "Why then do you baptise if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" "I baptise with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.' **John 1:19-28**

At the beginning of the New Testament era, there was a widespread belief that the Messiah was soon to come, and so there was a tremendous response to John's preaching, **Matthew 3:5-6 / Mark 1:5**. These verses indicate the start of a series of days, this being day one.

Remember that all priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests, and so John is questioned by the priests and Levites, **John 1:19**. The question has a specific ring to it as if a definite and final answer is now required. He now has an opportunity to declare the Christ, and he uses this chance well.

The Jews consisted of a group of prominent Jewish laymen or elders. John often refers to them. Jewish officialdom was called the Sanhedrin, **John 9:22**. The priests were of the Levite tribe, the men who had the task of the spiritual upliftment of the people. They would act as officials at the Temple.

The Levites were not all born to the Levite tribe and could be involved in priestly duties, as there were too many of them. The men called 'Levites', as opposed to 'priests', were working as servants in the temple at the time.

The Pharisees were a nationalistic sect who believed in the whole Old Testament, angels and the resurrection of the dead. The emphasis of their teaching was ethical rather than theological.

The Sadducees were a legalistic sect that had close links with the priestly class. They accepted only the Torah as canonical scripture and did not believe in angels or the resurrection of the dead, **Acts 23:8**.

It's clear from John's emphatic answer in **John 1:20** that he had no ambition to be known as the Messiah. Just the fact that these 'prominent' people ask this question indicates how well-known John had become, and how these people expected something of him.

And so, they ask the following questions, 'Are you, Elijah?' **John 1:21**. This was asked because **Malachi 4:5** stated that Elijah was to return before the Christ did. John was the spiritual essence of Elijah, not the physical representation. They ask, 'Are you the prophet?' **John 1:21**. This in turn was asked as a prophet according to **Deuteronomy 18:15**, was expected with or as the Messiah.

These three questions reflect the thinking of the time. The people were expecting one of the three: Christ, Elijah or a new prophet, **John 1:20-21**. The ring of this conversation is true of one held in heated circumstances.

'The Christ', most Jews expected the Messiah to be a conquering king, and Jesus' disciples would later express this idea, **Acts 1:6 / Mark 10:35**. 'Elijah', due to a misunderstanding of **Malachi 4:5**, many expected Elijah to return to earth to announce the imminence of the Messiah's coming. Jesus later corrected this error, **Matthew 16:14 / Matthew 17:9-13**. 'Are you the prophet?' **Deuteronomy 18:15**.

Some Rabbis taught that this was a prediction of another 'fore-runner' like the 'Elijah' of **Malachi 4**. John doesn't get into any discussion with them, although the Pharisees and Levites seem keen to do so. Instead, he points them to Jesus. Here is a lesson for us.

Their interest is not personal but political, and there's a sense of almost exasperation that is clear from **John 1:22**. The questioners need an answer of sorts to take back, so they let John speak unopposed.

In **John 1:23**, we read of John's declaration regarding himself. 'Make straight the way of the Lord' is John's description and an idea of the function he had. This is taken from **Isaiah 40:3**.

It could also refer to those sent ahead of a great man to herald his way, prepare the populace for the imminent arrival of a man of note. A king would send a trusted official to ensure the monarch's safe travel and proper reception. John concentrated on helping people come to the Messiah.

It is interesting to note that after the Priests and Levites have their say, the Pharisees now persist with the questioning, **John 1:24-25**, as occurred so often later. It is amazing how united people can get against the truth.

The practice of baptism was always done by one of some authority, **John 1:25**. These men were asking about the source of this authority. John does not attempt to explain his role as the essence of Elijah.

The Jews were accustomed to baptising, **John 1:26**. A convert to Judaism, called a proselyte Jew, would be baptised on entering the faith. According to Jewish tradition, they would have a general purification or cleansing before the Messiah came.

This idea originated from a misinterpretation of the text in **Zechariah 13:1** and the text in **Ezekiel 36:25**, both of which speak of water and a cleansing. The major, fundamental premise of the Jews is wrong, that is, that Elijah is coming and that the Christ would establish an earthly kingdom, thus ensuring that the conclusions they made in this regard were wrong as well.

The person spoken of here in **John 1:27** is the Messiah, Jesus Christ. John displays extreme humility in this verse, strongly indicating the Messiah's true position of superiority.

There is a Rabbinic saying, which says, 'Every service which a slave performs for his master shall a disciple do for his teacher, except the loosening of his sandal-thong.'

The reason this particular service was performed by a slave. John is basically saying, 'I am infinitely inferior to him, not even worthy to perform the service of a slave for him', **John 1:27**.

Careful distinction is made between this Bethany, **John 1:28**, and the Bethany of Mary and Martha as mentioned in **John 11:1**. It ought also to be noted that there was much water to be found at this place.

JOHN TESTIFIES ABOUT JESUS

‘The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptising with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen, and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.” **John 1:29-34**

We’re now into day two, and it’s fair to conclude that the people questioning John had been either satisfied with his answer or so perplexed that they had no further comment. John notes the coming Lamb and says, ‘Behold the lamb of God’, **John 1:29**.

This is the first recorded viewing of John and Jesus. The phrase is used only here and in **John 1:36**. John here identifies Jesus as the object of his preaching. The lamb referred to could be a reflection of the Passover lamb of **Exodus 12:3-7** / **Isaiah 53:6-7**, or the sacrificial lamb of later days.

In either case, the lamb was killed in place of the man who ought to have died. Firstly, by the hand of God against the Egyptian people, then as a result of man’s own sin.

This, of course, has much in common with the Christ who, in time, was to come became the sacrificial lamb dying in the stead of man who should have died for the sin he committed.

The lamb has always been considered an animal representing absolute innocence. Every day at the temple, a lamb would be sacrificed before anything else was done.

This was an acknowledgement of God of the sinfulness of the people. Even today, that thought holds true. So, this man was to be the sacrificial lamb of God to man, for all who want Him.

‘The sin of the world’, **John 1:29**, emphasises the power behind the Christ. No longer does man need a lamb to sacrifice, as the ultimate sacrifice has occurred, and it is a universal, all-cleansing sacrifice. Notice that **John 1:29** says, ‘sin’, not ‘sins.’

This is important because John is telling us that Jesus came to deal with sin in its totality. He didn’t just deal with the sin, but He dealt with the full consequences of sin, which include death.

In **John 1:30**, we see that John is still discussing Jesus, who is approaching. The idea of ‘a man who comes after me has surpassed me, because he was before me,’ is proof of the infinity of the Christ.

He was both conceived and born after John, so John is referring to the preconception of Christ, the ‘Logos’. This again emphasises the superiority of Christ over John. Before he baptised Him, the Baptist did not ‘know’ Jesus, **John 1:31** / **John 1:33**. Note the following.

1. Mothers were related and close friends, **Luke 1:36** / **Luke 1:56**.
2. Acknowledged the superiority of Jesus ‘ character, to himself, **Matthew 3:1-13**.
3. Obviously, John knew Jesus well. But, prior to the baptism, he did not know that Jesus was the Messiah.

This leads to a discussion on the purpose of John's baptism. John was baptising for the following reasons: 'that He might be revealed to Israel,' **John 1:31**. 'Repentance for the forgiveness of sins,' **Mark 1:4**. 'Repentance for the forgiveness of sins,' **Luke 3:3**. 'A baptism of repentance,' **Acts 19:4**.

John's baptism did not instil the Holy Spirit. For we are told the Spirit was given in Jerusalem in **Acts 2**. It became available to all at their baptism after the establishment of the church in **Acts 2:38**.

This baptism of John certainly lacked something, possibly more than the omission of the Holy Spirit, as in **Acts 19:1-5**, the people who had received John's baptism were re-baptised.

INTO THE NAME OF JESUS

This story in **John 1:32**, related by John, refers to the incident as recorded in **Matthew 3:11**, and following. Christ receives at this time the Holy Spirit and affirmation from the Father that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, and the people who were present must have heard the declaration.

The difference between the peace and tranquillity in this manifestation of the Holy Spirit is in stark contrast with the violence and power of His manifestation in **Acts 2:1-4**.

Here in **John 1:33**, John tells us that this sight was confirmation that Jesus of Nazareth, the one on whom the Spirit descended was indeed the Messiah, **John 1:34**. This Messiah would also have the power to baptise with Holy Spirit, a gift we now enjoy, **Acts 2:38**. And so, John again confirms the Christ, which is the whole purpose of his Gospel, **John 20:31**.

JOHN'S DISCIPLES FOLLOW JESUS

'The next day, John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "Where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter). **John 1:35-42**

We now move on to day three and note that only the apostle John tells of Jesus' first meeting with Andrew, Peter and others, **John 1:19-51 / Matthew 4:10-22**.

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE CALLING

The apostle John records who the first five people were called to follow Jesus. John and Andrew were the initial two people called to be disciples by Christ, **John 1:35-39**.

Then came Peter, also called Simon or Simon Peter, **John 1:40-42**, followed by Philip, **John 1:43-44**, and then Nathanael, Bartholomew, **John 1:45**. The book of Matthew then records that James, a son of Zebedee and brother of John, was called, **Matthew 4:21-22**, followed by Matthew's own calling, **Matthew 9:9**.

THE RABBI DISCIPLE SYSTEM

Every young Jewish boy grew up wanting to be a rabbi, and every young Jewish boy and girl would at least go to an elementary school called Bet Sefer, that is, 'House of the Book'. Their job was to memorise the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, what we would call the Old Testament, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

And the best of the best would be able to graduate and go on to the next school of learning, a type of secondary school called Bet Talmud, or 'House of Learning', and their job was to memorise the rest of the Hebrew Bible.

From there, the best of the best of that group would be allowed to apply to Bet Midrash, or 'House of Seeking', which was a type of school for would-be rabbis. A student would find a rabbi that he respected, someone that he wanted to be like, and he would say to that rabbi, 'Rabbi, I want to follow you.'

Now the rabbi's job was to question the would-be disciple to seek to determine, not whether or not he knew the Scriptures, but whether or not he could imitate his teachings, become like him, and pass on his way of life.

And if the student could answer the rabbi's questions to his liking, then he would say to his student, 'Come follow me'. And these are the words that every student longed to hear. And he would leave behind his family, his job, his vocation, and he would go and become a disciple of that rabbi.

Now, if the student didn't quite make the cut, the rabbi would say, 'Ah, my son, you know the Torah, you know the teaching well, but I'm afraid that you cannot be my disciple, go home, make babies, and pray that they become rabbis.'

The very fact that these men were fishermen shows that they were not the best of the best, and they did not make the cut. So when Jesus, a respected teacher of the law, a teacher of God's Word, comes along and says, 'Come follow me', they could hardly believe it, and so they leave everything behind. Jesus was inviting them to become like Him.

ANDREW

The name Andrew is a Greek name which means 'manly' or 'of valour.' Andrew was the brother of Simon Peter and the son of Jonah. He was born in Bethsaida in the province of Galilee and was a fisherman like his brother Peter.

Before he met Jesus, Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. However, when John pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, he realised that Jesus was greater and immediately left John, found his brother Peter and became a disciple of Jesus, **John 1:25-42**.

After this, Andrew and Peter continued to be fishermen and lived at home until being called permanently by Jesus to be 'fishers of men,' **John 1:40-42 / Mark 1:16-20 / Luke 5:2-11**.

Later, when Jesus is teaching the multitudes on the mountainside, he asks Philip where they could find food to feed the crowd, and Philip says, 'eight months' wages could not buy enough bread' to feed them.

It was Andrew who brought the boy with five barley loaves and two fish to Jesus, who miraculously multiplies into enough food to feed everyone, **John 6:8-9**. And it was Andrew who, during the Passover Feast, brought a group of Greek Gentiles to meet Jesus, which prompts Jesus to remark, 'when I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all men to myself,' **John 12:20-32**.

Andrew knew that Jesus came not only to save Israel but everyone on the earth. The last time Andrew is mentioned in the Bible is in **Acts 1**, where he is listed as one of the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection and His ascension into Heaven, **Acts 1:13**.

SIMON PETER

Peter was a Galilean fisherman who lived on the shores of the Sea of Galilee with his wife, his brother Andrew and his mother-in-law. People at the time worked as a family unit, so the men and women of Peter's family worked together to catch and preserve dry fish for export to the surrounding towns. This particular family was probably in partnership with Zebedee and his sons, James and John, **Matthew 4:21**.

Like his father and brother Andrew, Simon Peter was a fisherman by trade, working on the Lake of Galilee. His family seems to have been caught up in the revival movement led by John the Baptist.

Peter met Jesus at Bethany through his brother Andrew and was immediately impressed. Jesus called him 'Peter', the rock, an odd choice of name since Peter seems to have been passionate and impulsive rather than rock-like. Jesus actually called Peter 'Cephas', which is the Aramaic equivalent of 'Petros', a rock, **John 1:40-42**.

Because they were fishermen, who were used to fishing for fish, Jesus tells them He will make them fishers of men, **John 1:40-42 / Mark 1:16-20 / Luke 5:2-11**. They will preach the Good News and share it with others, in order that those they teach will become followers of Christ, **Matthew 28:19-20 / Mark 16:15-16**.

Andrew and Peter, two of John's disciples, after hearing him describe Jesus as 'the lamb of God', **John 1:36**, follow Jesus and have an interview with him. The apostle John tells us absolutely nothing about the conversation with Jesus. John again sees the Lord and again declares Him to be the Lord.

This could have been repeated, as different people could have been with him. In doing this, John, by now a well-known man on his own account, threw the spotlight on the one he came to 'make straight the way' for, **John 1:23**.

Two of the disciples of John heard the declaration regarding the Christ and left the discipleship of John in favour of the Christ, **John 1:37**. Absolutely no negative recriminations from John. In fact, he probably welcomed the movement of disciples to Jesus. These men had received teaching from John and had no trouble accepting the Christ.

The question Jesus asks the followers seems almost rude, **John 1:38**. However, this was the norm of the day and can be seen again in **John 2:4**, and other places in John. It was an acceptable manner in these times.

The reference to 'Rabbi', **John 1:38**, normally indicates a trained teacher or a scholar, literally meaning 'a great one'. It was probably used here as a term of respect to the teacher.

The introduction of time as a factor is unusual at this time, **John 1:39**. The Jewish method of telling and setting time was different to that now used by the Western world. 6 A.M. would have been the first hour, making the tenth hour about 4 P.M. However, if this refers to Roman time, it would have been 10 A.M. It is generally accepted that it was the latter, 4 P.M. at this time.

We now move on to day four in **John 1:40-42**, and the first disciple is now named. He is Andrew, which means manliness. He immediately goes to his brother, Simon Peter who was better known as just Peter, and they are introduced for the first time, **John 1:40**.

Andrew immediately recognises Jesus as the Messiah and wastes no time in telling his brother that he had found the Messiah and bringing him along for an introduction, **John 1:41**. Note that whenever we meet this man in John's narrative, he is bringing someone to Jesus, **John 6:8-9 / John 12:20-22**.

On meeting Simon, the first thing Jesus did was change his name, **John 1:42**. This was most odd, and we are given no clue as to why he should do this. Simon is from then on known as Simon Peter or just plainly Peter. He is also

referred to as Cephas in 1 Corinthians 1:12 / 1 Corinthians 3:22 / 1 Corinthians 9:5 / 1 Corinthians 15:5, and Galatians 2:9.

His name means a detached piece of rock or a stone or a pebble, but in each of these cases, the name Petros is in the masculine gender. Cephas is the Anglicised form of the Aramaic ‘Kapha’. **Matthew 16:18**, ‘You are Peter, ‘Petros’, ‘masculine’, on this rock, ‘Petra,’ ‘feminine’, I will build my Church’. Petra is the feminine form of Petros and means boulder.

Although the Roman Catholics elevate Peter to a position above the other disciples, giving him a high position in the church, those disciples did not give him any special position, nor did they seem to think he had the right to any position above a normal position.

Concerning this, he had no right to any above normal position, with reference to this point, **Matthew 18:1 / Mark 9:33 / Matthew 20:20-28 / Mark 10:42 / 1 Peter 5:1 / 1 Corinthians 9:5 / John 13:23 / John 21:20**.

If we see Peter as the Greek ‘Petros’, which means a movable stone as opposed to ‘Petra’, which means immovable rock or bedrock. In the Gospels, Peter was anything but a rock; he was impulsive, unreliable, and unstable. In Acts, he was a pillar of the church. Jesus named him not for what he was, but for what, by God’s grace, he would become dependable and steady.

JESUS CALLS PHILIP AND NATHANAEAL

‘The next day, Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.” Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip. When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.” “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.” Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.” Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.” He then added, “Very truly I tell you, you will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” **John 1:43-51**

We now move on to day five, and we see Philip is called by Jesus, **John 1:43**.

PHILIP

Philip, the apostle, is not to be confused with the evangelist Philip in Acts. Like Peter and Andrew, Philip was from Bethsaida, **John 1:44**. Philip, whose name means ‘lover of horses’, is named in all three lists of apostles, **Matthew 10:4 / Mark 3:16 / Luke 6:14-16**, and in each he is the fifth apostle listed. He isn’t mentioned again in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. Everything else we know of him comes from the Gospel of John.

In John, Philip told Nathanael that they had found the Messiah and that he was from Nazareth. When Nathanael replied, ‘Can anything good come from Nazareth?’ Philip simply said, ‘Come and see,’ **John 1:43-46**. Shortly after, Nathanael became one of Jesus’ disciples.

Later, before the miraculous feeding of the multitude, Jesus tested Philip by asking, ‘Where will we buy bread for these people to eat?’ Philip failed the test by replying, ‘Eight months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!’ **John 6:5-7**.

Later, shortly before Jesus is arrested, He tells His disciples that ‘If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him,’ **John 14:7**.

But Philip’s response again shows a lack of faith when he asks, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.’ Jesus sternly rebukes him and says, ‘Philip, don’t you know me, even after I have been with you for such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father,’ **John 14:8-9**.

Philip isn’t mentioned again in the New Testament except in the list of apostles waiting in the upper room shortly after Christ’s ascension, **Acts 1:13**. What lesson can we learn from Philip when it comes to sharing the good news with others? Philip was convinced about who Jesus was, as we must be. He was convinced enough to tell someone else about Jesus.

It is interesting to note that in this case, Jesus takes the initiative and finds Philip. He is quite happy to follow and even left for another town with him. Yet Philip seems to have been the most ‘ordinary’ of disciples, **John 6:7 / John 12:20-22**. Was he lacking in initiative? **John 14:8**. Jesus sees limitless potential in ‘ordinary people’, **1 Corinthians 1:26-29 / 1 Peter 4:10**.

All the disciples we have now named have come from Bethsaida, **John 1:44**. Before leaving with Jesus, Philip goes and finds Nathanael, **John 1:45**, who was to become a disciple and is called in the Gospels Bartholomew.

NATHANAEL, ALSO NAMED BARTHOLOMEW

His name means ‘given’ or ‘gift of God’; he was one of our Lord’s disciples, ‘of Cana in Galilee’, **John 21:2**. Jesus says he was ‘truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit,’ **John 1:47-48**.

His name occurs only in the Gospel of John, which in its list of the disciples never mentions Bartholomew, with whom he has consequently been identified. He was one of those to whom the Lord showed Himself alive after His resurrection, at the Sea of Tiberias, **John 21:1-2**.

Bartholomew’s name appears with every list of the disciples, **Matthew 10:3 / Mark 3:18 / Luke 6:14 / Acts 1:13**. This wasn’t the first name, however. It was his second name. His first name was probably Nathanael, whom Jesus called ‘an Israelite in whom there is no deceit,’ **John 1:47**.

The New Testament gives us very little information about him; tradition indicates he was a great searcher of the Scripture and a scholar in the law and the prophets. He developed into a man of complete surrender to the Carpenter of Nazareth, and one of the church’s most adventurous missionaries.

He is said to have preached with Philip in Phrygia and Hierapolis, also in Armenia. The Armenian Church claims him as its founder and martyr. However, tradition says that he preached in India, and his death seems to have taken place there; he died as a martyr for his Lord. He was lashed alive with knives.

If we’re taking the good news to people, how important is it to be truthful with them? No deceit means don’t do what Jacob did with his brother Esau. No alternative motives, **Genesis 27:1-46**.

Philip tells Nathanael that Jesus is the fulfilment of the law and the prophets, **John 1:45**. The declaration from Philip ‘the one Moses wrote about in the Law’, **John 1:45**, was a commonly held view, which is still held today, that the Christ was prophesied about by prophets in days long passed. I don’t think this man was under any doubts about who Jesus was.

He expresses surprise to hear of the Christ coming from Nazareth, **John 1:46**. Nathanael is not convinced about the Christ coming from Nazareth, but he agrees to accompany Philip anyhow, to test the supposed Christ rather than accept his brother at face value.

NAZARETH

Little is known of Nazareth's early history. It's not mentioned in the Old Testament at all. However, as it does have a good, strong water source, it was most likely around when much of Old Testament history was going on in the nearby vicinity.

Some claim that Jonah was from this area, **2 Kings 14:25**. The town seemed to have an almost despised ring or element to it. Similar to that accompanying a modern town of ill repute. The town's great claim to fame is that it is settled in Nazareth.

Jesus grew up in this town, was schooled there and learnt his trade and carpentry under his father in the town. Jesus started much of his early work here, but was soon reflected by the locals who saw him as the son of Joseph, rather than the son of God. As a result, Jesus left the town and settled instead in Capernaum.

The people of the town thus showed their Spiritual short-sightedness, which may have been known, explaining the comment from Nathanael, 'Nazareth, can any good come from there?' **John 1:46**. Nazareth has fallen in and out of favour since Christ, depending on the belief of the current conqueror.

It was obscure under the Romans, brought to some significance under later Christian influence, desecrated by the Muslims, glorified by the Crusaders, deteriorated under new Muslim control, was returned to its best under British control, suffered under early Israeli control, and refinanced under commercial interest.

The ancient town is now almost a ruin, but attracts much tourist interest. The town that has sprung up in the vicinity is called En-Nasirah, a small town of mainly Christian inhabitants.

As Nathanael approached, Jesus made His statement about him. He calls Nathanael an Israelite, **John 1:47**, not a Jew. The different terms came to mean different things. The Jews were always trying to persecute the Christ. These could be referred to as untrue Israelites, in whom some falsehood may have dwelled. Nathanael seems surprised to hear this and indeed proves Jesus' omnipresence when he tells of seeing Nathanael sitting under a fig tree, **John 1:48**.

The shade of the fig tree was the traditional place for prayer and study. In the Old Testament, the fig tree was also a symbol of a man's own home, **Isaiah 36:16 / Micah 4:4**. Nathanael had a remarkable spiritual experience known only to him, so he thought, but Jesus knew, **John 2:23**.

Nathanael's confession was spontaneous and all-embracing. His early declaration of Kingship and Sonship proves his insight and knowledge of the essence of the coming Messiah. He declares that Jesus is the Son of God, King of Israel, **John 1:49**.

The true Israelite acknowledges the true King. Nathanael's confession of faith is remarkable because most Jews had no conception of the Messiah being also 'the Son of God', **Matthew 16:13-17**.

For a Jew, such as Nathanael, to declare anyone King in this manner was the greatest statement of faith he could ever make, **1 Timothy 6:15 / Revelation 17:14 / Revelation 19:16**. The idea is portrayed as one of total and immediate spiritual dependence on the one accepted as King, that is, Christ.

In Jewish thinking, the son is the same as, an extension of, the father. This term is used here in acknowledgement at the beginning of His ministry, but later in mockery, **Matthew 27:40**. The greater thing to be seen mentioned in **John 1:50** was better explained in **John 1:51**. This probably refers to the story of Jacob, **Genesis 28:12**.

Perhaps this is what Nathanael was reading under the fig tree. Both involve the idea of communication between heaven and earth. Here, Jesus takes the place of the ladder.

Nathanael sees that HE is the link between heaven and earth, the One through whom God's will is fully revealed to man, the One alone through whom we have access to God, **John 14:6 / 1 Timothy 2:5 / Romans 5:2**.

However, this would have been a method of drawing attention to the role of Christ as a mediator between God and man, the idea of heaven being open to all men and communication allowed between God and man via the Son, not an earthly entity. Jesus Himself is the ladder, giving access to God.

Jesus is the Way, He doesn't show the Way, **John 14:6**. Jesus is our access to heaven. God has provided us with access to heaven through Jesus and Jesus only. The angels who seem to act as messengers between God and man, or guardian angels, **Hebrews 1:14**, are ascending and descending, **Genesis 28:13**.

Jesus says they are ascending and descending on Him, **John 1:51**. We would think that they would be descending and ascending, in other words, coming down from heaven to earth but they're not, **Hebrews 13:2**.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

'On the third day, a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so, they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. After this, he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.' **John 2:1-12**

JESUS CHANGES WATER INTO WINE

This is the first of eight signs, miracles, selected by John, but all have a purpose. They actively support the claims Jesus made, and are intended to lead to faith, **John 20:20-31**. Each 'sign' is an object lesson to illustrate spiritual truth.

The new wine of the Gospel is contrasted with the water of the old faith. Jesus came to bring something really new. The result speaks for itself; the miracle had a profound effect on the followers of Jesus.

CANA

Cana of Galilee, [John 2:1](#), is mentioned only in John's Gospel, [John 4:46](#) / [John 21:2](#). It is always qualified by the term Galilee. Today, we can't be sure of its precise location.

An unknown family in an obscure village, which isn't mentioned in the Old Testament, yet the scene of Jesus' first supernatural act. Nathaniel came from there, [John 2:1-2](#).

The record of days is continued, this being the third day after Jesus left for Galilee. It is strange to see Jesus and the disciples called only a few days earlier to be invited together, [John 2:2](#). This causes us to speculate about the possibility of Jesus and the disciples being related, even if only distantly.

We know that Jesus and John the Baptist were related. It could be that Nathaniel had the initial invitation. An eyewitness account, as frequently in the Gospel narrative, reads like the remembrance of one who was there.

John doesn't identify the bride, groom or families involved; only Jesus and Mary are named, [John 4:3](#). There's no mention of Joseph, the assumption that he was much older than Mary, and that he had already died is unsupported by evidence, [John 6:42](#).

Mary apparently is in some position of authority. Did Mary expect Jesus to work a miracle in the most public manner and reveal His identity? [John 2:3](#). This discourse may seem rather abrupt to the casual observer, but the word 'woman', 'gunai', [John 2:4](#), wasn't an impolite or discourteous, term in those days, [John 19:26](#).

However the declaration of Jesus 'why do you involve me?', [John 2:4](#), would have been quite normal under the social rules of the time. The words, 'My hour 'hora' has not yet come', [John 2:4](#), would be referring to the time when His ministry is launched.

It wasn't time for Him to act. The word 'hour', 'hora', often denotes a crisis time, [John 7:6](#) / [John 8:20](#) / [John 8:30](#). Jesus has a specific function to perform in training the disciples.

His hour had come in [John 12:23](#) / [John 13:1](#) / [John 16:32](#) / [John 17:1](#). 'Jesus' hour', [John 2:4](#), referred to his death and glorification, [John 17:1](#). The time of His manifestation as the Messiah were decisions for Him and His heavenly Father. Jesus even told Judas whatever you do, do quickly, [John 13:27](#), thus beginning the events leading to His crucifixion and beyond.

Mary did not perceive Jesus' response as being negative. His body language may have told her he would act to save the host from the impending embarrassment. He may have been in the process of getting up as He spoke to Mary. She knew one way or another, He would act, [John 2:5](#).

THE WEDDING FEAST

These feasts were very festive occasions; marriage was preceded by engagement. First, there was a feast, then an evening wedding ceremony, and on the wedding night, there would be a torchlight procession. The groom would go to the bride's house and bring her to the reception.

The banquet and feast would go on for three days, and could even go on for a week. The people would feast, and it was expected that a constant supply of good food and ample drink would be forthcoming. It would have been quite devastating to the host if something as fundamental as the wine were to run out.

The food and drink would have been lavishly spent on, as would gifts and all else associated with the feast. Meat, which was rarely eaten due to the cost factor, would have been available in abundance. The wedding and the associated feast were the highlight not only on the social calendar but also in the couple's lives.

It was most important that all ran smoothly. There were servants present, but note the commands given by Mary and Jesus. The servants did what they were told to do, and did it to the very best of their ability, [John 2:5](#).

JARS

The jars were used for washing, probably being kept at or near the entrance to the house, [John 2:6-7](#). People would use this water to wash their feet after the journey and before entering the house properly.

Also, the servants would pour water over the hands of the guests as part of the rites of purification. And they were also used for washing before meals. This is still practised in some parts of Israel today.

WHY SIX JARS?

Who knows! The jars were made of stone to assist in keeping water cool, and the jars were filled to the brim, indicating between one-hundred and one-hundred and twenty gallons of wine available, [John 2:6-7](#).

The wine was taken to the master of the banquet, [John 2:8](#), who played a role similar to that played by the present-day master of ceremonies, and he would also play a role similar to the best man.

The wine made by Jesus was notably superior to that originally supplied, [John 2:9-10](#). This doesn't indicate an inferior wine was originally used, but that Jesus made the best, as He now provides the best.

The best wine was generally served first so that the people could indulge and not be able to tell that the wine had deteriorated. Note that it was the bridegroom who received the praise for the quality of the wine, [John 2:10](#).

We can see the result of a miracle in [John 2:11](#). The miracle manifested His glory, showing Jesus power over Natural laws, showing His credentials as the Word. Not just to save embarrassment at the wedding, but to bring about greater faith as the disciple did, [John 2:11](#). This was the purpose of His miracles throughout His ministry, [John 20:30-31](#). Capernaum seems to be the centre point from where Jesus conducted His ministry and perhaps Jesus' own city, [Matthew 9:1](#). Here we find the last reference to Mary as His mother before His death and resurrection, [John 2:12](#).

Jesus made time to be with His family and friends, like the people of Nazareth but the people in Jesus' adopted town don't accept Him as the Messiah. They rejected His signs and Him as the Messiah, and they rejected His signs and Him as a person, [Matthew 11:23-26](#).

The term 'brothers' used here together with the term 'disciples', [John 4:12](#), proves that Jesus had physical brothers, [Matthew 13:55](#), not only spiritual brothers, which tells us that Mary wasn't a virgin throughout her life.

THE WINE

This event alone can't be used to justify or condemn drinking; the text doesn't tell us if it was alcoholic wine or not, and this isn't in the context of the verses. The passage is to demonstrate His miraculous power and its result. Don't miss the trees because you can see the forest.

This miracle was a very fundamental one; Jesus changed the structure of the water. He made it something it wasn't before. The miracle demonstrated His Deity, it met a real need, and it illustrated spiritual truth. John doesn't say what truth He intends to illustrate, but the obvious idea is change or transformation.

IS DRINKING ALCOHOL SINFUL?

Drinking alcohol isn't a sin in and of itself. For example, in the Bible we see that wine is a covenant blessing, [Genesis 27:28](#) / [Deuteronomy 7:13](#) / [Deuteronomy 11:14](#) / [Deuteronomy 33:28](#). Wine was also a blessed and acceptable offering to God, [Numbers 15:5-10](#).

God approved and encouraged the use of wine, [Deuteronomy 14:26](#), and arguably in large doses under certain conditions, [Proverbs 31:6-7](#). Wine is to be enjoyed in inappropriate ways, inappropriate settings, including its use to make 'life merry', [Ecclesiastes 10:19](#) / [John 2:1-10](#).

DRUNKENNESS

Look at the mess Noah and his family got themselves into after Noah got drunk, [Genesis 9:20-25](#). What the bible does condemn is getting drunk, [Ecclesiastes 10:17](#) / [Romans 13:13](#) / [Ephesians 5:18](#) / [Galatians 5:19-21](#) / [Romans 13:13](#) / [1 Peter 4:3](#). The heart of these commandments is that we avoid any drunkenness and loose living, whether caused by alcohol or any other substance.

In short, there are ways to drink alcohol that aren't sinful, as well as ways to drink alcohol that are sinful. But be careful, prevention is better than cure, having permission to drink doesn't give us permission to get drunk, [Galatians 5:1](#) / [Jude 1:4](#).

JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE COURTS

'After this, he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days. When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts, he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So, he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves, he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. Now, while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many people saw the signs he was performing and believed in his name. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all people. He did not need any testimony about mankind, for he knew what was in each person.' [John 2:13-25](#)

Jesus clearing the temple is also mentioned in [Matthew 21:12](#) / [Mark 11:15-17](#) / [Luke 19:45](#), but here, John places this at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, while the other Gospels place the cleansing of the temple at the end. There are differences in the accounts, which means Jesus cleansed the Temple more than once.

This incident indicates the dishonesty, hypocrisy, and prejudice at the heart of Israel's religious life, and it helps us to understand that a head-on clash between Jesus and the religious authorities is inevitable.

PASSOVER FEAST

The Passover, [John 2:13](#) / [Exodus 12](#), was a feast implemented to commemorate God's 'passing-over' the marked houses just before the Exodus was held on the fourteenth of the first month, the month of Nisan, or Abib, April, [Numbers 28:16-31](#). It was held in the early spring of every year.

The idea of going 'up to Jerusalem', [John 2:13](#), was said as Jerusalem was the capital city. All Jewish men were required to celebrate this feast in Jerusalem, [Deuteronomy 16:16](#), and it has been estimated that up to two-hundred and fifty-thousand lambs may have been slaughtered at this time.

At the time of the Passover, people came from distant countries to celebrate the feast. As a result, they didn't bring animals for the sacrifice as they were commanded to do so, [Exodus 12:3](#) / [Exodus 12:6](#), and so the locals would then set up shops at this time of the year to fill this need, [John 2:14](#).

THE PROBLEM

The problem was that these shops got out of hand and had slowly been erected closer and closer to the temple until they were erected inside. They started selling outside and then moved into the court of the Gentiles, where the Gentile went to pray, and then it became simply a money-making exercise. They would sell second-rate lambs and other animals at first-rate prices, [John 2:14](#).

THE MONEY CHANGERS

The money changers, [John 2:14](#), would take the foreign money and exchange it for the local money at high-interest rates to pay the necessary temple tax. It was this trading that ripped off the sincere worshipper that Christ objected to. You can also imagine the mess that the thousands of animals would make in the Temple courtyards, [John 2:15](#).

THE WHIP

The whip, [John 2:15](#), was made up of several cords braided together. The fact that Jesus took time to make this whip shows that His anger was not out of control; He was composed and knew what He was doing. It was a formidable weapon to those about to get a whipping from it, but it's unlikely that Jesus hit anybody.

Jesus made quite a scene at this time, upsetting the tables and chasing the animals, [John 2:16](#), and it must have been disruptive to those at worship at that time. The phrase 'My Father's house', [John 2:16](#), must have turned some heads, as it refers to Jesus claiming Deity.

At this point, it is mentioned that Jesus' followers remembered this passage of scripture, 'Zeal for your house will consume me', [John 2:17](#) / [Psalms 69:9](#). They may have thought of this at the time, or at a later date after the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which gives the Psalm a messianic ring.

Jesus speaks in almost a riddle fashion in [John 2:18-22](#). The people demand an explanation of His authority, but He didn't need any authority to remove those who were defiling the Temple, [John 2:18](#).

They didn't realise that Jesus spoke of His body but thought of the Temple. The body of Christ was rebuilt in the three days before His resurrection, [John 2:19](#). When He arose, the temple became a useless artefact, and His body became the church in which all Christians now reside.

THE TEMPLE

The Temple had taken forty-six years to build, [John 2:20](#). It was started around 20 BC, and the main work was finished in 10 BC, which gives us the date of this statement at AD 26. The Temple was still being worked on when it was destroyed in 70 AD. Some of the blocks used in building the temple were fifteen feet square by four feet high. The original temple was built on ground purchased by David and built by Solomon, [2 Samuel 24:18-25](#) / [2 Chronicles 3:1](#). It was by a long shot the grandest and richest of the temples, and once it was destroyed, its grandeur was never recaptured. It was destroyed in 586 B.C. by the rampant Babylonians.

A new temple, Zerubbabel's temple, was built in 520 B.C. after its foundations were laid in 536 B.C. [Zechariah 4:9](#). This was rebuilt by Herod in 20 B.C., and the work was paid for before a start was made, and the sanctuary took just eighteen months to complete; however, it was still going on in Jesus' time, about forty-six years later.

It is thought that work wasn't yet complete in the outer areas when this last temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans. The site is now being used by Muslims who have built a Mosque, the Dome of the Rock. Much is currently being said in Israel about rebuilding a temple. However, political considerations regarding the current Mosque on the site prevent this.

The internal area was thirty-three and a half acres. Some wall blocks were fifteen by four feet. Built with cream-coloured stone, with spikes on the roof. It was topped off with gold. There was also a plaque on the wall which read, 'a no enter sign' warning of death to all non-Jews who enter in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Arabic.

The Temple was divided into two parts, the Holy Place, with the altar of incense, the golden candlestick and the table of shewbread. The second part is the Holy of Holies, the heart of the temple, entered into only once a year by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. The different courts emphasised the strata of religious society; the more important you are, the closer you get to the Holy of Holies.

The two parts were separated by a veil, made of thick cloth. This is the veil that separated man and God, and it was torn in two at the point of Christ's death. The Inner court or priests' court was reserved only for priests, and the sacrifice was burnt on the altar located there. The Antonia Fortress was a Roman fortress that they used to keep an eye on the happenings on the Temple grounds.

They asked Jesus if He is going to raise it in three days?, [John 2:20](#), but the temple he had spoken of was His body, [John 2:21](#). This was remembered by the apostles, after His resurrection, and was the cause of even greater faith, [John 2:22](#). They must also have realised the full meaning behind this declaration of Jesus in that He is talking about His time in the tomb.

There is a general statement regarding happenings at the Passover feast, and the emphasis is on the close connection between signs and faith, [John 2:23](#). John's purpose stated in [John 20:30-31](#), furnishes the key. The signs recorded are in order that the readers might come to faith in Jesus as the Christ and son of God.

But here there is an unexpected consideration, Jesus' hesitation to trust them, [John 2:24](#). Although some faith had been exercised, Jesus knew it drew attention to supernatural knowledge of human motives. The faith was in the miracle and not in the miracle worker it points to, Jesus. Jesus didn't need advice from others because His knowledge was already perfect.

In [John 2:25](#), we are told that Jesus 'knew what was in man.' Jesus knows our hearts. [Hebrews 4:13](#) tells us that 'all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.' In [Luke 16:15](#), we learn that God knows what is in the heart of every man.

Acts 1:24 tells us that God knows our hearts. Proverbs 15:3 tells us that the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the good and the evil. Ecclesiastes 12:14 tells us that God even knows secret things. God knows if we are sincere or if we are hypocrites.

If we are not living the way we ought to, we are not fooling anybody. We may think we have the people around us fooled. We may think that we have our wife and our kids fooled.

We may think that we have people at the church fooled. But no one is really fooled. God is not mocked, Galatians 6:7-8. He will not be laughed at or made fun of. We will not trick God. God knows what is in our hearts. He knows who we really are.

On the Day of Judgment, if we have not done what we should have done, and if we have not been sincere, but have had ulterior motives, we will not be right with God, Matthew 7:21-23. God knows what is within our hearts. ‘As a man thinks in his heart, so is he,’ Proverbs 23:7. God knows what we think in our hearts.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION

‘Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus, who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.” Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So, it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things, and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?” John 3:1-12

JESUS TEACHES NICODEMUS

The supernatural knowledge possessed by Jesus of what was in man, and man’s refusal to recognise His true disciples, is made clearer in these verses. Any who didn’t feel the need for the radical change in human nature which He came into the world to effect, is clearly brought out in His interview with Nicodemus.

Nicodemus was a member of the ruling council, the Sanhedrin, John 3:1. Most of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees of the Priestly families, but some were of the Pharisee sect. Nicodemus was one of these, and his acceptance on the Sanhedrin council was quite an honour.

Nicodemus was genuinely impressed by what Jesus said and did; he at least didn’t attribute Jesus’ extraordinary powers to Satanic influence, as some of the other Pharisees did, Matthew 12:22-32 / Luke 11:14-23.

On the contrary, he recognised Jesus as a teacher who had come from God, John 3:2, and he is anxious to know more about Him, but he also seems anxious to avoid giving the impression he wants to become a committed disciple.

‘AT NIGHT’

Why he came at night is a matter of opinion and must be treated as such; here are a couple of possibilities.

1. The fact that Nicodemus came at ‘night’, **John 3:2**, is an indication that he didn’t want to be seen, however, it may just have been that he was too busy to see Jesus during the day, in which case it’s unlikely that the night would have been mentioned.
2. It could also have been that he wanted to see Jesus by himself to be able to ask Him questions without interruptions, and Jesus was so busy during the day with the crowds that the only time Nicodemus knew that he would get peace and quiet with Jesus was at night.

The word ‘Rabbi,’ **John 3:2**, is an indication of respect, so Nicodemus is being polite and cautious in this opening conversation, implying that he must have been at least a bit impressed by Jesus.

He acknowledges Jesus but doesn’t declare his faith. By using the word ‘we’ in **John 3:2**, he is referring to the people in general. He had discussed Jesus with a group sympathetic to His cause, not necessarily people on the Sanhedrin. Nicodemus would have been looking forward to the establishment of God’s kingdom and also a greater reward because he adhered to the Pharisaic traditions.

As soon as Nicodemus has paid his compliments, **John 3:3**, Jesus cuts away from under his feet all grounds for self-satisfaction. Jesus’ reply isn’t as reserved. He gets right to the heart of the matter.

‘I tell you the truth’ is a method of emphasising a point, directly translated, it would read ‘Amen, Amen’, and it is often translated as ‘Truly, Truly’ or ‘Verily, Verily’, **John 3:3**.

The idea of being born again, **John 3:3**, confuses Nicodemus; it holds the idea that a distinct change has taken place and results in his following question. The kingdom of God is for those who have received this total change. Jesus states it in the negative, **John 3:3**.

The Kingdom of God refers to more than the church; it was before the church and will be after it, before creation, patriarchs, mosaic age church, but the entire heavenly realm of God. God is present in all things.

The words ‘cannot see’, **John 3:3**, mean ‘cannot perceive’. It doesn’t mean see as in physical sight, but is talking about personal experience. Nicodemus asks for clarification regarding the question of being born again, remember Nicodemus would have to be quite old to be in the Sanhedrin, so his question seems almost comical, **John 3:4**.

The baptism of John was well known by this time, no matter how much the Pharisees wanted to ignore it, **Matthew 3:13-17 / John 1:26-36**. The answer Jesus gives confirms the doctrine of baptism and shows that it refers to the baptism of a penitent believer, **John 3:5**.

The new birth is demonstrated by people becoming citizens of the kingdom on the day of Pentecost, **Acts 2:37-47**. Jesus, here at the start of His doctrinal message, begins with a similar statement to Peter in **Acts 2:38**.

The Spirit confirms the need to receive the post-resurrection baptism, **John 3:6-8**, as only that baptism gives the Holy Spirit, **Acts 2:38**. A play on words is made here, the Spirit and the wind are the same words in Greek ‘pneumatōs’. Wind illustrates the fact that the Holy Spirit is inexplicable to man.

The Holy Spirit uses His sword, the word of God, to produce conviction of faith which leads to the conviction of sin which leads to the waters of obedience, baptism, **John 16:7-8 / Acts 2:36-38 / Ephesians 6:17**.

The message of the Spirit, **Acts 2:36-41**, includes conception, **Acts 2:37**, and delivery, **Acts 2:41**. As the wind, cannot be prevented from going where it wishes nor can the Spirit, **John 3:8**. He enters at will but must be allowed to enter at baptism to replace the removed sin.

The words, ‘born of the Spirit’, **John 3:8**, are a name given to all who are Christians. The point is that God isn’t restricted by human or physical boundaries; man can only reproduce human life, but the Holy Spirit can give life from above.

In **John 3:9**, Nicodemus again asks for clarification, ‘how can this be’ or ‘how can this come about.’ Like the Jews generally, he fails to appreciate the meaning of the Spiritual nature of the Kingdom, **Matthew 18:1 / John 20:21 / John 6:15 / Acts 1:6**. Jesus’ reply seems almost rude again, **John 3:10**.

He seems disappointed that the teacher of the Law, those who ought first to understand, cannot. It is an apparent rebuke. The ‘we’ in **John 3:11** is Jesus and the Father, or the apostles, **John 4:22**, or John the Baptist. The Pharisees had rejected the baptism of John, **Luke 7:29-31**.

The word ‘you,’ both here, **John 3:11 / John 1:11**, and in **John 3:12**, to paraphrase, says, ‘I solemnly tell you that we are reliable witnesses, but you reject our witness or testimony’. He is very straightforward.

Jesus must have seen something that He liked about Nicodemus, as He revealed Himself to Him, and gave him a good explanation of what Christ was all about. Jesus is saying to Nicodemus, ‘If you disbelieve me when I tell you about things on earth, how will you believe me when I tell you about heaven?’ **John 3:12**.

“No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.” **John 3:13**

Jesus asserts His heavenly origin, ‘No one but me?’ **John 3:12-15**. If Jesus is the only one who event gone into heaven and the only one who came from heaven, what about Enoch and Elisha?

DID ENOCH AND ELIJAH DIE AND GO TO HEAVEN?

Before we try to answer the question concerning whether Enoch and Elijah actually went to heaven or not, I think it would be useful to define what we mean when we use the word ‘heaven’.

THREE HEAVENS

The opening words of our Bible tell us that, ‘In the beginning, God created the heavens (plural) and the earth,’ **Genesis 1:1**. Speaking about himself, the apostle Paul says, ‘I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago, was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body, I do not know—God knows,’ **2 Corinthians 12:2**.

So, we have here three ‘heavens’.

1. The heaven, which is God’s spiritual, eternal home, **Isaiah 6:1 / Acts 7:55-56**.

This isn’t physical and isn’t created. This is the uncreated heaven where God has always been from eternity. It’s also described as the third heaven and paradise.

2. The heaven where the stars and planets are, **Psalms 8:3**.

This is physical and is created.

3. The heaven surrounding the earth where the atmosphere is, and the birds fly, **Psalms 19:1**.

This is physical and is created.

PARADISE

Notice in **2 Corinthians 12:2-4**, Paul says he was caught up to the ‘third heaven’, whilst in the same setting, he says, caught up to ‘paradise’. Surely, the phrases ‘caught up to the third heaven’ and ‘caught up to paradise’ mean the same thing! Surely, the ‘third heaven’ and ‘paradise’ are one and the same place!

The ‘third heaven’, or ‘paradise’ is God’s spiritual eternal home, which isn’t physical and isn’t created, this is the place where not only Paul found himself, but the place where Lazarus found himself when he died, **Luke 16:22**, and the place where Jesus and the thief on the cross went to when they died, **Luke 23:43**.

According to **Revelation 2:7**, the overcoming church will eat from the tree of life in the eschatological garden. Sin and death through redemption are now cast out of the human experience. The way is open for the faithful to return to the garden of God. ‘Paradise’ is the Christian’s final home.

We understand that God is everywhere, **Acts 17:27-28**. He is present in all ‘three heavens’, **Psalms 115:2-3**. We cannot get away from God, **Psalms 139:1-16**, but it is the ‘third heaven’, God’s spiritual, eternal home, where Enoch and Elijah went, as we shall see in this study.

GOD TOOK ENOCH AWAY

In **Genesis 5:22-24**, Moses tells us that God took Enoch away. Enoch was the father of Methuselah, who was the oldest living man, **Genesis 5:27**. Notice that ‘Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years’, **Genesis 5:24**, implying that he did what God wanted him to do for that length of time, **Jude 14-15**. After 365 years on earth, God took Enoch away.

The Hebrew word for ‘took’ is the word ‘laqach’, and it is defined as to take; it carries with it the idea of being snatched up or carried away. The Hebrew writer tells us that Enoch didn’t experience death, **Hebrews 11:5**, which tells us he never died.

The words ‘he could not be found’ suggest that people were looking for him in the same manner as the prophets looked for Elijah, but could not find him, **2 Kings 2:17**. The word ‘taken’ used twice in **Hebrews 11:5** is the Greek word ‘metatithemi’, and it means to transfer.

Willis, in his commentary, says the following concerning the Hebrew passage.

‘The word ‘taken’ functions as a technical term for man’s translation by God to a higher existence.’

In other words, the Hebrew writer explains what the words ‘God took him away’ mean in **Genesis 5:24**. Enoch never died but was translated, transferred into an eternal fellowship with the Creator. He was received into eternal fellowship with God without being obligated to pass through the experience of death.

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning the Hebrews passage.

‘Here the apostle explains what God’s taking him means, by saying that he was translated that he should not see death; from which we learn that he did not die, and that God took him to a state of blessedness without obliging him to pass through death’.

MacKnight, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Enoch’s translation by faith is mentioned by the apostle, not to raise in believers an expectation of being translated into heaven, as he was, without dying, but to excite them to imitate his faith, in the assurance of being admitted into heaven in the body after the resurrection.’

ALLEGED CONTRADICTION

There are those who insist that Enoch never died because the Hebrew writer says, ‘all these people died in faith not receiving the promises,’ **Hebrews 11:13**. In other words, ‘all these people’, that is, everyone mentioned in all the previous verses, that is, **Hebrews 11:1-12**, including Enoch, actually did die in faith not receiving the promises. Surely the Hebrew writer isn’t contradicting themselves!

SOLUTION

Answers in Genesis gives a simple solution to this so-called contradiction.

First, there is a simple theological explanation. In **Hebrews 11**, there appears to be a division of main ideas presented in **Hebrews 11:1-5** and **Hebrews 11:6-13**. Notice that **Hebrews 11:13** states, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises.” What promises?

When we look back on **Hebrews 11:7-11**, we see that each person who is mentioned received and believed a promise, so **Hebrews 11:13** only refers to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah, not Enoch or Abel. Hebrews does not mention any promises concerning Enoch and Abel in **Hebrews 11:4-5**. And the author specifically mentions that Abel was dead and Enoch was not.

Second, there is a simple grammatical explanation. Enoch is the exception to the rule. The rule is that everyone listed did not escape death. And then Enoch is the exception since it was stated, “He did not see death.”

ENOCH TAKEN TO HEAVEN

Although neither the Genesis passages nor the Hebrew passage mentions the word ‘heaven’, it doesn’t mean that God didn’t take him there. I believe there is more than enough evidence to prove that he was not only spared death, but God also took him to heaven.

There are some who suggest that he went to ‘heaven’, but not the heaven where God dwells. Earlier, I mentioned that the Bible speaks of three heavens, and if Enoch isn’t in heaven where God dwells, then according to some people, Elijah was taken to the heaven where the stars and planets are or taken to the other heaven, the earth’s atmosphere, where the birds fly.

Common sense tells us that God took Enoch to heaven, God’s dwelling place, because he faithfully walked with God, **Genesis 5:22-24**, and because of his obedience to Him, **Jude 14-15**.

ELIJAH TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN

When we read **2 Kings 2:1-12**, we read that the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven. Elisha asks Elijah for a ‘double portion of his spirit’, **2 Kings 11:9**. I don’t think we’re to believe that Elisha has twice as many miraculous

powers as Elijah had; only God could grant such a thing. He was simply asking Elijah for the ‘double portion’ as someone would receive as the firstborn son, **Deuteronomy 21:15-17**.

As they walked on together talking, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated them, **2 Kings 2:11**. Elijah was taken up in a whirlwind to heaven, **2 Kings 2:11**, and Elisha saw it and cried, ‘My Father, my Father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen, and he saw him no more.’ **2 Kings 2:12**.

This basically means that one prophet had done more for Israel than all the earthly kingdoms’ chariots and horses. Significantly, these same words were uttered upon the occasion of the death of Elisha, **2 Kings 13:14**.

Elijah was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind, **2 Kings 2:11** / **Exodus 19:16-25** / **Psalms 18:7-15**, it appears that God wanted Elisha to witness this miracle, as a way of confirming the end of Elijah’s ministry on earth and the start of his ministry. **2 Kings 2:11**, tells us that Elijah, like Enoch, was not only spared death but also went straight to heaven. There are some who suggest that he went to ‘heaven’, but not the heaven where God dwells. Earlier, I mentioned that the Bible speaks of three heavens, and if Elijah isn’t in heaven where God dwells, then according to some people, Elijah was taken to the heaven where the stars and planets are or taken to the other heaven, the earth’s atmosphere, where the birds fly.

There are those who suggest that Elijah didn’t go to heaven, but the whirlwind simply took him to another location on Earth. They argue this is why the other prophets searched for him, **2 Kings 2:16-17**. I’m sure you would have noticed that the other prophets couldn’t find him, **2 Kings 2:17**, just as people couldn’t find Enoch, **Hebrews 11:5**. Why? Because his ministry on earth was finished.

Just as Enoch never died but was translated into an eternal fellowship with the Creator. Elijah was received into eternal fellowship with God without being obligated to pass through the experience of death.

ALLEGED CONTRADICTION

In **2 Chronicles 21:12-15**, we read that King Jehoram of Judah received a letter from Elijah. But based on the chronology of events in **2 Kings**, we know that Elijah had been taken to heaven alive in a whirlwind by that point. How did Elijah send a letter to King Jehoram if Elijah had already been taken to heaven?

SOLUTION

Remember that Elijah had been taken up in a whirlwind to God before the reign of Jehoram, **2 Kings 2:11**. But it appears that Elijah had prophesied concerning the wickedness of Jehoram, even before Jehoram reigned. Elijah had prophesied against Ahab and Jezebel, the parents of Jehoram’s wife, Athaliah.

It’s not the first time in this book that a prophet has spoken about an upcoming disaster, for kings, before it happens, **2 Chronicles 12:5** / **2 Chronicles 16:7** / **2 Chronicles 19:2** / **2 Chronicles 24:20** / **2 Chronicles 26:16**.

However, some commentators believe that Elijah was still alive at this point in time.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This is the only notice which we have of Elijah in Chronicles. As a prophet of the northern kingdom, he engaged but slightly the attention of the historian of the southern one. The notice shows that Elijah did not confine his attention to the affairs of his own state but strove to check the progress of idolatry in Judah. And it proves that he was alive after the death of Jehoshaphat, **2 Chronicles 21:13**, a fact bearing.’

1. Upon the chronological order of **2 Kings 2:11**.

2. Showing that Elisha, who prophesied in the time of Jehoshaphat, **2 Kings 3:11-19**, commenced his public ministry before his master's translation.

The Apologetic Press say the following.

'Even if the events in **2 Kings 1-8** are recorded in a more strict chronological order, however, and Elijah had actually left Earth prior to Jehoram's independent reign as king began, there still is no proven contradiction between these passages and what the chronicler recorded about Elijah's letter to Jehoram. **2 Chronicles 21:12** does state that "a letter came to" Jehoram "from Elijah the prophet," but notice that the text does not say that Elijah personally delivered the letter. One simply cannot prove that the text implies that Elijah was still alive.'

The Apologetic Press continue and say the following.

'Perhaps the differences are the result of the events of **2 Kings 2** not being placed in a strict sequential order in the text. Or it could very well be that Elijah wrote the letter of **2 Chronicles 21** as a prophetic letter before his departure from Earth and long before Jehoram became the sole King of Judah. One thing is certain: no justifiable contradiction has been proven.'

ANOTHER ALLEGED CONTRADICTION

Some claim that Enoch and Elijah couldn't have gone to heaven because of what Jesus said to Nicodemus, **John 3:13**. They say that Enoch and Elijah couldn't have gone to heaven because Jesus clearly said, 'No one has ever gone into heaven except Jesus Himself', **John 3:13**. In other words, if Enoch and Elijah went to heaven before Jesus then this would contradict what Jesus says in **John 3:13**.

SOLUTION

Remember Jesus is speaking with Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews, **John 3:1**. After acknowledging that Jesus is a teacher from God and the proof was in the miracles He performed, **John 3:2**, Jesus now speaks to him about things concerning being 'born again,' but Nicodemus didn't understand because he thought Jesus was speaking about being 'born again' literally, **John 3:3-12**.

I think it's important to note that Jesus isn't speaking about being 'born again' literally; He is speaking about being 'born again' figuratively, that is, baptism, **Acts 2:36-38 / Romans 6:3-6**.

Notice that Jesus says, 'we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen', **John 3:11**. A person can only 'testify' to something they know and what they have seen. The 'we' is Jesus and the Father, **John 10:30**.

Jesus now says that He is the only person who is qualified to 'testify' about 'heavenly things' because only He has seen it, only He has come from there, **John 3:12-13 / John 8:23**. There's not a person who has ever lived or will live who will teach like Jesus, why? Because he was the only one who came from heaven.

Yes, some of the prophets got glimpses of heaven, but only through visions, **Ezekiel 1 / Acts 7:55-56 / Revelation 21-22**. God gave them the authority to speak about heaven, about the things He revealed to them, but because Christ had come down from heaven, He had more authority to speak about heaven and 'heavenly things.'

The point is this: Enoch and Elijah didn't come back to teach the people after they ascended to heaven. They didn't come back to 'testify' to anyone about things they had 'seen'.

They did come back on the Mount of Transfiguration, **Matthew 17:1-5**, but I'm sure you will have noticed that they only spoke to Jesus, not the disciples who were with Him, **Matthew 17:3**.

Remember Nicodemus acknowledged that Jesus is a teacher from God and the proof was in the miracles He performed, **John 3:2**. And so in relation to those statements, when Jesus says to Nicodemus, 'No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man,' **John 3:13**, He's simply telling Nicodemus that He came from heaven, and He will return to heaven, **John 16:28**.

He's saying to Nicodemus, 'If you don't believe me when I tell you, that is, teach you, about things on earth, how will you believe me when I tell you, that is, teach you, things about heaven.'

CONCLUSION

After digging into the texts and providing some reasonable solutions to the alleged contradictions, we are left with no doubts that both Enoch and Elijah went to heaven, God's dwelling place.

Although the Bible doesn't tell us why these two men were spared death, it's possible that God spared them both from physical death because of their faithfulness and obedience to Him.

We certainly know it signalled the end of Elijah's ministry on Earth, **2 Kings 2:1**, and we certainly know that Enoch was faithful to God, **Genesis 5:22-24**, and obedient to Him, **Jude 14-15**.

It's also possible that God was signalling to mankind that salvation was indeed possible, that, in time, God would provide it, **John 3:16-18**, and that it ultimately includes victory over death, **1 Corinthians 15:55-58 / 2 Corinthians 5:8-9**.

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” **John 3:14-15**

The 'snake' mentioned in **John 3:14** is taken from **Numbers 21:9**, where the bronze snake gave salvation of a physical sort to those bitten by snakes, **Numbers 21:4-9**. As this snake, later called 'nehustan', was lifted up, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, on the cross, **John 3:14 / John 12:32**.

Jesus tells Nicodemus that He is the Son of Man, an expression used in **Psalms 8:4** and **Daniel 7:13**. Jesus seems to get to the heart of the matter very quickly, indicating that He may have considered Nicodemus a spiritual man.

In the first instance, the snake was lifted up so people could see and receive physical healing, and in the second case, lifting Jesus upon the cross gave all salvation from spiritual death, **Romans 3:23-26**. After lifting up the Son, all who believe in Him may have eternal life, rather than eternal death without Him, **John 3:15 / Mark 16:16**.

The word 'believe', **John 3:15**, is 'pisteuo' in Greek, and it means to place one's trust or confidence in, to rely upon by faith. Eternal life has more to do with quality than quantity; hell is eternal in time too, the quality is there because it is life with the Eternal One.

Eternal life is more than just endless living; it is a sharing in the life of God, **John 5:26 / John 17:3**. **1 John 5:11-12** makes it very clear that eternal life is a dimension that means life in full fellowship and unity with God.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God, did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will

not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.’ John 3:16-21

It seems unlikely that this passage was in fact said by Jesus; it was more likely the words of John, the author, introducing some commentary. When Jesus refers to the first person of the Godhead, He uses the term Father, not God, as He does here; there is a similar phrase in **John 1:4-9**.

We are told something about the uniqueness of the love of God, and we see that it isn’t an inactive love, but a love that is proven by God’s actions. So, Christ was a result of the love of God. He saw that man needed help in overcoming sin. So, in response to that need, God sent and gave His unique and only begotten Son, **John 3:16**.

Salvation can only be achieved through Him, **John 14:6 / Acts 4:12**.

‘God so loved’, **John 3:16**, ‘agapao’, is the Greek word. This is the first use of this word; it is used thirty-six times in the book, and again with the same regularity in 1 John, it is used thirty-one times. Luke only uses it thirteen times.

The main themes of this book are ‘logos’ and ‘love’. As to person ‘logos’ as to character ‘love’.

The word ‘world,’ **John 3:16**, in Greek is ‘kosmos’, and it means ‘all of humanity’. The Jews often referred to God’s love for Israel, but never used the term love to describe His relationship with the world.

The response God seeks for this is that man ought to believe in the one He sent, and the result of believing is a return of love and obedience to the desires of God, **John 3:16**.

The essence of that desire is that none should perish, **John 3:16**. In Greek that is the word, ‘apollumi’, and it means not loss of being but the loss of well-being and so all should believe in the one God sent, **John 3:17**.

John 3:16, and **John 3:18**, describe the sad result of not believing was perishing or eternal separation from God, **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**. For those who do believe, awaits eternal life shared with God and the risen Saviour, **John 3:16 / 2 Thessalonians 1:10**.

The word ‘eternal,’ **John 3:16**, is used here and in six other places in this Gospel, always in connection with life. We are everlasting beings, we have a point of time of beginning, but only God is truly eternal with no beginning or end, **Isaiah 9:6 / Revelation 1:8 / Revelation 22:6 / Revelation 22:16**.

John uses a different expression when speaking about something abiding forever, **John 6:51 / John 14:16**. Although the idea of ‘duration’ isn’t absent from the former word, it is stressing the difference in the quality of life.

God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him, **John 3:17 / Luke 19:10**. **John 3:18** reminds us of **Romans 8:1**, ‘there is no condemnation for those who believe’.

The division is drawn between condemnation for those who believe. The division is drawn between condemned! Not being condemned is related to living in darkness or light. He that believes not incurs the wrath, ‘orge’ of God, **Matthew 3:7 / Romans 1:18**.

Man either accepts the grace of God and the eternal salvation it provides or refuses God’s help and so suffers the consequences of the justice of God’s verdict upon their sins and the consequences of their life.

We force God to pronounce His verdict of justice upon us as we reject His offer of mercy. The verdict, conclusion or result of all this is that absolute faith leads to absolute life, **John 3:19 / John 1:4-5**. **John 3:20** tells us about human nature. Adam and Eve hid in the garden, **Genesis 3:8**.

Truth and evil are equated with light and darkness, the Son is the light, and all can see the light, but not all choose to go with the light, **John 3:19-21**. It is interesting to see a relationship develop, dark, evil, hate, on the one side and light, truth, love on the other. Living in the light gives faith, which is accompanied by a new quality of life that can give credence to belief.

JOHN TESTIFIES AGAIN ABOUT JESUS

‘After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptised. Now John also was baptising at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptised. (This was before John was put in prison.) An argument developed between some of John’s disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptising, and everyone is going to him.” To this, John replied, “A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’ The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less.” The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.’ John 3:22-35

This was Jesus’ Judean ministry, **John 3:22**, but the amount of time involved here is hard to say, possibly about six months. This account isn’t related in the synoptic accounts, which go straight into the Galilean ministry, where John was already imprisoned, **John 3:24**. This is the only place we read His disciples baptising, **John 3:22**.

Remember, Jesus didn’t baptise anyone, **John 4:2**. Because this was before His death, burial and resurrection, the message of Jesus at this time is the same as John the Baptist, ‘repent and be baptised’, **John 3:22-24 / Acts 2:38 / Acts 19:4**.

If they obeyed the message, they didn’t become Christians but were restored as good Jews acceptable to God. The kingdom is at hand, near, which means the kingdom couldn’t be established until the death of Jesus, **Hebrews 9:12-17 / Mark 9:1 / Luke 24:46-49**. Jesus sent out the seventy with the same message; John’s message and Jesus’ message were in harmony.

In **John 3:23**, we find the motivation behind John baptising at Aenon; there was a large amount of water there. This was necessary as John was immersing people, not just pouring or sprinkling as some would have us believe. As I mentioned earlier, we are told that this was before John was put in prison, **John 4:24**.

The ceremonial washing that was being argued about was almost certainly baptism, **John 3:25**. This was practised by the Jews before John’s time, and even today, baptism as a type of ceremonial washing causes no end to the argument. The Dead Sea Scrolls show that some Jews were deeply interested in the right way to achieve ceremonial purification. This is one of the major differences between the Qumran sect and Jesus’ teaching; their baptism was for ceremonial purposes.

In **John 3:26**, it seems that John’s disciples seem to be jealous of the thought of Jesus attracting more attention than their own teacher. The first thing to note in John’s response is the total absence of bitterness at the news of Jesus’ success, **John 3:27-29**. He accepts that the success he had enjoyed was given from heaven and that any success Jesus now enjoys is likewise from heaven.

John’s parable in **John 3:29** is a graphic display of the central position held by Christ, who is the bridegroom. John the Baptist is the best man, sitting, waiting for the arrival of the groom, then serving him after his arrival. The position of the bride is reserved for those who accept his message and go to him.

He now sees his role as a diminishing one at the same rate as Jesus’ role increases, **John 2:30**. When John was taken and murdered, his role was complete. John says, ‘My joy is full,’ **John 3:29**. The joy of John is a reflection of a task completed and done well. This should be our attitude when Christ comes into our lives.

John 3:31-32, like **John 3:16-21**, is most likely a commentary included by John as he wrote the account. Jesus is designated as the one who comes from above, which is confirmation of the nature of His work, and also a recognition of the superiority of Jesus.

God has given Him ALL authority, **Matthew 28:18**. An awareness of the poor response and the rejection by the people of the messenger of God and son of God.

Note that those who accept Jesus are doing the right thing, **John 3:33**, and in **John 3:34**, the Greek here reads ‘for He whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure’.

FOUR VIEWS

1. God gives Christ the fullness of the Spirit instead of a limited or occasional supply.

This means that Jesus received all the Spirit while we receive only part of the Spirit, **1 Corinthians 12:1-11**. **Ephesians 1:19** tells us that the same power of the Spirit raised Jesus from the dead.

2. A general statement, God gives the Spirit freely and abundantly to everyone, including Christ, without measure.

John 14:26 says, ‘the Father will give the Spirit’ and **John 16:13**, ‘the Spirit will guide in truth’.

3. The Spirit is the subject, and the Spirit gives to Christ the words of God without measure.

This is incorrect according to the Greek and English texts.

4. Christ is subject, and He gives the Spirit without measure.

This is correct, Christ is the subject. John’s discussion was about the authority of Jesus, **John 3:34**, ‘To Him God gives the Spirit without measure’.

Christ now gives the Spirit because He shall baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire, **Matthew 3:11** / **John 1:33**. Jesus said He would send the Spirit, **John 7:37-39** / **John 14:26** / **John 15:26** / **John 16:7** / **John 16:13**. The Spirit is never mentioned as partially given, **1 Corinthians 12:1-11**.

Some say that Jesus had the Spirit in unlimited measure, and the apostles had the Spirit in baptismal measure. The ones the apostles laid hands on had the Spirit in miraculous measure, and all Christians have the Spirit in normal, indwelling measure, **Acts 2:38** / **Romans 8:1** / **1 Corinthians 6:19**.

Some say there is no difference between the Spirit and the power of the Spirit, **Acts 1:5-8** / **Ephesians 1:19**. Others say that they were to wait for the ‘spirit’ who would come with ‘power’, **Luke 24:49** / **Acts 1:1**. The Son has eternal life and note the point is made that salvation is only to be found in Jesus, **John 6:47** / **John 14:6** / **Acts 4:12** / **1 John 5:11-12**.

The words, ‘shall not see life’, **John 3:35**, means just a man who cuts his throat commits physical suicide, a man who rejects Jesus commits spiritual suicide, the latter is the worse, **Matthew 10:10**. The wrath of God, **John 3:36** / **Romans 1:18** / **Matthew 25:46**, means everlasting torment, age-abiding, present and continuous, both heaven and hell.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

‘Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptising more disciples than John—although in fact it was not Jesus who baptised, but his disciples. So, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.’ John 4:1-3

In John 4-6, Jesus is identified as the living bread and as the water of life that men must access if they are going to be right with God. The whole purpose of the Book of John is to prove that Jesus is God in the flesh, John 20:30-31. John 4-6 supports this theme by showing that Jesus is the only way that people can have spiritual sustenance. By looking at the signs Jesus performed in these chapters, we can rest assured that Jesus is God in the flesh and that He is the only way we can serve God and please Him through obedience to His will.

In the last two verses of chapter three, John 3:35-36, we saw the authority given to Jesus and His absolute power to save those who believe in Him and reject all others.

Here in John 4, marks the end of Jesus’ short Judean ministry and the journey to Galilee, John 4:1, to avoid further confrontation with the Pharisees at this time and to begin His Galilean ministry.

The Pharisees have heard that Jesus was making and baptising more disciples than John, John 4:1 / Matthew 4:12, which implies an intensive ministry, John 3:22.

The title ‘Lord’, John 4:1, KJV, is rarely used synonymously with Jesus, so it is strange to see John, the author, use it here, but it could be a reflection of high esteem. The clause in John 4:2 is included to put down any rumour or argument regarding Jesus and the relevance of being baptised by Him.

The Pharisees had just about been able to put up with John and his teaching, but they may have seen Jesus as just too much. Jesus was unwilling to have a premature confrontation with them. He is prepared to die at a particular time and place for a particular people, so He leaves the area.

The word, ‘left’ or ‘abandoned,’ John 4:3, is a military term and means withdrawal, which tells us that confrontation doesn’t always achieve God’s purpose.

‘Now he had to go through Samaria. So, he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.’ John 4:4-6

SAMARIA

Samaria was an area of land stretching from just north of Jerusalem to a line from Caesarea in the west to the Jordan in the east. It ran from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, sandwiched between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north. It follows similar lines to the old Northern Kingdom.

THE SAMARITANS

The Samaritans were the inhabitants of Samaria, and they were people of mixed origin due to the mingling of the remnant left behind in Samaria. The Northern tribes fell into the hands of the Assyrians in 722 BC, 2 Kings 17:5-6. Assyria resettled the land with pagans from other nations, who brought their gods with them.

As far as the Southern tribes of the Babylonian captivity were concerned, they had become tainted with the idolatry of the nation to which they were captives, and therefore were unclean, 2 Kings 17:28-41.

The religion that the pagan settlers brought meant that those who were left began to be syncretic in their faith; they became a mixture of Judaism and paganism.

They built their own temple on Mount Gerizim in 400 BC, which was destroyed by a Jewish army led by Hyrcanus in 128 BC, but they still held to the Pentateuch as their scriptures.

When the Jews, the Southern tribes, were returning after the Babylonian exile, the Samaritans did their best to interfere with the rebuilding of the temple, [Ezra 4:1-3](#). The Jews and the Samaritans, therefore, developed a long-term hate-based relationship. The Jews referred to them as cursed dogs, flea-ridden and filthy.

By the time Jesus came along, this relationship was so bad that many Jews passing from Judea to Galilee would prefer to travel east of the Jordan, thus avoiding Samaria and any chance of bumping into a Samaritan. This trip was a long way around. However, such was the distaste of the Jews for the Samaritans that they thought the trip well worthwhile.

The rift was widened by the erection of a rival temple on Mount Gerizim. In the Rabbinical literature, specific prohibitions exclude virtually all contact between the two parties. When the Jews wanted to be offensive to Jesus, they called Him ‘a Samaritan’ in [John 8:48](#).

Jesus, on the contrary, made a Samaritan the hero of one of His parables, [Luke 10:25-37](#), and this encounter with the Samaritan woman was one of the most significant incidents in His earthly ministry.

With this in mind, the true picture can be painted in [John 4](#), and the complete consequences can be understood. The full impact of the parable of the good Samaritan can also be felt and properly understood, [Luke 10:25-37](#).

It’s also significant that this event occurs after the meeting with Nicodemus, [John 3:1-15](#). Jesus speaks to a devout Jew, steeped in the Law and tradition, and then speaks to a Samaritan woman and tells them both the same message and treats them both in the same way.

Notice the phrase, ‘had to go’, [John 4:1](#), which tells us that the necessity was in His mission, not referring to the geography. He was motivated by love. He had to be about His Father’s business, [Luke 2:49](#). He knew that there were people who would listen to Him in this place, and we should never judge by outward appearances, [1 Samuel 16:7](#).

There were three normal trade routes, along the Seacoast, through Perea, which is alongside the Jordan or the direct north through Samaria. The Samaritan route was only three miles, whereas the others were six miles, but if you took the short route, you would be seen as ceremonially unclean.

Normally, the Jews would travel North along the East side to avoid Samaria, but it seems Jesus knew what was ahead, and as usual, He breaks down traditional barriers; the Jews were supposed to have no dealings with the Samaritans, [John 4:9](#).

In the city of Sychar, [John 4:5](#), there are two possible sites today, both near Mount Gerizim. The land and the well mentioned were given by Jacob to his son Joseph; it isn’t mentioned elsewhere in Scripture.

Samaritan tradition said that this was dug and used by Jacob, and to this day there is a well there which is one-hundred and thirty-five feet ft deep. The Old Testament mentions ‘The field’ but not ‘the well’, [Genesis 33:19](#) / [Genesis 48:21-22](#).

The word, ‘tired’ or ‘weary’, [John 4:6](#), means like a wet rag rung out, drained, which speaks of the humanity of Jesus, [Luke 5:5](#). The same expression is used, toiled all night. ‘The sixth hour’ or ‘noon’, [John 4:6](#), would mean either midday, in which case it would be very hot, or early evening.

JESUS TALKS WITH A SAMARITAN WOMAN

‘When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews, do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?” Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.” “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.” “Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.” John 4:7-26

Usually, the women came in a group to help each other either in the cool of the morning or the evening. Possibly she came at this time, and by herself, because she was seen as an immoral woman and therefore an outcast, [John 4:7](#).

Notice Jesus doesn’t allow the fact that she is a woman or that she is an outcast of her society to prevent Him from speaking to her, [Luke 4:7](#). For He isn’t bound by the normal racist, sexist, social barriers. To Him, the woman is important because she is a soul in need of salvation, [Luke 19:10](#).

This was quite unheard of in that society; Jewish men wouldn’t speak to an unknown woman, and Jews of either sex wouldn’t speak to Samaritans. They would not even travel in Samaria if it could be at all avoided. They certainly would not want to share eating or drinking utensils with one another, yet here was Jesus asking to share from a Samaritan bucket, [John 4:7](#).

Jesus speaking to her sees the collapse of ideas of sexism and particularly racism that had been common for generations, and this influence is extended to us today. Jesus gives us an example to follow on how to break down barriers, [Ephesians 2:14-16](#).

Jesus saw this woman as one who needed spiritual guidance, and her sex or race didn’t prevent Him from giving guidance to her. We perhaps would not class her as a good contact, but we often judge by human criteria; Jesus judges the heart of the person, [1 Samuel 16:7](#).

In either case, it is quite conceivable that the disciples had gone for food, [Luke 4:8](#), and shows that despite being Jews, they didn’t allow their dislike to stop them from getting food from a Samaritan town when they were hungry. Usually, travellers would carry some rope and a folded skin bucket to enable them to draw water from wells that had no equipment. It’s possible that the disciples had probably taken the bucket with them.

The woman’s surprise at this unexpected intrusion is reflected in her reply, ‘YOU are a JEW, I am a SAMARITAN WOMAN. How can YOU ask ME for a drink?’ [John 4:9](#).

This isn’t just talking about the lack of trade between the two groups of people, but He is asking to share her drinking vessel, the idea of eating from a common plate.

The disciples had many ideas to rethink in their day, just as we have in ours. But note, she doesn’t ignore Him but enters into conversation with him, thus showing her lack of racial prejudice.

She asks Him for an explanation, [Luke 4:9](#). We are told that the Jews do not associate with Samaritans, [Luke 4:9](#). The footnote says, ‘do not use dishes that the Samaritans have used.’

The gift of God Jesus speaks of in [John 7:38-39](#), and here, [John 4:10](#), is seen to be the Spirit. The living water is a reference to life in the Spirit, but also a connection with the law, divine activity giving life to men, [Jeremiah 2:13](#) / [Ezra 47:9](#).

Jesus has now got her full attention. Some see here that the gift is referring to eternal life, as in [John 4:14](#). The woman totally misunderstands Jesus, and she challenges Him on physical grounds, ‘the well is deep’, [John 4:11](#), not even comprehending the possibility of a spiritual element being included as well. I guess respect for the past prevents her from seeing the opportunity of the future.

In response, Jesus launches into a discourse explaining all the joy and sparkle of a good, full spiritual life; the nearer we are to God, the higher the bubbling becomes.

She asks Jesus in [John 4:12](#), ‘Are you greater than Jacob?’ and the answer that follows implies, yes. So, Jesus uses the situation and brings up the subject of the Gospel. Whoever drinks from Jacob’s well will thirst again, [John 4:13-14](#).

Yes, we have eternal life, Jesus and Christianity become increasingly important to us, and our joy increases correspondingly, [John 10:10](#). We have life, and we have it in abundance, enjoy it, live it, share it. Man doesn’t control the spring; it’s from God, a never-ending abundance for all simply to take.

[John 4:15](#) tells us again that the woman doesn’t understand, but it sounds good, and she responds with a somewhat cheeky answer, note, ‘sir, ‘kurios,’ give me this water.’

The word ‘sir’ was a mark of respect, but she’s still thinking in the physical realm of what a relief it would be not to have to come down here every day. And so, Jesus reaches into the heart of this woman’s needs, and she lives an immoral lifestyle.

He tells her to call her husband, knowing that she has none, [John 4:16](#). The word ‘aner’ can mean husband or man depending on the context. Notice how Jesus used the same approach with Nicodemus, [John 3:1-15](#). The first statement is misunderstood, so tries again more vividly.

Next, Jesus tries to awaken her conscience; she must then confess her standards, [John 4:17](#). Perhaps this immorality was why she was at the well at this time instead of coming down with the other women of the village in the cool of the morning or the evening. Jesus seems abrupt in asking this question, and her answer is very honest; she could easily have lied, [John 4:17](#).

And so, Jesus, as ever, gets straight to the point: the five husbands could’ve been the result of a tragic row of deaths, [John 4:17](#). She must either have been very polygamous or in a multiple divorce situation, but the discussion has little point.

She is now living with a man in an unmarried situation, [John 4:17-18](#), which is a demonstration of Jesus all-knowingness, [Matthew 9:4](#) / [John 2:24](#) / [Acts 1:24](#). This was always indefensible, and the Rabbis of the day didn’t allow more than three marriages. This is where most people would have made a mess of the opportunity.

Most people would have argued and pursued her marital status, and as a result, the opportunity to share spiritual truths with her would have disappeared. Jesus didn’t get into all of that because there were more important spiritual truths this woman needed to know and learn.

In [John 4:19](#), we see that the woman is now very attentive, and so, she attempts to change the subject to one of religious worship, a theological question, and Jesus allows her to do this gracefully.

Note, this was a reaction to Jesus’ attack on her morals. He is getting too close, she acknowledges Him as a prophet and then changes the subject to take the spotlight off herself.

This is common with people today, when you highlight their lives in the light of the Gospel, they respond with, ‘What about the suffering in the world?’ etc. We need to remind them, ‘they are either part of the problem or part of the cure’.

She declares Him a prophet, [John 4:19](#). As the Samaritans didn’t accept any prophet after Moses, she must have had in mind THE PROPHET, the Messiah, which both the Jews and the Samaritans were waiting for, [Deuteronomy 18:15-19](#).

WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP?

When she mentions, ‘our fathers’, or ‘ancestors’, [John 4:20](#), she was claiming descendants from Abraham and Jacob, both of whom erected altars in this area, [Genesis 12:7](#) / [Genesis 33:20](#).

The Samaritans believed that the mountain Gerizim was sacred because Abraham offered Isaac at the foot of Mount Gerizim on Mount Moriah, [Genesis 22:2](#), and they worshipped there, [John 4:20](#). The ruins of their temple were there and this was where they held their Passover annually.

She says, ‘you Jews say’, [John 4:20](#). The Jews, of course, didn’t agree, believing that Mount Zion, where the temple was, was the sacred place. As we see in [John 4:21](#), her question is soon to be irrelevant because the time will come when men will not worship in any particular place, but rather worship will be acceptable wherever men and woman have their hearts and minds attuned to the obedience of God’s will.

Jews today have a problem because the Old Testament law demands sacrifices for forgiveness; without sacrifices, they cannot be acceptable to God. How do they view Jesus?

The word ‘worship’, ‘proskiuneo’, [John 4:21](#), means to make obeisance to, to do reverence to; it refers exclusively to that which is given to God, not man. False worship means misguided, misled, ‘you worship that which you know nothing about’, [John 4:22](#).

The Samaritans didn’t accept the writings of the Prophets, Psalms or historical books; their worship was false worship. When Jesus says, ‘salvation is from the Jews’, [John 4:22](#), Jesus is referring to Himself here; the bloodline of Jesus is simple proof that salvation is from the Jews, and it is found in Jesus, the only true, law-abiding Jew, [Luke 1:67-69](#) / [Acts 13:26-27](#).

The word ‘true’, ‘alethenos’, [John 4:23](#), means genuine, [John 1:9](#) / [John 6:32](#). The woman’s concern was for a place of worship; Jesus says that true worship isn’t dependent on physical location.

The words, ‘in Spirit’, [John 4:23](#), mean the real thing is dependent on the attitude, condition and intention of the heart. The words, ‘and in truth’, [John 4:23](#), mean in harmony with the revealed will of God, [1 Kings 8:27](#) / [Isaiah 66:1-2](#) / [Micah 6:6-8](#) / [Acts 17:24-25](#). This is God’s will, not man’s idea.

Notice how the emphasis has moved from the formal type of temple worship to the new type, ‘His worshippers must now worship in spirit and in truth’, [John 4:24](#). We have to not only have the right attitude but the right information; worship must be from our hearts and our understanding.

This is what we as individual worshippers today need to continually strive for. It’s sad that some churches focus on spirit and not truth, and others focus on the truth but have no spirit.

The nature of God is found in the words ‘God is Spirit’, [John 4:24](#), and it means that He is not a physical being. This is consistent with His omnipresence, [Psalm 113:4-6](#) / [Psalm 139:7-10](#) / [Proverbs 15:3](#) / [Isaiah 57:15](#) / [Jeremiah 23:23-24](#) / [Hebrews 4:13](#).

And so, the woman stops trying to evade the truth and almost nudges Jesus into declaring His Messiahship, [John 4:25](#), which He acknowledges in [John 4:26](#). The word ‘Messiah,’ ‘Christos,’ means anointed one. This Hebrew term is only found here in [John 4:25](#) and in [John 1:41](#). The Samaritans were looking for the Messiah, which was a common term used, ‘Taheb’, He who returns or restores that which is pleasing to God.

Jesus says in [John 4:26](#), ‘I WHO SPEAK AM HE’. This is the first time in John where Jesus indicates His divinity by using the ‘I AM’ phrase that was later to anger the Jews, ‘I AM EGO EIMI’, [John 8:37](#) / [Matthew 26:63-66](#), when the Jews accused Him of blasphemy.

THE DISCIPLES REJOIN JESUS

‘Just then, his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him. Meanwhile, his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?” “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now, the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus, the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.” [John 4:27-38](#)

It can be seen from the surprise of the disciples how strange it was for a Jew to talk to a Samaritan. However, they do not challenge Him or her on this matter, [John 4:27](#). They have almost come to expect the unexpected from Jesus. The woman has been truly impressed and convinced about Jesus and the things He has said.

So much so, that she leaves her water jar and goes into town where she is probably looked on as an outcast, and bravely tells them about Jesus, [John 4:28](#). Note she speaks to the ‘men’, KJV, [John 4:28](#).

Look at the effect that Jesus had on this woman; she had come to draw water. She leaves her water jar, [John 4:28](#), why? She had possibly forgotten it, or it would hinder her from hurrying to the city. Maybe she left it for Jesus to have a drink, or she left it as a guarantee that she would return.

Whatever the reason, the result is that she goes and tells others about Jesus, [John 4:29](#). People telling others about Jesus should be a natural result of contact. It is possible, as with many immoral people, that her sin was simply an attempt to fill the need in her life that only God can fill. Many immoral people have a deep sense of religion.

Sin is often a vain attempt to find satisfaction or fulfilment in actions, situations or a relationship because of the void in one’s life which is a result of our need for God.

She has been transformed, and she shares what she has found, causing the townspeople to leave what they are doing and come and see this wonderful man, [John 4:30](#).

She is seriously considering the possibility that this man is Christ. The theme of John’s Gospel is ‘come and see a man’. Jesus wasn’t just a child of His age; He was Deity.

In [John 4:30](#), we see that the people begin to go to see Jesus, but the disciples were begging Him to eat, [John 30:31](#).

In the meantime, Jesus tells the disciples a story similar to that which He told the woman, [John 4:13-14](#).

This time, He relates food to the completing task laid out before Him by the Father, [John 4:32](#). Jesus’ obedience to the Father was total and perfect, but the disciples still do not understand, [John 4:33](#).

[John 4:34](#) gives an idea of the importance of the Atoning work of the Father. He stresses it as one would stress the need for food for physical life. He needs to do the task as much as we need food to eat.

A similarity is drawn between farming and the Gospel, which was common because it was something all the people could relate to; it made understanding easier, [John 4:35-38](#).

The words, ‘lift up your eyes’ or ‘open your eyes’, [John 4:35](#), tell us that probably the disciples were looking down the road towards Sychar, and they could see the hordes of people coming down the road with the sun glinting off their white robes like the reflection of the sun on a cornfield.

Jesus is speaking of the Heavenly harvest of souls, not the physical grain crop. If this had been left to a committee of men, they would say yes, they are needy, but they are not ready.

The seed had been sown by Jesus in the mind of the woman, [John 4:1-16](#), and now He and His disciples would reap the harvest together, [John 4:37-39](#). Jesus is laying the groundwork for that which Philip is to proclaim later in [Acts 8:4-25](#).

The ‘harvest is now’ [John 4:35](#), today is the day of salvation, [2 Corinthians 6:2](#). A call is made for workers to get to the task of harvesting the souls of people in whom the seed had previously been planted, [Matthew 9:37-38](#).

Today, you can see some people being the sowers of seed, some tenders as growth to understanding appears, and others the harvest takers, those who complete the task, [1 Corinthians 3:6-7](#).

Should we wait until these Samaritans live as we do before we tell them the Gospel? Should we wait until their religion is the same, their morals are the same?

Should we wait till they are just like us before we tell them about Jesus? No, tell them now, the changes can come later. It will take time, as they say, Rome wasn’t built in a day, but we cannot wait forever to get started.

MANY SAMARITANS BELIEVE

‘Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So, when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words, many more became believers. They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.’ [John 4:39-42](#)

[John 4:39-42](#) tells us the Samaritan woman is a herald of the Gospel. People hear what she has to say and believe which indicates how Jesus can use all people, not just a ‘good’ select group. They believed because of the woman’s testimony, her witness, which is the word ‘marturia’, in Greek.

The Samaritans quickly accept the Gospel of the Messiah’s coming and the need for repentance. Jesus stays two days, [John 4:40](#), and preaches, resulting in many converts, [John 4:41](#).

No mention is made of any miracles; it seems the people accepted the message without the need for any further confirmation. As a result of their own meeting with Jesus, many more believe, they had now heard for themselves, [John 4:41](#).

In [John 4:42](#), the woman exaggerates how much Jesus has told her, but she must have been very enthusiastic to get such a good response. She had little knowledge of the Gospel but seemed to display much love.

It is important when the Gospel is spread that the result is belief in Jesus, not in the preacher who preached a good sermon. Faith is to be in Christ, not in man.

The Samaritans call Jesus, ‘The Saviour of the world’, [John 4:42](#). They would be familiar with this title because it was also applied to the Caesars, Augustine, Julius, Claudius, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, and others.

This is accurate reporting on John’s behalf, [John 19:35](#) / [John 20:30-31](#) / [John 21:24](#). Jesus has turned a conversation about water into a soul-winning opportunity, with the result of a harvest of souls, [1 Corinthians 3:6-7](#).

JESUS HEALS AN OFFICIAL'S SON

‘After the two days, he left for Galilee. (Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honour in his own country.) When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, for they also had been there. Once more, he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death. “Unless you people see signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.” The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.” “Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.” The man took Jesus at his word and departed. While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, “Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him.” Then the father realised that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So, he and his whole household believed. This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.’
John 4:43-54

What does this picture in Galilee contribute to John’s picture of Jesus? This has been called the ‘Great Galilean Ministry’. Jesus completes His journey to Galilee after a two-day stopover teaching the Samaritans, [John 4:43](#) / [John 4:1-42](#), and He is now heading for Capernaum, [Matthew 1:12-13](#) / [Mark 1:14-15](#) / [Luke 4:14](#).

A large group of people living in the same house was not unusual, and we often see the same today with Indian and Pakistani families in Britain, where there may be as many as sixteen to twenty relatives all living under the same roof.

The statement of the proverb ‘A prophet has no honour in his own country’, [John 4:44](#), could well be referring to Bethlehem in Judea as opposed to Galilee, [Matthew 3:57](#) / [Mark 6:4](#) / [Luke 4:24](#).

All are aware that Galilee is in fact his home, but He was now leaving Judea in favour of a Galilean ministry, [John 4:45](#). In Judea, the Pharisees were causing too much trouble for Jesus, and He didn’t want to provoke a premature confrontation, [John 4:1](#). Perhaps John is implying that the non-Jews were in general more responsive to the Messiah. Despite this fact, Jesus goes to Galilee because He came to die for the salvation of all. [John 4:45](#) tells us that it started well. His welcome in Galilee seems to support this idea.

Jesus must have made a lasting impression on the Jews at the time when He drove the money changers and traders out of the temple, [John 2:13-16](#), and because of other signs they may have seen or heard Him do, such as turning the water into wine at Cana, [John 4:46](#) / [John 2:1-11](#).

But their popularity is based on Him being a miracle worker who could amaze them and not on the reality of His being the Messiah who could save them, [John 4:48](#).

Jesus is later to rebuke them for their hollow faith when they realise that He is not going to feed them and clothe them, [John 6:26-29](#), but rather that He is going to ask them for commitment and even perhaps to give their lives for Him, [Matthew 8:18-22](#). When He begins to talk of discipleship being difficult, they leave and reject Him, [John 6:15-66](#) / [Matthew 13:57](#) / [Mark 6:4](#) / [Luke 4:24](#).

The royal official mentioned in [John 4:46](#) / [John 4:49](#), could have been a nobleman in his own right, or he could have been an official ‘basilikos,’ of royal connection or a civil or military officer in service at the court of Herod Antipas, Tetrarch, ruler of four sections, of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great, [Matthew 14:19](#) / [Mark 6:14](#).

The man travelled from Capernaum to Cana sixteen miles to where Jesus was, without bringing the boy, [John 4:47](#). He seemed to know Jesus as a miracle worker, perhaps he had been in Jerusalem for the Passover, [John 2:23-35](#).

He begs Jesus to return with him; the word ‘begged’ is in the continuous tense, he kept on begging, [John 4:47](#). The man’s faith is evident, even though it was brought on by necessity, as is often the case with us.

The word ‘son’, [John 4:47](#), in Greek is ‘padion’, and it means a little child, [John 16:21](#) / [1 John 2:13](#). He clearly thought that Jesus had to be present, and if He didn’t go, the child would die.

Jesus expresses disappointment at the official's need to see a healing. He says, 'unless you see signs and wonders,' [John 4:48](#). The word 'you' is plural, and so, Jesus is describing the attitude of the group represented by the official's attitude.

The word 'signs' in Greek is 'symion', and it means with purpose, to point the way. The word 'wonders', in Greek, is 'teras', and it describes the effect of a sign, an amazing thing.

The phrase 'will never believe', [John 4:48](#), is a conviction about Jesus, based on the fact that signs alone are not enough, [John 2:23-25](#). Perhaps Jesus was testing the man's faith, [Mark 7:24](#) / [Matthew 8:1-4](#).

While walking, the boy is ill, at the point of death, and so he asked Jesus to 'come down', [John 4:49](#). Cana was a hillside country as opposed to Capernaum on the other side of Galilee; all the geographical details mentioned in the Bible are accurate.

[John 4:49](#) tells us that the man isn't deterred; he persists in his plea, but changes his attitude. The official responds in a more controlled and respectful manner, 'Sir, come down before my child dies.'

Notice the growing faith of man. He believed in Jesus' power to heal, [John 4:47](#), shown by his request. He believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, [John 4:50](#).

The official shows great faith; his son's life is in danger, yet the official leaves without pressing Jesus any further, [John 4:51](#), returning to his son's bedside. He finds that his son is recovering and that the turn in his son's health came at the seventh hour, the time when Jesus said, 'Your son will live', [John 4:52](#).

In [John 4:52](#), we read about the cure, 'Your son will live'. Jesus healed immediately, and without seeing the boy, he began to mend as in a slow process, but immediately.

He finally believes that Jesus is all He claimed to be. Not only he but all his household, when they hear and understand, [John 4:53](#). Family and servants, 'oikia', all heard, all believed, all rejoiced, like the households of Lydia in [Acts 16:13-16](#), and the jailer in [Acts 16:25-34](#).

John says this is the second sign which Jesus performed, [John 4:54](#). Both the first, [John 2:1-11](#), and the second miracles recorded, [John 4:43-53](#), and detailed by John, occurred in the Cana of Galilee.

The purpose of the signs was to bring about faith in Christ, [John 20:30-31](#). A comparison between today's modern healings and those of Jesus will show today's versions sadly lacking, as pointed out earlier.

A COMPARISON BETWEEN JESUS' MIRACLES AND SO-CALLED MODERN-DAY MIRACLES

1. In the miracles of Jesus, the result was immediate, [Matthew 8:3](#) / [Matthew 8:15](#).
2. Faith was not always required on the part of the one involved, [John 11:39](#).
3. Everyone was allowed to come, [Matthew 4:24](#).
4. Jesus healed organic diseases, not just functional ones, [Matthew 15:30](#).
5. The miracles were always public, not private, [Matthew 12:9](#).
6. The person being healed was always made complete, made whole, [Matthew 12:13](#).
7. Miracles were always acknowledged by his enemies, [Matthew 12:13](#).
8. They were not used to make money, [Matthew 10:8](#).
9. The miracles gave God the glory, [Acts 3:2](#).
10. The miracles were always used to support the truth, [Hebrews 2:3](#).
11. They were not used to establish a denomination or promote any sect.

12. The person healed didn't always have to be present, [Matthew 8:5](#).
13. Sometimes they were performed at the protest of the one being healed, [Matthew 8:28](#).
14. Sometimes they were performed because of the faith of others, [Matthew 8:8](#).
15. He didn't heal others while having an illness himself.
16. There was no prior investigation to weed out the wicked.
17. Jesus never tried and failed. Never blame the recipient for lack of faith.
18. Jesus didn't fail to perform a miracle and then blame the presence of an unbeliever.
19. Jesus didn't fail and then say it was God's will.
20. The miracles always proved the power of God, [Matthew 9:6](#).

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

'Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here, a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralysed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once, the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat." But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" So, they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?" The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. Later, Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.' John 5:1-15

THE HEALING AT THE POOL

This is the third miraculous sign given in John's account. Jesus clashed with the religious authorities several times, over healing on the Sabbath, [Mark 3:1-6](#) / [Luke 13:10-17](#) / [Luke 14:1-6](#) / [John 9](#).

It's not the general principle of the Sabbath that He disagrees with, but rather with the petty restrictions imposed by the religious authorities, which often worked against God's purpose in giving the people a weekly day of rest.

Here, the Jews attack Jesus on two counts, Sabbath-breaking and blasphemy, because He puts His own work on the same level as God's, [John 5:17](#). God's activity didn't finish at creation.

The amount of time that passed between the last verse of chapter four and the first verse of chapter five is difficult to determine. The phrase used could indicate any period other than immediately after this, [John 2:12](#).

It doesn't necessarily indicate a long period of time. If this time were clearly indicated, then we would be able to determine more clearly which feast Jesus had travelled back to Jerusalem for, [John 5:1](#).

Whatever the feast, it demonstrates the faithfulness of Jesus. The pool was most likely a mineral water pool similar to those found around the world, [John 5:2](#).

BETHSAIDA

In 'Bethesda' or 'Bethzatha', there may have been more than one pool in this area or a group of pools with the same name, [John 5:2](#). A pool in this area was excavated in 1871 and found to be one-hundred metres long, sixty-seven to eighty wide and seven to eight deep.

It's possible that a gush of mineral water would flow occasionally from the depths, disturbing the water and encouraging those waiting to get in, [John 5:7](#). Such pools are often even today considered to have healing powers, or at least to have some therapeutic value. We call them spas today.

The pool was identified by the five covered colonnades, [John 5:2](#). The latter part of [John 5:3](#) and [John 5:4](#) are generally accepted as being additions to the early text and are omitted from modern versions. It reads as follows, 'Some manuscripts include here, wholly or in part, paralysed—and they waited for the moving of the waters. From time to time, an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease they had.'

The text runs quite clearly without them, and they add little to the understanding of the situation. In [John 5:5](#), we see this paralysed man was one among a multitude of invalids, yet he alone was healed.

The age of the man is unknown, but it seems to have been common knowledge that he had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. He may have advertised 'he had been an invalid for thirty-eight years' to gain a little sympathy. The nature of the invalidity is unknown, but it is more than fair to assume that he was paralysed and otherwise unable to walk.

It may seem strange that Jesus asks, 'Do you want to get well?' [John 5:6](#). There were some 'professional beggars' around in those days who could lose an easy and even perhaps profitable income if cured, and therefore would not want help.

Obviously, Jesus knew the man's heart, and any man could assume that he would want to get well. It could have been that the man, in his depression after thirty-eight years of being an invalid, had given up the idea of ever being well again. He could lose the living he made from begging, or he would have to begin to compete in the job market.

Like many people, long-term invalids can sometimes learn to feel comfortable in their limitations and their familiar environment. Jesus needed to challenge the man's will and ask the man for faith in himself. It is sad to see a man in such a desperate position with no one to help him for all those years.

[John 5:7](#) tells us that as the water stirred, it was each man for himself, and as a result, the invalid never had a chance. The water could be stirred by a gush of mineral-rich water, or perhaps someone actually stirred the pool at certain times.

Note, though, that the man didn't see Jesus as a potential healer; he still had his faith in the pool. Jesus could well have been touched by the man's plight as He gives a strong instruction, three imperatives, [John 5:8](#).

1. Get up! 2. Pick up your mat and, 3. Walk! He may have known that it was just tradition that gave him belief in the pool, but Jesus gives a direct instruction which the man immediately follows, [John 5:9](#).

Imagine the joy, no aches and stiffness after all those years, just up and on. Again, notice the healing was immediate and complete. Jesus sometimes chose not to heal completely for His own purpose, [Mark 8:22-25](#).

In [John 5:9-13](#), we see that Jesus is then persecuted for healing on the Sabbath. This is the first real religious hostility He has encountered; the attitude of the individual is important.

It was the Sabbath, this was the first time, the Sabbath 'law' was broken as a result of Jesus' action in Jerusalem. This wasn't the law of Moses but the fine hair-splitting type definition that had appeared around the Sabbath.

Sabbath observance, the law of Moses strictly forbade working on the Sabbath, [Exodus 20:8-11](#) / [Jeremiah 17:19-27](#) / [Nehemiah 13:15-18](#). The Jews saw law-breaking, [John 1:19](#) / [John 5:33](#), instead of rejoicing with the man they were looking for fault someone to blame, [John 5:10](#).

They Jewish leaders said to Jesus, 'the law forbids you', [John 5:10](#). No it doesn't, the law forbade work for money but the animals still had to be fed, and the priests still made their sacrifices.

This prohibition applied to that type of burden-bearing which was connected with ordinary labour, secular work, bargaining, and bartering connected with ordinary trade during the week.

EXAMPLES

For example, if a man had a toothache on the Sabbath, he was forbidden to apply vinegar directly to the tooth, but he could take large quantities of vinegar with his food, and this did not come under the command of work. The Rabbinic authorities defined work under thirty-nine separate regulations.

When they criticised the disciples for taking a handful of grain on the Sabbath, [Matthew 12:1-2](#), they said that it was work because it involved reaping, threshing, winnowing and preparing a meal. Dragging a chair along the ground was work; it was classed as ploughing if it made a furrow in the ground that seed could fall into.

If your house caught fire, you could run outside, but you could only carry out the clothes you were wearing. If you stripped off and went back in and put on some more clothes and ran out again, that would be all right, and you could do that as often as you like.

[1 Maccabees 2](#) tells us of the Jewish revolt against the Syrians when two thousand men were wiped out when they were attacked on the Sabbath and wouldn't defend themselves. Jesus wasn't violating the law, only their human traditions.

[John 5:11-13](#) tells us that the man didn't even know who had healed him, he had no faith in Jesus or the cause, and the healing depended entirely on the power of Jesus Christ. The man evades all the conditions put on potentially healed people of today's healing ministries.

Although [Jeremiah 19:20-21](#) forbids the carrying of a load on the Sabbath, the Jews ignore the fact that this man had been healed; they did not celebrate with him, and they didn't even congratulate him.

They immediately persecuted Jesus because of the binding of the law, Jesus sought no payment or thanks for His charity, He didn't declare Himself or the Gospel, He simply, 'slipped away into the crowd', [John 5:13](#).

Notice Jesus 'found him', [John 5:14](#). This implies that Jesus had been looking for him, [John 9:33](#) / [John 1:45](#). The man's body had been healed, but his spiritual status hasn't been mentioned. As a result, Jesus again finds the man and mentions the more spiritual aspects of life and so. He encourages the man to live a more holy life, [John 5:14](#).

This isn't a threat of physical disability if the man doesn't behave himself; rather, it is an example of Jesus encouraging the man to prevent his spiritual disablement. The eternal consequences of sin are worse than any illness he has suffered.

Perhaps his illness had been caused by a specific sin, and Jesus warns of the more serious consequences than physical ones that await those who face spiritual punishment. If he were to continue, a worse punishment could be the result. This implies that, being warned about the Final condemnation, he will lose his soul.

The ex-invalid then tells the Jews who it was who healed him, [John 5:14](#), which proves that more occurred in the conversation between Jesus and the man than we are told. Jesus did quite possibly tell him of salvation.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE SON

‘So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. In his defence, Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” For this reason, they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these so that you will be amazed. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him. “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.’

John 5:16-29

The Jewish establishment had missed the whole point of the healing, and no mention is made of their reaction to the healing itself. As the text says, ‘these things’, [John 5:16](#), this tells us that they knew that this wasn’t an isolated incident.

Now they believe that they have a good reason for persecuting Jesus; they sincerely believe that He sinned by healing on the Sabbath. Jesus now claims and emphasises in a special sense a Father and Son relationship with God, [John 5:17](#). To the Jews, this claim is in effect the same as claiming to be the Father, God.

Notice that Jesus calls God Father, [John 5:18](#). He can do this because He is a man and the Father became His God at his conception, [Psalms 22:10](#) / [Matthew 27:46](#) / [Luke 22:42](#) / [Mark 14:36](#) / [John 20:17](#) / [Revelation 3:2](#) / [Revelation 3:12](#).

The Jews were enraged, [John 5:18](#), because they knew that for any individual human to say, ‘God is the Father of me’, was to claim equality with God the Father, having the same divine nature as the Father, [Isaiah 64:8](#) / [Deuteronomy 32:6](#) / [Psalm 82:6](#) / [Psalm 89:26](#) / [Isaiah 63:16](#) / [Jeremiah 3:4](#) / [Jeremiah 3:19](#) / [Malachi 1:6](#) / [Malachi 2:10](#).

This would be seen as blasphemy in their books because they rejected even the possibility that this man was from heaven, sent by the Father to save his people from their sins, [Matthew 1:21](#).

God works on the Sabbath by sustaining life, and Jesus, who is God, also has work to do on that day, equality with God, [John 5:18](#). Jesus doesn’t break the Moses-given law but the traditions of the fathers who have grown up around that law.

As a result of Jesus' claim, the Jews now wish to kill him, for they believe He has committed the act of blasphemy and thus deserves to die, [John 5:18](#). His claim implies that He is God, not next to Him, or with Him, but of Him, the same as Him, united in Him. In [John 5:19-23](#), we find three themes concerning Jesus.

1. His unity with the Father.
2. His divine authority.
3. The witnesses authenticate His claims.

Jesus makes His relationship with the Father very clear; all who were around Him knew exactly what He was saying. Jesus declared his deity, and those who heard, knew and understood.

If Jesus is guilty of breaking the Sabbath, then so is God, for they are both the same. Jesus is either God or He is a liar and blasphemer, not a sub-god or angel.

Jesus is fully aware of the Father's plans and purposes, and the Father shows Him all that He is doing, [John 5:19-20](#). Throughout [John 5:19-23](#), Jesus draws comparisons between Himself and the Father, and in that way, He emphasises the closeness of the relationship between the Father and the Son.

Notice in [John 5:21](#), that the Jews accepted that God could raise from the dead and give life, [Deuteronomy 32:39](#) / [1 Samuel 2:68](#) / [2 Kings 5:7](#). So can Jesus because He asserts that He also is the life-giver 'the Son gives life to whom He wills,' [John 5:21](#) / [John 14:6](#). All judgement is entrusted to the Son, [Acts 17:30-31](#) / [2 Corinthians 5:10](#), this demands honour to be given to the Son and this must have incensed the crowd.

The word 'has', [John 5:22](#), is present tense and means salvation is in Jesus Christ; He will judge. The whole Christian doctrine is excluded from this passage, and all is focused on Christ; man is unimportant in his ideas, all is Christ.

In [John 5:24](#), we find the words, 'Truly, truly,' which are important.

Jesus promised eternal life for those who believe in Him. He displays authority to forgive sins and declare men saved, [Matthew 9:9](#) / [Romans 8:1](#). This passage teaches that all who have accepted the Son have passed from death to life, thus Christians now have eternal life as a reality, [John 3:36](#) / [1 John 5:13](#). Like a house on a mortgage, this life is, or soon will be, available to all who are dead in the spirit, they will all have an opportunity to be reborn.

It's conditional, in terms of our relationship with Jesus, [1 John 5:11-12](#) / [John 10:27-30](#), we hope for eternal life, [Titus 1:1-2](#), because in heaven we will enjoy it to the full.

It deals with our ability to see God's plan, like using a telescope or microscope, the higher the magnification, the more we see, deep wells of knowledge, belief and trust, so hold on to Jesus. Later in [John 5:25-29](#), we see that this speaks of the Son and judgment. Notice there are two resurrections mentioned.

1. Spiritual, 'now the hour is coming', dead in sin, [John 5:25](#), Pentecost, [Acts 2](#) / [Ephesians 2:1-5](#).
2. Physical, 'all in the tombs', [John 5:28-29](#), all physically dead, [1 Thessalonians 4:16-18](#).

Note that Jesus has life in Himself, [John 5:26](#) / [Acts 24:15](#). Because of Jesus, mainly because of His nature, He will be the judge of men. And as a result, an entirely fair hearing will be given as he has been a man and has been tempted as a man, [John 5:30](#).

Jesus continues to tell the Jews present of great things to come, He indicates an opportunity for all to hear and receive His word. Jesus has claimed a special relationship with the Father, He has in fact claimed to be of the same substance, a physical explanation of a spiritual relationship, as the Father.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON FATHER SON

A special relationship with Jesus. Jesus calls God ‘My Father’, [John 5:17](#).

The Father does what the Son does. The Son does what the Father does, [John 5:19](#).

The Father loves the Son and shows. The Son enjoys perfect knowledge of Him, His works, and the Father, [John 5:20](#).

The Father raises the dead. The Son gives life, [John 5:21](#).

The Father trusts his Son with judgment. The Son judges, [John 5:22](#).

To honour the Father, the Son must be. To honour the Son, the Father must be honoured, [John 5:23](#).

The Father has life in himself. The Son has life in himself, [John 5:26](#).

In [John 5:29](#), we see, as always in Scripture, that judgment is on the basis of works, though salvation, of course, is a gift from God, causing the response of faith, [Ephesians 2:8-9](#). The Jews were right, Jesus was claiming equality with God, [John 5:18](#), but this didn’t mean He was setting Himself up as an independent authority, [John 5:19](#).

Jesus has knowledge of God’s plan, [John 5:19-20](#), He has God’s authorization for all He says and does, [John 5:19](#) / [John 5:30](#). He has the power to give eternal life, [John 5:21](#) / [John 5:24](#) / [John 5:40](#), and finally, Jesus has the right and authority to judge all men living and dead, [John 5:25-29](#).

TESTIMONIES ABOUT JESUS

‘If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. There is another who testifies in my favour, and I know that his testimony about me is true. “You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light. “I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. “I do not accept glory from human beings, but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

“But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?’ [John 5:30-47](#)

The word ‘testify’ [John 5:30](#), or witness, ‘*marturia*’, means testimony, evidence, which is the great theme in John. He gives evidence to prove who Jesus is and claims to be, that we might have life, [John 20:30](#). He wants quite rational evidence of the acceptance; He wants faith, not credulity.

CAN HIS CLAIMS BE PROVEN?

Yes, witness after witness and with accurate testimony, it is reasonable and logical, the same applies to His resurrection. Jesus discredits His own testimony, [John 5:31](#), because the testimony of a man in his own support is invalid in accordance with human standards.

Here, He accepts these standards, while in [John 8:14](#), He invokes higher Godly standards. He specifies the corroboration of witnesses.

1. Another. The Father, [John 5:32-38](#) / [Matthew 17:5](#) / [John 8:18](#) / [Mark 9:1-7](#).

2. The testimony of John the Baptist, [John 5:33-35](#) / [John 1:9-37](#).
3. Jesus, His works and His miracles, [John 5:36](#) / [John 3:2](#).
4. Jewish scriptures, [John 5:39-44](#) / [Luke 24:26-48](#).
5. Moses testifies, [John 5:45-47](#).

JOHN THE BAPTISER

John the Baptist bears witness, [John 5:33-35](#). It appears as if John was quite well accepted and trusted, [John 5:35](#). Now that the true light of life has come, that light to which John testified, [John 1:7-10](#), the Jews have rejected John's teachings, [John 1:11](#).

THE SCRIPTURES

The scriptures bear testimony, [John 5:34-40](#), throughout the prophets and elsewhere, that the coming of Christ is proclaimed. The learned men who searched the scriptures are not able to recognise the one they are looking for, even when he stands before them. They fail to see Him; life is not found in the scriptures, but is freely available to all in Christ.

THE FATHER

The Father bears testimony, [John 5:41-44](#). Pride and falsehood bear testimony to Christ.

MOSES

In [John 5:45-47](#), we see the most powerful testimony of all, the testimony of Moses. The Torah-loving Jews must have shuddered when Jesus said, 'Your accuser is Moses'. The Torah indicated the coming of Christ and what His spiritual appearance would be like.

The Jews clung to Moses, but couldn't recognise the one Moses spoke of, [Deuteronomy 18:15-19](#); this is spiritual short-sightedness. The accusation that they didn't believe in Moses, [John 5:46-47](#), indicated the spiritual superficiality of their faith; they were lawyers and philosophers, not spiritual men.

CONCLUSION

They had many reasons for rejecting Jesus. They were deaf and blind, [John 5:37](#) / [John 5:14-24](#) / [2 Corinthians 4:44](#). They were unwilling to receive the words of God, [John 5:38](#). The word didn't find a place in their hearts.

Unwillingness to receive is an attitude of the mind; whatever God says should be acceptable to us, Luke 8:15. They had no love for God, John 5:42.

Jesus was saying their refusal to accept Him shows that they have not one scrap of love in their hearts. If they love God and His word, they will know Him; if they see Him, they will see the Father in Him, John 14:1-11.

They preferred man's praise to God's, John 5:44 / John 12:42-43. They didn't seem to honour God, Matthew 26. He is a God of love, 1 John 4:8, but we all have a cross to carry, Matthew 16:24-26.

Is the praise of men more important than the praise of God? No. A person who rightly understands the Old Testament scriptures will be convinced that the Messiah was Jesus the Christ, the anointed one of God.

Mere knowledge of the scriptures is not enough, John 5:39; we need to keep on searching. The scribes wrote copies of the scriptures and had every page numbered, every verse and every line. They calculated the middle letter of each verse that contained all the letters of the alphabet or a certain number of them.

In copying out the original script, they were not allowed to do more than one letter without consulting the original again. They knew the scripture but not the Saviour. Moses, the lawgiver they loved, would become their judge on the last day, John 5:45.

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION

‘After this, Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples.’ John 6:1-3

A period of time passed between chapters five and six, but we don't know how much time, but during this time, Jesus' ministry continues in the Galilean area. Here, He heals many people and teaches much regarding life and love, and of course, He runs into trouble with the Jews. John the Baptist is also beheaded in this time period. Much of this missing time can be read about in the Gospels.

However, it must be understood that these accounts don't record all the events that occurred. Why? Firstly, because these were perhaps not necessary to John's purpose, John 20:30-31, and secondly, because John assumes his readers are already familiar with the other Gospel writings.

Jesus has returned from Jerusalem to Galilee, and note that each chapter so far has alternated between Jerusalem and Galilee. From the other Gospel accounts, we can deduce that this actually occurred after the time when the apostles had been sent out to preach; this visit to the mountain was probably for rest and fellowship, Mark 6:30.

The Sea of Galilee, John 6:1, was also known by other names, Lake Gennesaret, 1 Kings 19:19-21, Sea of Tiberius, John 21:1, was probably the better-known name outside of Palestine.

It's also called Lake Chinneroth, Joshua 12:3, Lake Chinnereth, Numbers 34:11. It's a small area by today's standards, but in those days, it supported a relatively large population.

On the north-east coast of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus withdrew after hearing of the death of John the Baptist, Matthew 14:12-14, and to give the apostles rest after their extensive preaching, Mark 6:30-36.

There was no avoiding the crowd that followed Jesus; they wanted to see more miracles, and they probably carried the sick with them. But some must have recognised Jesus as the Messiah and were genuinely wanting to hear more of His lessons. He welcomed them and healed their sick, [John 6:2](#) / [Matthew 14:14](#) / [Luke 9:11](#).

The fact that the people have come because of miracles is especially relevant when you see how quickly they deserted Jesus when He would not be their king, [John 6:15](#), and when it's time to eat flesh and drink blood, [John 6:52-66](#).

It seems that the disciples were tired after the mission they had been on. Jesus went up the hill to get a little rest, but the crowd persisted in following Him. Jesus sits in a reclining position, [John 6:3](#), as was traditional at the time, [Luke 4:20](#) / [Matthew 13:2](#) / [Matthew 23:2](#) / [Matthew 24:3](#).

These events seem to stand out very clearly in John's mind. He remembers which disciples replied to Jesus' questions, [John 6:7-8](#), he recalls the boy with the food, [John 6:9](#), and remembers how far they rowed from shore afterwards when they saw Jesus, [John 6:19](#).

JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND

'Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So, the men sat down, about five thousand in number. Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also, the fish, as much as they wanted. And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." So, they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.' John 6:4-15

The feeding of the five thousand is the fourth sign recorded by John, and it is recorded in all four Gospels: [John 6:1-15](#) / [Luke 9:10-17](#) / [Matthew 14:13-15](#) / [Mark 6:32-44](#).

There are only two miracles of Jesus recorded in all four Gospels, the feeding of the five-thousand and His resurrection, [John 20:1-20](#) / [Luke 24:1-12](#) / [Matthew 28:1-10](#) / [Mark 16:1-15](#).

We don't know the time that transpired between the sending of the twelve in [Luke 9:1](#) / [Mark 6:12](#), and their reporting back to Jesus, [Luke 9:10](#) / [Mark 6:29](#). It seems the disciples came to tell Jesus all that had happened to John, [Matthew 14:1-12](#) / [Mark 6:14-30](#).

When the disciples returned from their preaching trip, Jesus sought to leave the multitude in order to spend time with them privately, [Matthew 14:13](#) / [Mark 6:30](#). They had been so busy they hadn't even had time for meals, [Mark 6:31](#). Mark lists at least eleven instances when Jesus went to a place of rest. This is a good example for any evangelist who has given himself to periods of intensive evangelistic efforts. Because these worthy evangelists worked hard, they needed the rest.

They needed time to talk among themselves and with God about the great things God had done through them. This was a retreat for prayer, thanksgiving and discussion.

Everyone needs some time out from their busy life schedule, and Jesus knew that the disciples needed some time out, for many of them had first believed because of John's preaching. They withdrew across the sea of Galilee to a quiet place for meditation and prayer, [Matthew 14:13](#) / [Mark 6:31](#).

The people saw that Jesus entered a boat to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, [Matthew 14:13](#). When Jesus arrived at the other side, the multitudes had already arrived there on foot, [Matthew 14:13](#).

A large crowd had followed Jesus because of the signs He performed by healing the sick, [John 6:1-2](#) / [Luke 9:11](#) / [Matthew 14:14](#) / [Mark 6:33-34](#). As the Passover was near, [John 6:4](#), it must have been spring.

This was one of the three major feasts that the Jews were obliged to attend. It seems that Jesus is now at the height of His popularity. Soon, after this bread of life discourse, many of His followers were to turn back, [John 6:66](#).

Now they were coming to Jesus, and they were looking for spiritual leadership. They were like sheep without a shepherd, [Mark 6:34](#). This was the leadership that the religious leaders of the day weren't giving. It was in the context of their searching for someone to lead them that Jesus worked this miracle of creation.

We see Jesus' love and understanding of people. He wasn't only a leader but a leader with compassion for the multitudes. On this occasion, His healing of the sick and the feeding the multitudes was motivated by His compassion, [Matthew 15:32](#) / [Matthew 20:34](#).

Therefore, when He saw their zeal to follow Him, He was moved with compassion, [Matthew 14:14](#) / [Mark 6:34](#). They were a nation of people who hadn't been spiritually led for years, and thus, they sought someone to give them guidance.

The disciples want to send the people away, [Luke 9:12](#) / [Matthew 14:15](#) / [Mark 6:36](#), but Jesus had other plans.

Notice how Jesus allowed the apostles time to search for food to feed the people, [Matthew 14:16](#). The disciples suggested that someone go into the city and buy food, [Mark 6:36](#).

Jesus asked Philip where they were going to get food in order to feed so many people, but the question was really a test of Philip's faith, [John 6:5-6](#). Jesus tests Philip, [John 6:5-6](#). This is particularly relevant if the apostles have been performing miracles, healing, preaching, etc.

He already knew what was to happen, but it was appropriate for His plans to test, 'peirazo', Philip at this time to see if he understood that his Lord can supply every need and handle every situation.

Philip fails the test miserably as he looks only to himself and the common purse for a solution, [John 6:7](#) / [Mark 6:37](#).

He ignores the role Jesus could play by employing His power and fails to understand, [John 14:8](#).

Two-hundred denarii equal around four quarts of barley, sixteen-hundred quarts of wheat which was the purchasing power of the day, an awful lot of money, [Mark 6:37](#) / [John 6:7](#). One denarius was a working man's wage for the day and so this equalled eight months' wages.

In [John 6:8-9](#), we see Andrew attempting to get something organised, and he finds a 'paidarion,' a little boy with some food and presents this to Jesus. He passes the test that Philip failed, and he gives Jesus the chance to perform a miracle.

He uses a little initiative and gets the job done. Jesus asked the question in order to stimulate a faith response from Philip and the others. Among the disciples, or among the multitude, they came up with only five loaves of bread and two fish, [Luke 9:13](#) / [Mark 6:38](#) / [Matthew 14:17](#).

The loaves, [John 6:9](#) / [Luke 9:13](#) / [Matthew 14:17](#) / [Mark 6:38](#), would have been small, almost like rolls, 'artos', round flat cakes made with wheat flour, or black barley bread, it was the common daily bread of the people. The fish were probably dried or pickled, as was the norm at the time.

Mark reports that the people sat down on the green grass, and the number given is five-thousand men, [Mark 6:44](#), as does [Luke 9:14](#), and John, [John 6:10](#). [Matthew 14:21](#) says 'five thousand plus women and children'.

This could have been the total number present, or another five thousand women, and it's possible children could have been there. The total present was immaterial; if Jesus could feed five-thousand, He could just as easily feed ten-thousand, [Psalm 23:1-2](#).

Luke's accounts tell us that Jesus split the people into groups of fifty, [Luke 9:14](#). Mark tells us they were split into groups of one hundred and groups of fifty, [Mark 6:40](#).

Jesus always gave thanks before eating. Some Bibles say, 'blessing', but this wasn't blessing the crowd, but thanks to God for the bread, [John 6:11](#) / [Luke 9:16](#) / [Matthew 14:19](#) / [Mark 6:41](#).

In other words, Jesus thanked the Father for the food. This is what He did for the bread and the wine when He instituted the Lord's Supper: He didn't bless the bread and the wine; He thanked God for providing it, [Luke 22:19-20](#) / [Matthew 26:26-27](#) / [Mark 14:22-23](#). Jesus left a good example for the disciples in the years to come to do likewise concerning the blessing of food, [1 Timothy 4:4-5](#).

'BLESSED THE BREAD!'

Imagine you're sitting around the dinner table preparing to enjoy a sumptuous meal, and someone is asked to 'bless the food' before you eat. The person praying says something like this, 'Heavenly Father, bless this food, to the nourishment of our bodies, may it strengthen us to do your work, in Jesus' Name, Amen.'

I'm sure we've all heard this prayer at some point in our lives, maybe you've even prayed something similar before you ate your food. I was speaking with a brother just recently and asked him why he blessed 'the food' before eating. Jokingly, he said, the food might be poisoned, and we need God to make it safe to eat!

Now he may have been joking, but there's some truth in what he said. Some Christians sadly believe, although they won't openly say it, that they can't or won't eat any food unless God has somehow miraculously made it safe to eat first.

It's as though there's something wrong with the food in the first place, and so by blessing the food before eating, it somehow becomes 'kosher' enough to eat. I can understand this kind of thinking, especially when you're about to eat some food from certain fast food outlets: 'Dear God, this food doesn't look or smell great, so please bless it and make it edible for me to eat!'

WHERE DOES OUR FOOD COME FROM?

When we ask the question, where does our food come from? You may be forgiven for saying the local supermarket or the local farmers. As Christians, we know this isn't true; they are simply the suppliers of the food, but it's God Himself who is the real provider of food, [Genesis 1:29-30](#) / [Genesis 9:3](#) / [Psalm 104:14](#).

Since it's God who is the ultimate provider, He's the one who provides the sun and the rain for our food to grow, it's Him we should be thanking for our food. James tells us that 'every good and perfect gift is from above', [James 1:17](#), and this would include our food. And when we pray, 'Give us our daily bread', [Matthew 6:11](#), we're acknowledging that our food is an answer to our prayers for that food.

The problem with 'blessing the food' is that it doesn't acknowledge where the real source of the food comes from. When we pray before eating, should we bless the food or give thanks to God for providing that food?

Paul taught that believers should receive their food with thanksgiving when he spoke of 'Certain foods, which GOD CREATED to be received with THANKSGIVING by those who believe and who know the truth,' [1 Timothy 4:3](#).

GIVING THANKS FOR THE FOOD

Before miraculously multiplying the loaves and fishes and providing a meal for the five-thousand, Jesus asked the Father's blessing upon the food. Notice, He didn't bless the food, but blessed God or thanked God for providing it, [John 6:11](#) / [Luke 9:16](#) / [Matthew 14:19](#) / [Mark 6:41](#).

Before miraculously multiplying the loaves and fishes and providing a meal for the four-thousand, Jesus asked the Father's blessing upon the food. Notice again, He didn't bless the food, but blessed God or thanked God for providing it, [Matthew 15:36](#) / [Mark 8:7](#).

Later in the Book of Acts, we read about the Apostle Paul, publicly and in the presence of many people, some of whom were probably not Christians, who thanked God for the food before eating. Notice again, Paul didn't bless the actual food; he thanked God for it, [Acts 27:35](#).

BEFORE AND AFTER A MEAL

Let me share with you another interesting thought concerning giving thanks to God for our food. In the Old Testament, we see that God's people not only gave thanks BEFORE they ate the food God provided for them, but they also gave thanks to God for the food AFTER they had eaten it, [Deuteronomy 8:7-10](#).

Remember, we're to thank God or bless God for the food, and that's because we acknowledge that the food itself is already a blessing. Now notice [Deuteronomy 8:10](#), which tells us that God's people were to praise or bless God AFTER they had eaten. I think it's right that we give thanks to God BEFORE we eat, but maybe it wouldn't be a bad practice to give thanks to God AFTER we've eaten.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

So here we are gathered together on the Lord's Day as a church to remember the Lord's death, burial and resurrection at 'The Lord's Supper'. The presiding brother says a few words and shares a few thoughts to help us focus on Christ's death, burial and resurrection and then the prayers come.

The prayer for the bread usually goes something like this, 'Dear God, as we're about to partake of this bread, which represents your Son's body, please bless it to us as we partake of it.'

Then follows the prayer for the wine, which usually goes something like this: 'Dear God, as we're about to partake of this wine, which represents your Son's blood, please bless it to us as we partake of it.'

If you've been attending worship for a few years and participating in the Lord's Supper, the chances are you've probably heard these prayers or something similar many times in your Christian life. Maybe you've prayed something similar yourself if you were presiding over the Supper.

I'm sure you've noticed the link between asking God to 'bless the food' before eating the food and asking God to bless 'the bread and the wine' before partaking of it. The Catholic church believes the Eucharist, the bread and the wine, actually becomes the body and blood of Christ; this is called 'Transubstantiation'.

Now, I know most Christians don't believe in that teaching, but again, we ask the question, why would anyone want God to bless the bread and the wine? Is there something wrong with the bread and the wine? Do they really believe that something miraculous is going to happen when they ask God to bless them both?

Notice what Jesus actually did when He instituted His Supper, and notice especially that He never once blessed the actual bread and wine, [Luke 22:19-20](#) / [Matthew 26:26-27](#) / [Mark 14:22](#) / [Luke 24:30](#) / [1 Corinthians 11:23-25](#). As I mentioned earlier, you will notice what Jesus actually did: He 'Gave Thanks' for the bread and wine, He never blessed the actual bread and wine.

Who did He give thanks to? Obviously, it was the Father for providing the bread and the wine. He gave thanks to the Father, or blessed the Father; the word 'bless' is another way of expressing thanks to God.

The Jews, even to this day, still declare with the entrance of the Sabbath on Friday evenings as members sip wine from a cup, 'Blessed are you, O Lord, Our God, King of the Universe who creates the fruit of the vine.'

Another blessing as members break bread is, 'Blessed are you, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.' Notice again that in these 'blessings', God the Creator is being thanked for giving food, not the bread and wine.

These would probably have been similar to the prayers that Jesus would have uttered during His 'Last Passover Supper.' [Luke 22:17-18](#). What About [Matthew 26:26](#)?

When we read the King James Version, at first glance, it reads as Jesus 'blessed it', i.e. 'blessed the bread'; however, when you read a Greek lexicon, you'll discover that the word 'IT' isn't in the original text.

It reads as follows, '(as) they were eating moreover of them, having taken Jesus bread and having blessed, broke and having given to the disciples, he said eat: this is the body of me,' [Matthew 26:26](#).

The word 'IT' is kind of misleading in the KJV and so we always have to remember that the Bible doesn't contradict itself, if any text appears to say the opposite of all the other related texts, it's usually because the translators haven't done a good job of translating it.

When Christians pray, I believe it's good practice to think about what we're actually saying in our prayers, especially when it comes to giving thanks to God for our food or giving thanks to God for providing the bread and the wine at the Supper.

Our children and any visitors often learn how to pray by listening to others, and all too often, they will simply repeat what they have heard time and time again until they are mature enough to share their own thoughts.

Here we are, getting ready to enjoy a sumptuous meal, and someone asks you to 'bless the food', why not simply say, 'The food is already a blessing from God, and so, if you don't mind, I'll give thanks to Him for providing it.'

Here we are gathered together on the Lord's Day to participate in the Lord's Supper. Someone asked you to bless the bread and the wine. Why not simply say, 'The bread and the wine are already a blessing from God, and so, if you don't mind, I'll give thanks to Him for providing them.'

WHY TWELVE BASKETS?

There are so many ideas out there about the significance of the twelve baskets, [John 6:13](#) / [Luke 9:17](#) / [Matthew 14:20](#) / [Mark 6:43](#). The number twelve is such a common recurring number throughout the Scriptures.

The number twelve is mentioned forty-eight times, and the word twelve is mentioned one-hundred and thirty-three times. Jacob had twelve sons, who became the twelve tribes of Israel; Abraham's son Ishmael had twelve sons, and Jesus had twelve Apostles.

There's always a danger of reading a text and making it mean something it wasn't meant to mean. I personally believe that the twelve baskets of food were left so that each one of those disciples who participated could take one.

This miracle was unique. Jesus asked them to take up the leftovers in order to impress on the minds of the disciples that this was a miracle of creation. They knew how much bread and fish they started with and how much was left over, and the only conclusion they could come to was that bread and fish had been created by God, who was in their midst.

Later in His ministry, when He wanted to confirm who He was in the minds of the disciples, Jesus asked them to recall this miracle and the second feeding of four thousand in [Matthew 15:32-38](#), where Jesus discussed the 'bread of life,' which discussion resulted from this miracle, [John 6:27-59](#) / [Matthew 16:8-19](#).

In [John 6:14-15](#), we see that this was a visible sign because all present saw it and benefited from it. There were two results: first, they wanted to make Jesus king by force and second, they deduced that Jesus must be the prophet that was foretold, the prophet mentioned is a reference to the one predicted in [Deuteronomy 18:18](#) / [John 1:21](#).

The people have obviously wanted a political Messiah, and now here is one who can feed them without any effort on their part. He could provide a physical utopia for them. The Jews wanted a political and military leader like David, who would re-establish David's throne and the physical kingdom of Israel.

Jesus wasn't the kind of king they wanted Him to be. This was the high time in His popularity, and from this time on, they began to leave in disappointment, as He wasn't what they expected, and also, they were disturbed by his teaching, [John 6:60-66](#).

Jesus withdrew alone for a time of reflection, [John 6:15](#) / [Matthew 14:25](#). He wanted the people to receive Him after a sincere, well-thought-out decision, but He didn't want them to take Him in the emotional state they were now in. Christ is the king of individual hearts by faith and obedience, true and sincere, not by force, which is no example of kingship. Jesus is looking for unconditional surrender of the heart, [Luke 9:23](#) / [Proverbs 3:5-6](#) / [Romans 12:1-2](#).

This multitude of seekers came looking for one who would lead them. They found the Chief Shepherd and the Son of God who would lead them to victory through the cross. The proof of the miracle was magnified in the baskets of leftovers they took up.

The power of the One who was in their midst was measured by the leftovers. He was truly the Son of God who had the power of creation, [John 1:1-2](#). Jesus set the stage for the miracle to prove His power over the physical laws of nature. He sent the disciples on by themselves by boat on the sea, knowing that a storm would develop that would engulf them, [Matthew 14:22-23](#).

JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER

'When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.' John 6:16-21

The account of Jesus walking on the water is recorded in [John 6:16-21](#) / [Matthew 14:22-36](#) / [Mark 6:45-56](#). Jesus sent His disciples ahead of him on a boat and then proceeded to spend some time alone in prayer, [Matthew 4:22-23](#) / [Mark 6:45-46](#).

In the early morning from 3:00 am to 6:00 am, the fourth watch, Jesus, walked by them on the Sea of Galilee, [Matthew 14:25](#). The disciples left about 6 pm, but were still rowing when Jesus came to them in the fourth watch of the night, 3-4 am, and they had rowed only three or four miles, [John 6:19](#).

The disciples were rowing against the wind in the late evening, [Matthew 14:24-33](#). They didn't think that their lives were in danger; they were simply struggling against the wind. The sea became so rough that some of the disciples were becoming seasick!

The Sea of Galilee was infamous for its storms, as they were sudden and violent in this area, causing common disruption of the fishing, [John 6:18](#). The wind is disrupted by the mountains of the region and funnelled through the Jordan River valley, causing strong winds on the Sea of Galilee. This is common even today.

Jesus was passing by them, [Mark 6:48](#), not in the sense of leaving them in their predicament, but in order to present the situation that would truly manifest His deity, but Jesus may have been exercising a sense of humour.

They were struggling against the wind, and He, with ease, was simply walking by on the water. There would come a time, however, when they would have the faith to move mountains, [Matthew 17:14-20](#).

They looked out at the sea and guess who they saw? They are frightened when they see Jesus; they think it is a ghost, [John 6:19](#) / [Matthew 14:26](#) / [Mark 6:49-50](#). They would think this again after His resurrection, [Luke 24:37](#).

They saw Jesus walking toward them on the water! This was a Divine display of His power over the natural laws. Now let's just pause and think about this for a moment. Jesus is walking on water. I don't know about you, but this is nothing less than a miracle, isn't it? You might be thinking I don't really believe that Jesus actually did walk on the water, but if you believe [Genesis 1:1](#), where the Bible says, 'God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them', then you shouldn't have any problem believing this miracle.

If God can create the whole world and everything out of nothing, then why can't the One who created the water in the first place be able to walk on what He created?

Why can't the One who created the sun stop the sun from going down, as we read about in [Joshua 10](#)? Why can't the One who created life bring Lazarus back to life after he had been dead for four days, like we read about in [John 11](#)? My point is, Jesus walked on water, so that means that Jesus is definitely afloat. Now, seeing anyone walking on water would be enough to frighten me, and it frightened the disciples too, [John 6:19](#) / [Matthew 14:26](#) / [Mark 6:49-50](#). And so knowing their fear, Jesus reassures them and says, 'Don't be afraid, it is I'.

When Jesus says, 'it is I', [John 6:20](#) / [Matthew 14:27](#), this could be translated, 'EGO EIMI,' 'I am', [Exodus 3:14](#) / [John 8:24](#) / [John 8:28](#) / [John 8:58](#). Their superstitious nature led them to think that they were seeing a ghost, but Jesus reassured them that it was He.

Note that only Matthew records Peter walking on the water, [Matthew 14:22-33](#). It teaches us that the unexpected should be expected when we spend time with Jesus.

And so Jesus is walking on the water, and the storm is still raging, and according to Matthew, when Peter saw Jesus, he asked, 'Lord, if it is you', which could be translated, 'Since it is You.' [Matthew 14:28](#).

Peter became excited, and he said to him, 'Lord, if that's really you, let me walk to you on the water', [Matthew 14:28](#). Then Jesus answered Peter and said, 'Come', [Matthew 14:29](#). Peter climbed over the side of the boat and started walking on the water to Jesus, [Matthew 14:29](#).

This is a big lesson we all need to learn from time to time. When was the last time we stepped out in faith as Peter did? You see, it's easy to stay in the boat where everything is nice and safe. But when was the last time we got out of the boat and started to trust God as Peter did?

This is amazing, isn't it? Peter didn't create the water, so how did he manage to walk on the water? He had a little of what we all need as Christians; he had one of those things we can't see: he had faith.

And his faith was great until, according to Matthew, he began to look around, he felt the strong winds and saw the waves, and he became afraid and started to sink, [Matthew 14:30](#). He had great faith until he took his eyes off of Jesus, and it was then that he cried out to Jesus for help. I want to raise an important point right here.

Sometimes in life, we find ourselves drowning in all sorts of things. Adults drown in the waters of bereavement, sorrow and worries.

Adults drown in the waters of debt, family pressures and broken relationships.

Children drown in the waters of peer-pressure, unloving parents, and having no good role models in their lives.

Children drown in the waters of neglect, abuse and lack of support.

Now all these things can drown anyone, and sometimes they do, although Peter started off with great faith, and even though his faith achieved a great thing like walking on water, he took his eye off the creator of the water and began to drown. The point is this, Jesus didn't just leave him to drown, He reached out and saved him, [Matthew 14:31](#).

There are times when life is great, and we feel like we are walking on water. But there are other times when life isn't so great, and we begin to drown in the waters of life. But there is hope; you don't have to drown. Why? Simply because Jesus has His arm outstretched and He is trying to save you, but you need to take hold of His hand.

As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he was walking on the water, but when he took his eyes off of Jesus, he began to sink. We face many storms in our daily life, but if we keep our eyes on Jesus, we can weather the storm, [Hebrews 12:2](#).

When Jesus says to Peter, 'you of little faith', 'why did you doubt?' [Matthew 14:31](#). I don't think we're to believe that Jesus was rebuking Peter; He probably had a smile on His face.

The point is we should do what Peter did, we need to reach out to God in times of need, [Matthew 6:30](#) / [Matthew 8:26](#) / [Matthew 16:9](#). Notice also that Peter must have walked on the water a second time, to get back into the boat and it was then that the wind died down, [Matthew 14:32](#).

The disciple's reaction indicates a growing faith, [Matthew 14:33](#), and the result, again they worshipped Him saying 'Truly you are the Son of God', [Matthew 14:33](#) / [Mark 6:51-52](#).

They worshipped Him, [Matthew 14:33](#), which tells us they recognised that Jesus was indeed God, [John 1:1](#) / [John 1:14](#). They proclaimed that Jesus truly is the Son of God, [Matthew 16:16](#) / [Matthew 26:63](#) / [Mark 1:1](#) / [Luke 4:41](#) / [John 1:49](#) / [John 6:69](#) / [John 11:27](#) / [Acts 8:37](#) / [Romans 1:4](#).

Mark adds the statement in [Mark 6:52](#) to associate these two miraculous wonders of Jesus. The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the water proved that Jesus was Deity, [John 1:1-3](#). He had the power to create, [Colossians 1:16](#). He also had the power to control that which He had created, [Hebrews 1:3](#).

It was at this time in the ministry of Jesus that the disciples were beginning to realise who He was. At the time of the feeding of the five thousand, they were slow to understand who He was, [Mark 3:5](#) / [Mark 16:14](#). They hadn't understood from the miracle that He was God.

They were astounded, for like Philip, their hearts were hardened, for they didn't fully understand the implications of the signs of the loaves and fishes, [Mark 6:52](#). Therefore, the statement that their hearts were hardened, [Mark 6:52](#), must be understood in the context of what Jesus wanted them to understand concerning who He really was.

They had accepted Him as a good teacher who could work miracles as Elijah or one of the prophets, but Jesus was more than a prophet; He was the Son of God who had the power of creation, [Matthew 16:18-19](#). Jesus wanted them to realise that He was the Son of God.

He could feed the hungry. He who could heal the sick could calm and control the tempest; therefore, He can and will take care of you. Anyone who follows Jesus for physical gain has missed the point and will not gain the spiritual benefits of salvation.

Many arguments have been built up around this miracle; some people think that Jesus walked on a sandbank, others say that the Greek indicates that He was still on the shore.

However, as the boat was three miles into the sea and Jesus got into the boat, it seems that the Biblical version holds more water! The boat then enjoyed some miraculous transportation to the shore. This miracle built up the faith of the disciples, also proving Jesus' power over natural laws.

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the water proved that Jesus was Deity, [John 1:1-3](#), He had the power to create, [Colossians 1:16](#), He also had the power to control that which He had created, [Hebrews 1:3](#).

It was at this time in the ministry of Jesus that the disciples were beginning to realise who He was. At the time of the feeding of the five thousand, they were slow to understand who He was, [Mark 3:5](#) / [Mark 16:14](#).

They hadn't understood from the miracle that He was God. Therefore, the statement that their hearts were hardened must be understood in the context of what Jesus wanted them to understand concerning who He really was.

They had accepted Him as a good teacher who could work miracles as Elijah or one of the prophets, but Jesus was more than a prophet; He was the Son of God who had the power of creation, [Matthew 16:18-19](#). Jesus wanted them to realise that He was the Son of God.

'On the next day, the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So, when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.' [John 6:22-24](#)

The disciples of Jesus were left on the far shore, the five-thousand, not those who became apostles. The next morning, they could probably see as far as the other shore from where they were standing, and they could see that only one boat was moored there, the one travelled in by the disciples, [John 6:22](#).

They knew that Jesus had not gone over with the disciples, so they started searching in the immediate area, but to no avail. These people then seem to realise that Jesus had arrived at the other shore by some supernatural force, so when some boats arrive from Tiberius, they get into them and come looking for Him, [John 6:23-24](#).

JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE

'When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." So, they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." [John 6:25-34](#)

It seems as if this conversation is split between the lakeshore and the synagogue; the split is probably between [John 6:40](#) and [John 6:41](#). The crowd found Him on the other side of the lake, while [John 6:59](#) clearly places Him in the synagogue, which was on that side of the lake.

When they find Jesus, He is going to explain to them the meaning of the sign of the loaves and fishes and amplify it with teaching on the True Bread of Life.

FOUR MAIN INTERPRETATIONS

1. That the bread of life primarily applies to the Lord's Supper.
2. That it deals with only spiritual realities using the figures of Jesus' body and blood.
3. That while it does deal with spiritual realities, it sets forth principles that also apply to the Lord's Supper.
4. That it teaches that at the Lord's Supper we physically eat and drink the Lord's body and blood.

After asking the question, [John 6:25](#), we find Jesus' response in [John 6:26-27](#). Jesus replies in the form of a statement regarding their motives for seeking Him. Jesus knows that they haven't understood the signs of the loaves and fishes. Remember, these signs are to point to who Jesus is, [John 20:30-31](#); they aren't meant to be miracles just for the sake of feeding hungry bellies.

Jesus tells them their motives were wrong; they can't work for eternal food, [John 6:27-29](#). They wanted to benefit from the miracle worker and wanted to make Him their king by force, [John 14:15](#), so that they could snap their fingers and Jesus would feed them while they lounged about doing nothing.

Jesus offers them two kinds of food, He had filled them with physical food, [John 6:5-13](#), now He offers them spiritual food, and He encourages them to eat this food which leads to eternal life, [John 6:27](#).

They were concerned about the food that perishes, He wanted them to be concerned about the food that endures to eternal life, [John 6:27](#). Jesus alone was that food, on Him the Father has set His seal, set his approval, [John 1:32-33](#) / [Acts 2:22](#), take up your cross and follow me.

In [John 6:28](#), they ask, 'How can we do what God requires?' This is in the continuous sense, 'what are we to do as a habit that we may go on working the works of God'.

They were probably thinking of Law works. 'The work of God is to believe in the one He has sent', [John 6:29](#), means you need to keep on believing in me as the Messiah.

In [John 6:30-31](#), they ask 'for a sign'. All the miracles they have already seen are forgotten, and they seek to base their faith on sight, [2 Corinthians 5:7](#). It was a common Jewish belief that the Messiah would repeat the miracle of the Manna.

Perhaps they are thinking Moses supplied a nation with Manna but Jesus only fed a multitude. Moses fed Israel for forty years, but Jesus has only fed a multitude twice. Perhaps they are saying this is what Moses did.

What credentials do you have? They never seek the fulfilment of physical needs as opposed to spiritual needs. Jesus never performed any superfluous miracles; each had a purpose.

Jesus now indicates the nature of the miracle in [John 6:32-33](#), and corrects their mistaken impression. It wasn't Moses but God who fed them bread in the desert, [Exodus 16](#). Now He sends the true living bread, His Son. He then describes in detail what He means by this true bread.

1. True, 'alethenos', genuine, real, [John 6:32](#).
2. The bread of God, provided by God, [John 6:33](#).

3. The bread of life, spiritual life, [John 6:35](#).

This is all conditional, trust, belief, accept, obey, follow, that you may have eternal life. In every instance, He is speaking of Himself. Then he tells them of its origin.

1. From heaven, [John 6:32](#).

2. Comes down from heaven, [John 6:33](#). Again, He insists He is talking about Himself, 'I have come down', [John 6:38](#).

JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE

‘Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” John 6:35-40

‘I AM’

John never uses the word ‘miracle’ in his gospel, but he does use the word sign regularly. There are sixteen signs recorded in John’s gospel; eight are things which Jesus did, and eight are things which Jesus said.

John is basically saying that the ‘I AM’ claims of Jesus are signs, selected from many other signs. And he says these signs are selected with a purpose in mind, and that purpose is that you believe that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, [John 20:30-31](#).

Here we find the first of seven of Jesus’ ‘I AM’ claims, [John 6:35](#) / [John 8:12](#) / [John 8:58](#) / [John 10:9](#) / [John 10:11](#) / [John 11:25](#) / [John 14:6](#) / [John 15:1](#). Each of His ‘I AM’ claims are claims that He is God, EGO EIMI, is the Greek equivalent of YHWH, [Exodus 3:13-14](#) / [John 5:18](#).

He is Eternal, [Psalm 135:13](#), and self-existent, [Psalm 88:6-7](#). When we come to the ‘I AM’ claims of Jesus, we need to remember that Jesus was not giving Himself a Name or a title, but was asserting His Deity. In other words, every ‘I AM’ reveals some aspect of His nature and purpose. Here He is, ‘The Bread of life,’ [John 6:35](#).

In [John 6:34](#), they ask for this bread, but in [John 6:35-40](#), Jesus declares Himself to be the bread of life again. Jesus is the sustainer of life; all who come to eat of Him will never go hungry. Eternal life is a present reality and possession of the believer, [John 3:15-16](#) / [John 5:11-13](#) / [John 10:27-30](#).

Who can receive this bread? He who comes to me, [John 6:35](#). He who believes in me, [John 6:35](#). He who sees the Son and recognises and appreciates His purpose and identity. He who believes in Him, [John 6:40](#).

And what are the benefits of this bread? This bread gives life, [John 6:33](#). We will not hunger, [John 6:35](#). We will not thirst, [John 6:35](#). We will have eternal life, [John 6:40](#).

We will be resurrected to salvation in the last day; the believer in the Lord will be raised at the last day, [John 6:39-40](#) / [John 6:44-54](#). If the Lord repeats Himself, that means that what He says is important; there is no room for a second resurrection one-thousand years later, [Hebrews 9:27-28](#) / [2 Peter 2:4](#), Christians are being described here.

‘So, the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from

heaven’?” Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” John 6:41-51

This is the first of many grumbles, [John 6:41](#) / [John 6:52](#), and the Jews start to grumble disapprovingly among themselves. They know His parents and His family, but how can He be the Christ? [John 6:41-42](#). Jesus hears grumbling and interjects, answering the questions they were asking among themselves, [John 6:42-51](#).

It’s no longer just the crowd who is grumbling, but that group of people called the ‘Jews’, including the rulers of the synagogue. The text implies that they were following Him around in order to trap Him, [Matthew 15:1-7](#) / [Mark 2:23-24](#) / [Mark 3:1-2](#). Initially, the people were called the ‘crowd’, [John 6:24](#).

The term ‘Jews’ is used, [John 6:41](#). Jesus has confronted the multitude; now He is to confront the Jews and later confront His disciples, [John 6:67-70](#). This is the watershed time when the rubber hits the road. Jesus tells them to stop grumbling among themselves, [John 6:43](#), and tells them that no man can come to Him unless drawn by the Father, [John 6:44](#).

There are two factors involved in coming to Jesus, firstly, man’s own will, no man can come to Jesus unless he wants to come, [Matthew 5:40](#) / [Matthew 23:37](#). Secondly, God’s drawing power, [John 6:45](#) / [Romans 1:16](#) / [2 Thessalonians 2:14-15](#).

[John 6:45](#) makes it clear that people are drawn to God through teaching, [Romans 10:17](#) / [1 Thessalonians 2:14-15](#).

We are born again into God’s family after being taught the reality of sin and our need for a Saviour and accepting the Good News that Jesus is and brings, [Jeremiah 31:31-36](#).

God will not materialise in front of people to teach them Himself; no one has seen God except the one whom He has sent, [John 6:46](#). The one who believes has eternal life, [John 6:47](#). Jesus is ‘the living bread’, [John 6:48](#). Jesus again declares Himself to be Deity.

Jesus reminds them that their ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died, [John 6:49](#) / [Exodus 16:4](#) / [Exodus 16:35](#). Then He says, in contrast that here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die, [John 6:50](#).

‘All’, He says, are taught, those who listen can come and have life and if any eat of the bread of life, He will live forever, [John 6:51](#). This is being re-emphasised because of the Jews. Jesus will give Himself, His flesh for the world, and so, He is food for the soul, [John 6:51](#).

‘The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” So, Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.’ John 6:52-59

Here we find the second grumble, ‘how can this man give his flesh to eat?’ [John 6:52](#) / [John 6:41](#). The Jews don’t understand, and a fierce argument breaks out; they disputed. They have ears but don’t wish to hear, [Isaiah 6:9-10](#) / [Mark 4:12](#). No great hidden truth is being revealed, yet the Jews practice a dose of spiritual blindness.

He introduces the idea of blood and the role it will have to play, [John 6:53-56](#), but He isn’t referring to cannibalism, as that would be against God. He is referring to the commitment and trust of those who become His followers, and what they will understand will change their lives and create a new birth because of His sacrifice.

In other words, this is not literal but a figurative description of belief in, relying on, trusting in and obeying Jesus. This passage acts as a summary of Jesus' teaching on the bread of life and Him as that Bread. The words, 'remain in me', [John 6:56](#), give the same thought which is found in [John 15:5-7](#).

Was He a literal vine, were His followers literal branches? Also, [2 Corinthians 6:16](#) says that God dwells in the lives of His people; we are His temple. Is this a literal temple? No. [Acts 17:24](#) says He doesn't dwell in temples made with hands. Are His words, 'if anyone keeps My word, he will never die', [John 8:51-52](#), are they literal?

We who look at the picture as a whole have a distinct advantage over those of His day. We can see how the blood and the bread tie in to be representative of Christ's body and blood on the cross, [Matthew 26:26-29](#), the sacrifice of Jesus, [Hebrews 10:19-20](#). So, this passage is primarily a reference to the death and sacrifice of Jesus, which the Lord's Supper became a memorial, [1 Corinthians 11:24](#).

So, when Jesus is here speaking about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, He is referring not to a literal act but rather a call to His audience to place their faith in what He will achieve for them through His death on the cross. His sacrificial death is the only way salvation and eternal life are possible for the sinner, [John 14:6](#).

There were many other times when Jesus capitalised upon a situation that was presented to Him in order to teach a lesson, which is what He is doing in this chapter with the feeding of the five thousand.

[John 6:57](#) gives an idea of the closeness of the relationship between Jesus and the one who feeds Him. The manna in the desert brought physical life for a short time, forty years, [Exodus 16:35](#), but Christ brings eternal spiritual life, [John 6:58](#).

Those who ate the manna died; those who eat of the bread of life live on. He will give of Himself, His flesh for the world, and He is food for the soul. Jesus again refers to Himself as the food giving life, and He goes over the previous message again, but this time makes it more literal.

He rubs it in so to speak, to make sure they get the point, unless you eat My flesh and blood, you haven't lived. [John 6:59](#) confirms that the discussion took place in Capernaum, at the synagogue, but this doesn't mean that it would have had to be on the Sabbath, as there were meetings at the synagogue on other days of the week. It is claimed by archaeologists that the remains of this synagogue have been discovered in a dig at Capernaum.

MANY DISCIPLES DESERT JESUS

'When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offence at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father." 'After this, many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So, Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." He spoke of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him.' John 6:60-71

Notice how Jesus loses much of His popularity here and is never to recover it until after the establishment of the church, [Acts 2](#). In these verses, we see the followers who sought Jesus after the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand are being discussed.

These people seem confused by what Jesus has said, and they now count the cost of following Jesus and find they aren't willing to pay the price, [John 6:60](#) / [John 6:66](#).

The Jews with the preconceived ideas of what the Messiah would be like and what His plan would be weren't pleased with this revelation of the Messiah, which asked for commitment.

Jesus doesn't fit their bill, and so, once again, they grumble. Jesus asked His disciples, 'Does this offend you?' [John 6:61](#). In other words, what if you see Me ascend into heaven, would that make any difference? [John 6:62](#).

Those who had put a crudely literal interpretation on His words were disgusted. The law forbids the drinking of blood; meat had to be specially prepared to meet the law's requirements. Yet if they had bothered to think back to the reason for this rule, they might have understood.

[Leviticus 17:11](#) says 'It is the blood that makes atonement for one's life'. Jesus is saying, 'I am atoning for your sins'. The centrality of the crucifixion of Jesus as the only refuge for sinners and the only way for salvation, [John 14:6](#), was to prove an offence not only for these people here but also for many more in the future.

Paul writes later in [1 Corinthians 1:18](#), and says that, 'the world thinks it is foolishness. To the Jews, a real stumbling block, and that is what we read of happening here.

[John 6:62-64](#) brings out the thought or question regarding faith. Does man's faith come from within himself? Or are we led to faith by the Spirit of God? [John 6:65](#) may be read to suggest that God gives faith, which leads to eternal life, but this leads to the question of predestination.

[John 6:45](#) tells us that all who listen and learn come to Jesus. Jesus can't be telling us to literally eat His flesh and blood, for He now says in order to clarify the point that the flesh profits nothing, we cannot, by eating the flesh of Jesus, gain anything, but the sacrifice spiritually accepted by God can give us eternal life.

This tells us that the Spirit gives life, [John 6:63](#), the Spirit is active in the heart before, [Acts 16:14](#), and after a person commits themselves to God, [Acts 2:38](#) / [Ephesians 2:1-3](#).

The true understanding is that the Spirit is waiting to help the willing heart examine the evidence, but if a person is dead set against the Gospel, then even the Spirit of God can only stand by helplessly.

The Spirit has been involved in ensuring we have the message of the Gospel to read and understand and listen to, [2 Timothy 3:16](#). He will help us if we strive to understand the message and will help us if we are willing to apply the message, [1 Corinthians 2:14](#). The teacher teaches all who accept will be saved, and all who reject will be lost, [Mark 16:16](#) / [2 Thessalonians 1:8-10](#).

[John 6:66](#) says, 'after this', which means literally as a consequence of this teaching, many of His disciples left. The Messiah they wanted was a Messiah who would make things easy for them, who would be a powerful earthly ruler, who would miraculously feed and clothe them, a nice, easy road to follow.

The road Jesus offers will not be an easy road to some earthly utopia, but a road that may demand suffering and self-denial, or self-sacrifice, just as Jesus gave Himself. His teaching tested their faith; with Him, there was no compromise. Notice this in [John 6:41](#). The crowd turn away because they don't want this kind of Messiah.

Jesus has just witnessed many of His regular followers giving up and turning around, and He now gives His innermost circle the opportunity to examine themselves and ensure they are willing to continue on the road in [John 6:67-71](#).

It's also an opportunity for them to be tested, [John 6:67](#). They had an opportunity to make a conscious decision at this point. Peter answers on behalf of them all, [John 6:68](#), and shows an understanding of His Master's teaching, although not, perhaps, on behalf of Judas. He states the common belief of the twelve, that He is the Holy One of God, [John 6:69](#).

They all, by not objecting to Peter's answer, commit themselves to follow Christ. This phrase 'Holy One of God' is only used one other time when Jesus healed the demoniac by casting the demons into the swine, [Mark 12:34](#) / [Luke 4:34](#).

[John 6:70-71](#) reveals a deep, dark secret. Jesus knows which one of the disciples is a betrayer. The full impact can only be seen and understood as we see Judas, staying in apparent full agreement with Peter, while the rest of the crowd of followers left.

John explains what is meant in [John 6:70](#). The betrayer was a chosen apostle, like the rest, he was given miraculous powers, [Luke 6:13](#), yet Jesus calls him 'devil', [John 6:70](#), 'diabolos', accuser, slanderer. This was one of the names of Satan himself.

Jesus doesn't say that Judas was a devil when he first became an apostle, but rather we see that he was a covetous man, 'pleonexia', [John 12:4-6](#) / [John 13:20-27](#). Remember, John, is writing in retrospect. He and the others didn't know this at the time, [John 6:71](#).

CONCLUSION

Jesus says, 'All that the Father gives me will come to me,' [John 6:37](#), are said in connection with the fact that God does not want anyone to perish. The plan of salvation consists of the following.

1. The initial objective aspect.

An action coming forth from God who gives to everyone without distinction or discrimination whatsoever the chance to be saved.

2. There is the subjective aspect.

An action coming forth from a man who individually has to decide whether or not he will grasp God's lovingly extended hand. The subjective aspect being possible thanks to the objective aspect, we might say that, although the sinner decides out of his or her own free will and not by coercion.

God gives the repentant sinner into the arms of Jesus, their Saviour. Without the initial objective aspect, which is an act of merciful grace given by God, salvation would be an impossibility.

What an assurance of security we find in Jesus words in [John 6:40](#)! If we do what is expected from us, if we believe, go to Christ, keep on believing in trusting obedience, He will not cast us out! [Psalms 91](#). And He will raise us on the last day to the resurrection of life, not of judgment, as for those who did not do what is good, [John 5:29](#).

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION

In [John 7-9](#), we see how Jesus is the truth that can make men free. The truth that He speaks is the only truth that can set us free from sin. This begins the fourth phase of Jesus' teaching. Soon, John will enter the last week with Jesus, and John demonstrates great selectivity.

JESUS GOES TO THE FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES

‘After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill him. But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, Jesus’ brothers said to him, “Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.” For even his own brothers did not believe in him. Therefore, Jesus told them, “My time is not yet here; for you, any time will do. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that its works are evil. You go to the festival. I am not going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come.” After he had said this, he stayed in Galilee. However, after his brothers had left for the festival, he went also, not publicly, but in secret. Now at the festival, the Jewish leaders were watching for Jesus and asking, “Where is he?” Among the crowds, there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, “He is a good man.” Others replied, “No, he deceives the people.” But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the leaders.’ John 7:1-13

The feast mentioned here shows that a year has gone by between [John 5](#) and now, for we are back with the feast of tabernacles, or ingathering, or booths. When John uses the term ‘went around in Galilee’, [John 7:1](#), he is covering six months of Jesus’ teaching.

It’s not John’s purpose to give a comprehensive account of Jesus’ life but to present evidence as to His claims and authority. The majority of people don’t believe the evidence because they have a fixed image already in their minds.

John says we’re ready to fight for claims of Jesus, and the weapon we use is the Word of God wielded in love. Two of the great themes of John are Jesus teaching on two subjects. 1. My hour ‘hora’. 2. The last day.

The final Passover is only six months away, and here we find the fifth discourse, the life-giving Spirit, [John 7:1-52](#). All of the six months’ retirement ministry of Christ, we find a detailed account of which is given in the Gospels, is mentioned in this verse. John is primarily concerned with Jerusalem and Judea.

This includes the works described in [Mark 7-9](#). Opposition to Jesus was now growing, and as Jesus’ time had not yet come, He had to keep away from Judea because of the Jewish leaders who were seeking to kill him, [John 7:1](#).

The feast of the Tabernacles or booths was approaching; this feast was instituted in [Numbers 29](#) and [Leviticus 23:33-44](#). It commemorated the harvest as well as the divine guidance granted to the Jewish forefathers during their desert wanderings.

It lasted one week and began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, ‘tishra’, the people camped in booths, ‘tabernacles’, in Jerusalem. Rabbinical law required that each male Jew within a twenty-mile radius should attend, but in fact, some Jews came from much farther.

It was a very joyful and happy affair following hard on the heels of the day of Atonement, thus allowing granted redemption to feature prominently. It was considered a vital feast.

In [John 7:3-5](#), we see that Jesus’ brothers don’t yet believe He is the Christ. Jesus brothers, [Matthew 13:55-56](#) / [Mark 6:13](#), James, Joseph, Judas, Simon. This may seem a little odd, as their mother Mary, must have known after the events surrounding His birth.

However, it’s clear they were being a little sarcastic in this event. The brothers make a fair point, Jesus did need the publicity as does some public figure. The statement must be understood in the light of their attitude towards him.

Jesus had many disciples in Judea, [John 2:23](#) / [John 4:1](#). He left there because of the jealousy of the Pharisees, [John 4:1-3](#).

So, his brothers are saying, ‘if you are the Messiah, you should publicly prove it at Jerusalem, not hide away in Galilee’. After His resurrection, His brothers are reported to be among the most vigorous of His followers, [Acts 1:14](#). However, the more important priority was that His time ‘had not yet come’ and He needed to wait for the correct time to arrive, [John 7:6-9](#). Jesus doesn’t argue with His brothers but explains that it is not yet time for Him to go up. He

isn't saying that it is not yet time for Him to be offered up, as this would be inconsistent with the fact that He did eventually go.

He often spoke of His time, or hour, [John 2:4](#) / [John 12:27](#) / [John 17:1](#), but here in [John 7:5-8](#), He uses a different word. He spoke of a fixed time, 'hora' for His death and manifestation, here He uses the word, 'kairos', opportune, suitable, or appropriate time, the right time, [Galatians 4:4](#).

Jesus knows the world hates him because He testifies to its evilness, [John 7:7](#). It was not yet time for Him to travel to Judea, [John 7:7-9](#), ensuring that the Sanhedrin did not have time to plan an early death for Him. He wasn't unwilling to die, that is why He came, [Matthew 20:28](#) / [Mark 10:45](#) / [John 13:1-17](#), but not yet, it would be the time that God decided, not man.

Notice in [John 7:10](#), Jesus didn't say He wasn't going to the feast, but 'not yet', [John 7:8](#). The time for His departure arrives, and Jesus goes up quietly or in secret so as not to attract attention to Himself. Not publicly but privately, it was the custom for large groups of families and friends to travel together to the feasts, [Luke 2:44-45](#).

He didn't go with a group but travelled as if He didn't want to be seen, [John 7:10](#). The Jews were looking for Him, perhaps they expected, like His brothers, that He would perform some more miracles for them, [Matthew 12:38](#).

He didn't intend to go as His brothers suggested, nor in the manner, that they expected, they wanted Him to do some great signs, to prove His claims, He would go at the opportune time, and so saying He remained in Galilee, [John 7:10](#). In [John 7:11](#), we read 'the Jews were watching for him'. This group of people are the same as those wanting to kill Him, [John 7:1](#). Jesus is obviously expected to put in an appearance at the feast, and His arrival is eagerly awaited, [John 7:11](#).

A very obvious difference of opinion is seen among the Jews, some are for Him, believing Him to be a good man and others oppose Him, waiting to say He is an impostor and a trickster, [John 7:12-13](#).

The Greek emphasises that the difference between the two groups was a very sharp one. This difference is clearly still very obvious today, with many people believing Him to be anything but Christ.

It is sad to see that the Jews so opposed Jesus that they didn't even allow public debate on Him, as anyone supporting Him was liable to be tossed out of the temple.

It seems as if Jesus was very topical at the time; the whispers and rumours for and against Jesus form a background to the whole feast, and the whereabouts and character of Jesus were the centres of public interest. The two opposite estimates of Jesus: He is a good man, and He is leading the people astray, [John 7:12-13](#).

Note that many did not confess Jesus because of fear, [John 7:13](#) / [John 9:16](#) / [John 10:19](#). The man born blind is threatened with being cut off from the temple worship by the Jewish religious leaders, [John 9:22](#) / [John 12:42-43](#).

JESUS TEACHES AT THE FESTIVAL

'Not until halfway through the festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews there were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having been taught?" Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. Has not

Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are you trying to kill me?" "You are demon possessed," the crowd answered. "Who is trying to kill you?" Jesus said to them, "I did one miracle, and you are all amazed. Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a boy on the Sabbath. Now, if a boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing a man's whole body on the Sabbath? Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly." John 7:14-24

FOUR DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF MEN ARE INVOLVED IN THIS PART

1. The Jewish leaders. The Sadducee's rulers, Annas, Caiaphas.
2. The people from outside Jerusalem who didn't know the plot against Him.
3. The ordinary people of Jerusalem didn't know of the plot to kill Him.
4. The Pharisees who wanted Him killed.

Jesus arrives and starts publicly to teach, and He makes no attempt to hide Himself but gets on with the work at hand. He went to the temple and found himself a space, sat down and started to teach in accordance with the common practice of current-day teachers, [John 7:14](#).

Jesus' teaching soon attracts a large crowd of people. The group of learned men known as 'the Jews' are present and attacks Him for His lack of rabbinical studying, as He didn't study in any recognised school, [John 7:15](#). This was a reference to the great school of Hillel and Gamaliel, [Acts 22:3](#).

Jesus wasn't an accredited 'rabbi' but in the eyes of the Jews a 'Shammai', that is, a self-taught enthusiast, not a 'grammata', a man of letters, like going to Eton and speaking on equal terms on specialised subjects using the same words and understanding.

His appearing and teaching in the temple fulfilled [Malachi 3:1](#), which the Jews believed to be a Messianic prophecy. The quality of the teaching was such as to attract amazement from the Jews and so, a series of questions and answers started.

They ask, 'Where did you study?' [John 7:15](#), and Jesus answers by stating My teaching comes from the one who sent me, God, [John 7:16](#). Jesus then goes into a discussion similar to the one held after the healing at the pool, [John 5:19-24](#), when He accuses the Jews of not knowing the Law or obeying it, [John 7:17-18](#).

A condition to knowing the truth regarding the Messiah is to be prepared to seek and do the will of God, [Luke 18:15](#) / [2 Thessalonians 2:10](#). His critics had a vast knowledge of the scriptures; they studied them constantly and minutely, yet they hadn't learned nor understood their meaning, the truth about the Messiah.

Gamaliel in [Acts 5:18](#) implies that they didn't lack knowledge; they lacked love. If you don't have a foundation of love, your knowledge is useless, [John 5:39-42](#).

In [John 7:19](#), Jesus now asks two questions, 'Has not Moses given you the Law?' The answer to this question is obvious to all and doesn't need answering, then He asks, 'why are you trying to kill me?' and we find the answer in [John 7:20](#).

The crowd, not the Jews, answer this one, they don't know of any plans to kill Jesus, so they think He is mad to suggest it. No one wants to be seen as agreeing with Jesus, so they put on an aggressively anti-Jesus posture and answer the question by asking another.

Notice when they ask, 'Who is trying to kill you?' Jesus doesn't answer the question directly, as that accusation would bring no profit, [John 7:21-24](#). He defends the Sabbath healing that originally gave cause to the desire to kill Him. The Law allows, even demands, circumcision on the Sabbath; this requires and represents healing, [John 7:22-23](#).

If Moses heals on the Sabbath, why not Jesus? Jesus then urges those present to look deeper before making rash judgements, [John 7:24](#), and alludes to [1 Samuel 16:7](#), which says, 'Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart'.

‘At that point, some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah? But we know where this man is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from.” Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own authority, but he who sent me is true. You do not know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.’ John 7:25-29

In [John 7:25-27](#), we find some of the crowd now recognise that Jesus is the man that the Jews are trying to kill, making the question in [John 7:20](#) illegitimate. They notice that He is speaking publicly, not hiding away to prevent possible capture, [John 7:26](#).

The people appear confused at the ‘official’ reaction to Jesus and even wonder if the religious authorities have accepted Him as the Christ, whilst others negate this possibility, pointing out that none will know where the Christ will originate from, [John 7:26-27](#).

Some taught that He would reveal Himself to the nation by dropping out of the sky, [Matthew 4:5-6](#). Others taught that He would suddenly appear and be anointed by Elijah, but Jesus was aware of their ignorance.

This group of people speaking is recorded as ‘the people of Jerusalem’, as opposed to the crowd in general, who represented people from all over the land and who were more open to teachings and didn’t know of the death sentence against Him.

Jesus hears the argument against Him and interjects, declaring again His divinity, [John 7:28-29](#). The first declaration doesn’t agree with the people of Jerusalem.

This is ridiculing them for even proposing the possibility that they have any idea of the origin of Christ. He goes on declaring Himself to be God and His Own Deity. He uses the term ‘I AM’, and all who are present know exactly what He is saying and declaring.

‘At this, they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, “When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?” The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him. Jesus said, “I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me. You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.” The Jews said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? What did he mean when he said, ‘You will look for me, but you will not find me,’ and ‘Where I am, you cannot come?’” John 7:30-36

The people Jesus was talking to were eager to seize Him, but were unable to do so. There are various possibilities as to why not.

1. Jesus was good at evading people and managed to hide.
2. The people of Jerusalem were afraid of the crowd being sympathetic to Jesus and His cause.
3. Some divine intervention occurred, preventing His capture
4. It was simply against God’s will for Him to be brought to trial at this time.

Nevertheless, some in the crowd now put their faith in Jesus, [John 7:30-31](#). This could indicate some miraculous intervention in the prevention of His capture, as those believing believe because of the miracles He does, and they recognise the miracles to be a sign, and the signs to be from God.

The Pharisees hear of more people putting their faith in Jesus and decide to arrest Him with the help of the chief priests before more damage is done to their own position, [John 7:32](#). Note that the Pharisees were the popular, religious teachers, and the chief priests were mainly Sadducees, who dominated the Sanhedrin.

Normally, they were enemies, [Acts 23:6](#), but here they combine their strength against a common cause; they wish to oppose Jesus. ‘They’ sent for the temple police to arrest Jesus.

They may also have been afraid of the Romans, who watched proceedings in the temple from the adjacent Castle of Antonia. If a large disturbance occurred in the temple, the Roman soldiers would come in and break up the disturbance.

The temple would then be desecrated if they came further than the Gentile court, and the feast would certainly be disrupted. The temple had its own small Jewish garrison, and these men were sent to arrest Jesus.

We read in [John 7:33-36](#) that even though Jesus is now sought by those wishing to arrest Him, He calmly announces His intended departure. He is referring at the time, to His death, resurrection and subsequent ascension which shall take place in six months.

[John 7:34](#) could be a prophecy relating to the failure of the large majority of Jews to recognise Him. Once again, the Jews don’t understand what Jesus is saying, and they suppose He may be going to the Greek Jews and believers, but general confusion about Jesus’ plan is the order of the day, [John 7:35](#).

They are puzzled, so they ask if He is going to visit those of the ‘diaspora’, those who were displaced at the time of Alexander the Great, those living outside Palestine, was He going to teach Jews and non-Jews, [John 7:36](#) / [James 1:1-2](#) / [1 Peter 1:1-2](#).

The Jews of the dispersion, [Acts 2:5-11](#). The Jews were good, stable business people, so they were often used and encouraged by the government of the day to move somewhere or even be resettled by force.

‘On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” By this, he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time, the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. On hearing his words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.” Others said, “He is the Messiah.” Still others asked, “How can the Messiah come from Galilee? Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David’s descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?” Thus, the people were divided because of Jesus. Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.’

John 7:37-44

On the last day of the feast of Tabernacles, the seven days’ feast was usually followed by a day of holiday and thanksgiving, [Leviticus 23:36](#). It’s possible that Jesus who had been sitting teaching, stood upon this eighth day as the procession passed, and cried aloud, is anyone thirsts let him come and drink of Me, [John 7:37](#). Or it’s possible that He made this announcement on the eight-day because that would be the day expected for something to happen.

Whatever His reason for standing then, it is clear that He wants them to understand that the Holy Spirit has come to satisfy the spiritual thirst of believers, the believer is to have rivers of living water constantly flowing from Him, like garden ponds and a fountain, [John 4:14](#).

The water symbolises the Holy Spirit, indwelling the believer, [Acts 2:38](#) / [Romans 8:9-15](#) / [1 Corinthians 3:16](#) / [1 Corinthians 6:19](#) / [1 Corinthians 12:13](#) / [Ephesians 3:15-17](#) / [Galatians 4:5-6](#) / [Galatians 5:22-23](#).

As is well known the Spirit came to the believers at Pentecost and all who subsequently believe and obey receive the Spirit as described in [Acts 2](#), after Peter’s first sermon, [Acts 3:38](#). [Isaiah 44:3](#), connects the pouring out of the water with the giving of the Spirit but as yet the Spirit had not been given for Jesus hadn’t been glorified, [John 7:39](#).

It was the norm to pour a huge pot of water over the altar of the temple to signify the bounty and goodness of God.

This was a golden pot, and water was ceremoniously poured over the altar, [1 Kings 18:33-40](#), and it was always done on the last day of the feast and could well have been in progress when Jesus speaks. It may have reference to the provision of water in the desert as recorded in [Deuteronomy 8:15](#).

The ‘rivers of living water’, [John 7:38](#), mentioned by Jesus, were originally referred to by Isaiah, [Isaiah 44:4](#) / [Isaiah 55:1](#) / [Isaiah 58:11](#). The Old Testament says this living water will be given through the Messiah. It was previously mentioned by Jesus to the Samaritan woman, [John 4:13-14](#).

The idea behind the message here is clearly that not only do those who choose to drink from the fountain, that is, Jesus, receive everlasting life, full and free, [John 3:37](#), but that also communicates itself to others.

So, the one who is blessed and drinks, in turn, shares the abundant supply with others who also drink, receives the blessing of eternal life and communicates it to yet more.

[John 7:40-44](#) depicts the confusion that the declarations of the Lord caused. The objections raised about Christ being Jesus are the same here as in previous passages, [John 7:27](#) / [John 6:42](#).

Note, they didn’t direct their objections to Jesus but discussed them among themselves, [John 7:40-44](#). If Jesus had been asked, He would have cleared up the problems. The prophecy of the Messiah being born in Bethlehem was correct, [Micah 5:1-2](#), but Jesus’ true birthplace wasn’t known by the people.

UNBELIEF OF THE JEWISH LEADERS

‘Finally, the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring him in?” “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied. “You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted. “Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in him? No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them.” Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, “Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?” They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.” Then they all went home.’ [John 7:45-53](#)

The guards sent to arrest Jesus returned empty-handed, much to the disgust of the Pharisees. The guards had been totally overawed by the remarks made by Jesus; such was His authority, we see the men had the courage to admit this to the Pharisees, [John 7:45-46](#).

The guards may have seen that a large number of people believe in Jesus and were supporting Him. If Jesus had been arrested, it could have resulted in some ugly scenes, and so the decision not to arrest Him may well have been the best, and the only one that would keep the watching Romans out of the temple.

The Pharisees didn’t see any merit in this decision, and the impression given by the Scripture is that they were most upset and angry at this decision, [John 7:47](#). The Pharisees immediately turn Jesus’ message into one of deception and proclaim themselves the only ones qualified to judge the identity of the one claiming Messiahship, [John 7:48-50](#).

The basic idea of the Pharisees was that they were learned and thus pious, while the crowd was wicked and ignorant. Nicodemus the Pharisee, who met Jesus at night in [John 3:1-21](#), now speaks in His defence and those who were only moments ago, declaring themselves the learned men, now have it pointed out that they are also in error, as the Law demands fair trial, stating a man is innocent until proven guilty, [John 7:50-51](#).

And so, the division has now occurred in their own quarters. No longer is the entire movement anti-Jesus, but one is perhaps sitting a little too close to the fence for comfort.

The balance of the Pharisees came down on him with vigour, ignoring their own error and pointing out a common error at the time, that Jesus was not born in Bethlehem, [John 7:52](#).

They say no prophet comes out of Galilee, but in their haste, they forget Jonah, who came from ‘Gath Hopher’, a town in the area later to be called Galilee, [2 Kings 14:25](#).

It could also be noted that many of the other prophets don't tell us of their origin, so this argument is invalid. It's not surprising that everyone went home after these heated discussions, John 7:53.

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION

Much has been said about this passage of Scripture; should it be here? Was it originally here? Is it inspired? Did Jesus even do this? Does it matter, and if so, how much? The following are the facts known about this passage, and the answers can be deduced from them.

Several words are used here that don't occur in any other passage of John's Gospel or other writings. This isn't conclusive of anything. The earliest manuscripts do not include John 7:53-8:11. Many later manuscripts mark this section with asterisks.

One group of manuscripts inserts this section after Luke 21:38. A few manuscripts have this section after John 21:24, and one has it after John 7:36. It is found in many old manuscripts, if not in the very oldest and best. The Vulgate Latin, and in the Arabic, Coptic, Persian, and Ethiopian versions.

The oldest translation of the Bible doesn't include it, nor do the earliest commentators mention it. A few of the oldest Latin witnesses do mention it. Eusebius states that Papias recounted it in 100 AD.

It is commented on by Augustine in his exposition of this Gospel, while in another of his writings, he expressly refers to and explains its omission from some manuscripts, that it is quoted and defended by Ambrose, referred to by Jerome, and treated as genuine in the Apostolical Constitutions.

It cannot be insisted that the passage ought to be here, or that it was originally here; thus, its inspiration is impossible to prove, as is Jesus' role in this situation. I believe it does matter for the sake of the purity of Scripture, which must be maintained. However, as it doesn't affect any doctrinal issue, it's perhaps better to maintain the status quo rather than cause further disunity in the Christian family.

Morris, in his commentary, says the following.

'If we cannot feel that this is part of John's Gospel, we can feel that the story is true to the character of Jesus.'

THE WOMAN ALLEGEDLY CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF ADULTERY

'But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn, he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again, he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this,

those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.” John 8:1-11

John 7:53 tells us that after the failure of the temple guards to arrest Jesus, the Pharisees and other Sanhedrin decide to call it a night, allowing all to return home.

Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives, John 8:1, possibly spending the night in prayer. He may have then gone on and spent the night with friends in one of the nearby towns.

Jesus returns to the temple, John 8:2. The temple court is where the rabbis held their schools and the Scribes their debates. A scribe may be a Rabbi, but not all Rabbis were scribes; scribes were mainly copyists.

Note Jesus sat down and taught, John 8:2 / Luke 4:20 / Matthew 13:2 / Matthew 23:2 / Matthew 24:3. This is the normal practice of the rabbis and teachers, and here, Jesus attracts a group of disciples very quickly.

The Pharisees had somehow ‘come across’ a woman in the act of adultery, John 8:3-4. We’re not sure how they ‘came across’ her, but it’s evident that they may well have entrapped her to use her as a weapon against Jesus.

If this woman really was caught in the act, then where is the man who was caught with her? Leviticus 20:10 / Deuteronomy 22:24. Her adultery could have been with a secret lover she was forbidden to see, or with the one she was betrothed to or with one sent by the authorities to seduce her.

They may have intended to take the woman before the Sanhedrin council, but this isn’t very likely because, as we read, she was just a tool they used in the hope of trapping Jesus, John 8:6.

The woman must have appeared as a sorry sight before Jesus, John 8:3-4. John 8:5 tells us they hoped to get Jesus to deny Moses’ Law by forgiving her. Deuteronomy 22:23 says she ought to be stoned, or deny Roman Law, as the Jews were under Roman law, which forbade them from stoning people.

But it’s clearly indicated that the accusers weren’t interested in justice; she was just a tool they used to try to trap Jesus, John 8:6 / Matthew 22:15. And so, they leave Jesus with a dilemma because Deuteronomy 22:22-24, Moses commanded stoning.

What do you say when you teach love? John 8:5. If He says no, don’t stone her, then He would be reported to the Sanhedrin for teaching against the law. If He said yes, stone her, He would be going against His own teaching and also against Roman law, as the Jews were forbidden to stone people under Roman law.

Please note that the Greek text actually has Jesus saying in John 8:7. ‘Let him who hasn’t committed her kind of sin cast the first stone’. In other words, Jesus says, ‘if you’re accusing her of adultery and want her stoned, take a look at yourself’, Matthew 5:27-28. He’s basically calling them adulterers.

A question often asked is, what did Jesus write in that sand? John 8:6 / John 8:8. However, He has deemed it unnecessary for us to know, so we aren’t told. Many ideas have been brought forth, including the following.

1. The names and sins of the woman’s accusers.
2. A warning aimed at the accusers.
3. Jesus doodled, showing His disinterest in such matters.
4. He didn’t know what to say, so He played for time, to think up an answer.

So, we don’t know what He wrote, but we do know that when they insisted on an answer, Jesus turned the legal squabble into a moral issue. A strange sense of morality overcomes the accusers and the others present, and they all leave, John 8:9, none able to say they were without her kind of sin.

The oldest go first, indicating either more skeletons hidden in their cupboards or their higher awareness of personal sin. If they were guilty of the same sin by either desire or intent, they themselves would be hypocrites. He doesn’t mean that judgments were to be carried out only by sinless people, for that would be impossible.

In [John 8:10-11](#), we see Jesus dealing so kindly with this embarrassed, wretched woman. He doesn't condemn her, condone her, or even chastise her; all He does is encourage her to leave her sinfulness, which gives her hope. In this story, we see the hypocrisy that the Jews condemn in others but fail to see in themselves. We also see their double standards; they brought the woman, not the man, just a put-up job to trap Jesus. The day we meet Jesus is an opportunity to change our lives and become better people.

DISPUTE OVER JESUS' TESTIMONY

'When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid." Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. In your own Law, it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me." Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also." He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.' [John 8:12-20](#)

Here we find the sixth discourse where Jesus begins teaching in the treasury, in the court of the women, [John 8:20](#). There were thirteen large chests with trumpet-like openings to receive gifts and also in this court there were four large candelabra fifty-feet high used for the ceremony called the illumination of the temple, this was to commemorate the Pillar of Cloud and Fire in the wilderness, [Exodus 13:21-22](#).

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

There are sixteen signs recorded in John's gospel; eight are things which Jesus did, and eight are things which Jesus said. John is basically saying that the 'I AM' claims of Jesus are signs, selected from many other signs, [John 20:30](#). And he says these signs are selected with a purpose in mind, and that purpose is that you believe that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, [John 20:30-31](#).

Here we find the second of seven of Jesus' 'I AM' claims, [John 6:35](#) / [John 8:12](#) / [John 8:58](#) / [John 10:9](#) / [John 10:11](#) / [John 11:25](#) / [John 14:6](#) / [John 15:1](#). Each of His 'I AM' claims are claims that He is God, EGO EIMI, is the Greek equivalent of YHWH, [Exodus 3:13-14](#) / [John 5:18](#). He is Eternal, [Psalm 135:13](#), and self-existent, [Psalm 88:6-7](#).

When we come to the 'I AM' claims of Jesus, we need to remember that Jesus was not giving Himself a Name or a title, but was asserting His Deity. In other words, every 'I AM' reveals some aspect of His nature and purpose. Jesus claims to be 'the light of the world, [John 8:12](#). Jesus makes an incredible claim that the Jewish authorities represent darkness, whilst Jesus represents light, [John 9:5](#).

In the first eighteen verses of John's Gospel, we read that the Word, who became the Son, brings light to the world. Jesus here declares Himself to be that light, [John 1:1-18](#). An interesting allegory can be drawn between the followers here walking in the light and the followers in the desert walking in the light of the pillar of fire.

This is especially relevant as the Feast of Tabernacles, which remembers the divine guidance of the Jews after the Exodus, was in progress, [John 7:1-53](#). John always connects light with life and darkness with death, [1 John 1:5](#).

The light that brings spiritual illumination to all men, [Isaiah 9:2](#) / [Isaiah 60:1-3](#) / [John 1:9](#) / [John 12:46](#) / [Ephesians 5:8](#). Notice Jesus uses the word, ‘follows’, [John 8:12](#), this is the present continuous tense, [John 10:48](#).

The word, ‘darkness’, ‘skotia’, [John 8:12](#), is an emblem of sin, [John 1:5](#) / [John 12:46](#). Light of life means light resulting from the possession of Eternal life, [John 1:4](#).

We see in [John 8:13-18](#), that the Pharisees will not believe Jesus and they come with the idea that as He doesn’t have a second witness, and so, His claims are invalid, [Deuteronomy 19:15](#).

In [John 5:31-40](#), Jesus explains who His co-witnesses are and there He discredited His own witness, but here He doesn’t, [John 8:14](#). Instead, He invokes higher spiritual standards and claims God the Father as the co-witness, [John 8:16-18](#).

In [John 8:14](#), Jesus claims higher knowledge than those who have studied, and so, the denial of Jesus’ testimony is invalid, but Jesus supports what He says with three facts.

1. He knows His heavenly origin and destination, [John 8:14](#).
2. It isn’t Jesus alone who judges but the Father who sent Him, [John 8:15-16](#).
3. The two witnesses of the Father and the Son, [John 8:16-18](#), should be enough for [Deuteronomy 19:15](#), and His works are an extra witness, [John 10:25](#), and they were done with divine help and cooperation, [John 3:2](#).

In [John 8:19](#), we see the Pharisees and everyone else knew what Jesus was referring to when He spoke of ‘My Father’. They ask for clarification in an attempt to get a direct statement to use against Him.

They may also be implying that they thought Jesus was illegitimate. Another possibility is that they thought He was referring to Joseph, who they knew was dead, and were saying ‘go on, produce your dead witness’.

But it’s more likely that they knew He was referring to God as His Father and were sarcastically demanding that He produce God as His witness. Again, Jesus claims higher knowledge than His questioners, again He ‘blasphemes’, and again the Pharisees are unable to seize Him, [John 8:20](#).

The sessions of the Sanhedrin were held in a room in which only a wall separated them from the court of the women, [John 8:20](#). Jesus would have been within earshot when He made His statement, yet it was impossible for anyone to arrest Him, [John 8:20](#). His hour hadn’t yet come as it’s only six months more till He is crucified.

Christians need to let the reflective light of Christ shine in their lives, [Matthew 5:14-16](#) / [2 Corinthians 4:6](#) / [Ephesians 4:17-19](#) / [Ephesians 5:8-14](#) / [Philippians 2:14-15](#).

DISPUTE OVER WHO JESUS IS

‘Once more Jesus said to them, “I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come.” This made the Jews ask, “Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, ‘Where I go, you cannot come?’” But he continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins.” “Who are you?” they asked. “Just what I have been telling you from the beginning,” Jesus replied. “I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.” They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. So, Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” Even as he spoke, many believed in him. John 8:21-30

Again, Jesus teaches the gathered people, and again they aren’t able to grasp the message Jesus brings them, [John 8:21](#). He knows that few of the Jews will ever accept His Messiahship and that most of those He taught directly will fail the test, making them unable to join Him at the final destination.

Notice Jesus says, ‘die in your sins,’ [John 8:21](#) / [John 8:24](#). This would appear to be related to the specific sin of denying the claims of Jesus, despite all the evidence. They would die in their unforgiven state, whereas accepting Him means that their sins could be taken away.

After telling them that they cannot come where He is going, [John 8:21](#), they ask the question, ‘Will he kill himself?’ [John 8:22](#). This tells us that they believed that the lowest regions were prepared for the suicides and murderers, and so Jesus speaks about His origin.

He says, ‘I am from above, not of this world’, and His critics were from their father below, [John 8:23](#). Notice [John 8:24](#), ‘I AM EGO EIMI’, The word, ‘he’ isn’t in the Greek, so, literally, Jesus says, ‘If you believe not that I AM, you will die in your sins’.

He tells the people of the urgent need they have to believe His claims, [John 8:24](#), and this is a clear indication of His claim to Deity; the phrase is an echo of [Exodus 3:14](#) / [Deuteronomy 32:39](#) / [Isaiah 43:10](#).

They ask for clarification, and Jesus slowly explains twice over. After asking, ‘Who are you?’, Jesus says, ‘I AM’ have been saying this from the beginning, [John 8:25](#). I’m sure you noticed that this is now the third attacking question, they asked Jesus, [John 8:19](#) / [John 8:22](#) / [John 8:25](#).

Clarke, in his commentary, translates [John 8:26](#) as follows.

‘I could speedily expose all your iniquities-your pride and ambition, your hypocrisy and irreligion, your hatred of the light, and your malice against the truth, together with the present obstinate unbelief of your hearts, and show that these are the reasons why I say you will die in your sins.’

Jesus declares that His words were from God the Father, [John 8:26](#). In other words, if the Pharisees opposed Jesus, they were really opposing God the Father. He had much to tell them, but they were unable to understand it. His message from the Father must be proclaimed, [John 8:27](#).

Jesus explains that He must be lifted up, [John 8:28](#), which is an obvious reference to His crucifixion, [John 3:14-15](#). And then they will know who Jesus is and that He was taught by His Father. This shows the unity between the Father and the Son.

In [John 8:29](#), we find another amazing claim: the unity between the Father and the Son continued and will continue. Going to die on the cross would prove His perfect love and obedience to His Father. And in [John 8:30](#), we can see the fruit of these careful explanations, ‘many put their faith in him’.

DISPUTE OVER WHOSE CHILDREN JESUS’ OPPONENTS ARE

‘To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?” Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now, a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father.” “Abraham is our father,” they answered. “If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would do what Abraham did. As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the works of your own father.” “We are not illegitimate children,” they protested. “The only Father we have is God himself.” Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is

a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God." John 8:31-47

At this point, until the end of [John 8:36](#), Jesus addresses the people mentioned in [John 8:30](#) as believers. Many commentators differ as to the point at which Jesus stops addressing believers and starts talking to unbelievers. The argument extends into questions regarding the quality of the faith of those mentioned in [John 8:30](#), which we won't go into, but I believe that Jesus encourages the new disciples to hold on to the teaching, [John 8:31](#). When the Spirit comes and the church is established, [Acts 2](#), they can be baptised in Christ and receive freedom from the bondage of sin, [Acts 2:38](#). Jesus guarantees them total freedom from the guilt associated with the sin in their lives and He also was in a position to relieve them from their burden of sin immediately as He had the power to forgive sin, [Romans 8:1](#).

But, as we know, salvation is conditional, 'if you continue (holdfast) in my word,' [John 7:17](#). 'Hold fast to my teaching and live in accordance with it,' [Colossians 1:21-23](#) / [John 15:6](#). [John 8:33](#) literally says, 'seed of Abraham we are and to no one have we been enslaved ever.'

THE SLAVE AND THE SON

The idea of slaves refers to spiritual, not physical, slaves. The Jewish nation had been slaves, and all the Jewish people would be very aware of this. Jesus said that everyone who commits sin, practices sin, is a slave to sin, [John 8:34](#), and so, He shows that the slave has no rights or security, but the son always remains the son, as the Son in God's house, Jesus could give freedom, [John 8:35](#). If the Son sets you free you are free indeed, [John 8:36](#).

Jesus now turns to those not accepting Him and accuses them of trying to kill Him in [John 8:37-41](#). Jesus twice mentions that they wish to kill Him, [John 8:37](#) / [John 8:40](#), but the people don't deny this.

Jesus proclaims them as Abraham's descendants, [John 8:37](#), but not his children, [John 8:39-40](#). They first declare themselves Abraham's children, [John 8:33](#) / [John 8:39](#), but then contradict that and say they are the Father's children, [John 8:41](#).

In [John 8:38-39](#), the people do what their physical Fathers do as opposed to that done by the spiritual fathers. They were illegitimate children, [John 8:41](#). Jesus reaffirms the divine origin of the message He brings, accusing those who don't accept it of rejecting God for the love of Satan, [John 8:42-43](#).

If you were God's children and loved Him, then they would love the one that God had sent, [John 8:42](#). He asks one impossible question to answer another question, 'Why is my language not clear to you?' [John 8:43](#). The answer! They cannot hear, they don't believe, and they cannot even prove Jesus guilty of sin because they don't belong to God. [John 18:38](#) / [John 19:4-6](#).

They cannot bear to hear His word because of envy, [John 9:41](#) / [Acts 14](#) / [Ezra 16:45](#) / [2 Thessalonians 2:8-12](#). They have made themselves destined for eternal separation because they will not believe the truth. Their hardness of heart is because they are children of their father, the devil.

And then Jesus makes one of His strongest statements ever, He declares those in opposition to Him are children of Satan, not children of God, [John 8:44](#). The devil is a liar and a murderer in the beginning, [John 8:44](#), which is an obvious reference to using Cain to murder Abel, [Genesis 4:8](#) / [1 John 3:15](#).

Jesus was telling them the truth because He is the Truth, [John 8:45-46](#) / [John 14:6](#), yet they won't believe Him, [John 8:45](#). They couldn't prove that Jesus has sinned, [John 8:46](#). The reason they don't believe or listen to Jesus is that they don't belong to God, [John 8:47](#).

JESUS' CLAIMS ABOUT HIMSELF

“The Jews answered him, “Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?” “I am not possessed by a demon,” said Jesus, “but I honour my Father, and you dishonour me. I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death.” At this, they exclaimed, “Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?” Jesus replied, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” “You are not yet fifty years old,” they said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!” “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.’ John 8:48-59

In [John 8:48-51](#), we see the Jews are now incensed at Jesus’ comments and give Him two insults. They say that Jesus was a Samaritan and demon-possessed, [John 8:48](#) / [Matthew 12:22-32](#) / [Luke 11:14-23](#).

The Jews are now full of abuse and impossible to impress, but Jesus still continues to converse with them. They are unable even to listen to what He is saying; their hate of Him is spilling over, but Jesus still proclaims the truth.

He knows that the situation is getting worse. He is in danger of being molested, but He sticks to the truth, not backing down one inch. Jesus tells again of eternal life through Himself and displays humility by assuring the crowd that His intention isn’t to bring glory on Himself, but on God.

Jesus denies being demon possessed and declares that He honours God, [John 8:49](#). Someone who is demon possessed would certainly not bring honour to God in any way.

Spurgeon, in his commentary, says the following.

‘No man can be said to have a devil who honours God; for the evil spirit from the beginning has been the enemy of all that glorifies the Father.’

Likewise, we ought to seek glory for God, not ourselves. The Jews are now sure that Jesus has a serious problem, He says life, eternal, is available through Him, [John 8:51](#). Jesus now declares that anyone who obeys His words will never see death, [John 8:51](#).

The word ‘obey’ used by Jesus in this verse suggests a continuing obedience to His words, [2 John 9-10](#). The promise of never seeing death doesn’t mean that people won’t die physically, [Hebrews 9:27](#), but it is the promise of eternal life.

In [John 8:52-59](#), the crowd are convinced that Jesus is demon-possessed, but we see that all the crowd know that Abraham is dead, yet this, Jesus claims it is possible never to taste death, [John 8:52](#).

Jesus is obviously saying He has the power to conquer death. Abraham and all the prophets didn’t have much power, and so, Jesus is claiming to be greater than them, [John 8:52-53](#). Of course, Jesus is God, far superior to any man.

The crowd acts most indignant at His claims, and Jesus attempts once more to get the word out and forced it, using His Godly power on them, [John 8:54-55](#), but Jesus respects mankind’s freedom of choice and lets the mob make up their own mind.

Jesus clearly knew who His Father is, and He clearly knows that His Father honours Him and He obeys His Father’s word, [John 8:54-55](#). In other words, Jesus is saying He knew God, but the Jews didn’t, He obeys His Father, but the Jews don’t.

It’s interesting to note the Greek words for ‘know’ used in [John 8:55](#). The Greek uses two different words, resulting in a much stronger expression. The word used to describe the Jews not knowing the Father is ‘egnokate’, which gives the impression of being ignored due to a lack of study.

The word used by Jesus to express His own knowledge of the Father is ‘oyda’, which refers not merely to an academic knowledge of the Father, but a deeper, intimate knowledge of Him.

Jesus says He has been with, seen, been part of, and has been with the Father. This was rather provocative, as these men, Jesus spoke to include the most ‘learned’ of the Jews.

Tradition said that before Abraham died, he had a vision of the Messianic age. This could be what Jesus refers to in [John 8:56](#). Jesus, who is eternal, saw the gladness of Abraham when the Saviour was promised all those years ago, when the covenant was drawn up between Abraham and the Father, [John 8:56](#) / [Genesis 12:1-3](#).

The mob picks up on this idea and distorts it; they say, ‘You are not yet fifty years old’, [John 8:57](#). He was about thirty when He was baptised, [Luke 3:23](#), and His ministry lasted around three years.

Why do they say fifty? Possibly because He may have looked older than His years, or fifty was a round figure, but it was also the year that a Levite retired after completing their service, [Numbers 4:3](#).

‘BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS BORN, I AM’

Note that Jesus even goes to the length of using the double Aramaic ‘amen, amen’, [John 8:58](#). In saying, ‘Verily, Verily’ or ‘truly, truly,’ that denotes the paramount importance of the statement that is to follow, Jesus is emphasising even more the staggering statement.

Each of His ‘I AM’ claims is a claim that He is God, EGO EIMI, the Greek equivalent of YHWH, [Exodus 3:13-14](#) / [John 5:18](#). He is Eternal, [Psalm 135:13](#), and self-existent, [Psalm 88:6-7](#).

Jesus now makes His third ‘I AM’ claim, [John 6:35](#) / [John 8:12](#) / [John 8:58](#) / [John 10:9](#) / [John 10:11](#) / [John 11:25](#) / [John 14:6](#) / [John 15:1](#). Each of His ‘I AM’ claims are claims that He is God, EGO EIMI, is the Greek equivalent of YHWH, [Exodus 3:13-14](#) / [John 5:18](#). He is Eternal, [Psalm 135:13](#), and self-existent, [Psalm 88:6-7](#). ‘I AM’ would imply that Jesus said He was far more exalted than Abraham since the ‘I AM’ in contrast with ‘Abraham was’ and speaking and in the past tense.

Jesus, by saying ‘I AM’ instead of ‘I WAS’, which would be the normal structure of the sentence in that particular case, was alluding not merely to His antiquity in relation to Abraham, but also to His (Jesus’) timeless existence even more because He said ‘before Abraham was I AM’.

Jesus puts all doubt out of their minds when He declares, ‘before Abraham was, I am’, [John 8:58](#). The crowd is aware of the significance of this claim, which vividly draws a picture of Jesus’ eternal existence as well as their absolute superiority. Jesus claims to be God.

The situation takes the last step to blatant violence: ‘they picked up stones to stone him,’ [John 8:59](#). Once again, Jesus escapes from an enclosed place, while many want to do Him bodily harm, some divine intervention must have been employed, [John 8:59](#).

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION

‘As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So, the man went and washed, and came home seeing. His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” Some claimed that he was. Others said, “No, he only looks like him.” But he himself insisted, “I am the man.” “How then were your eyes opened?” they asked. He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So, I went and washed, and then I could see.” “Where is this man?” they asked him. “I don’t know,” he said.’ John 9:1-12

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

The miracle of giving sight to the blind is unknown in the Old Testament, and nowhere other than in the Gospels in the New Testament are there any other cases of the blind receiving sight. It is mentioned in [Psalm 146:8](#) as the entitlement of YHWH.

But in the Gospels, Jesus does this miracle more than any others: [Matthew 9:27-31](#) / [Matthew 12:22](#) / [Matthew 15:30](#) / [Matthew 21:14](#) / [Mark 8:22](#) / [Mark 10:46-52](#) / [Luke 7:21](#). It was predicted by the Messiah, [Isaiah 35:5](#) / [Isaiah 61:2](#) / [Luke 4:17-19](#), and so, in giving sight to the blind, Jesus is fulfilling Messianic prophecy.

In [John 9:1-5](#), we find that the man was blind from birth, and the disciples are now with Jesus. The Jews considered that any problem anyone had was a result of sin.

A commonly held idea at the time was that physical impairments are the result of sin. If a child was born with a physical disability, the parents would normally be blamed, but this idea is in line with what Ezekiel says in [Ezekiel 18:20](#). It was sometimes considered that the child sinned in the womb before birth and so carried the disability for life, but this argument is weak, to say the least.

The entire idea of physical problems being the result of our sin before we are born is in no way supported by Christian literature. The Bible clearly teaches of a reckoning afterlife, not during. This would also have a problem when faced with the fact that all eventually die.

The reaction of Job’s friends demonstrated false thinking, and many today think in the same way, perhaps subconsciously, when they say, ‘What have I done to deserve this?’ [Job 30:24-31](#).

Sometimes people suffer the consequences of their parents’ sin. For example, we have children born with drug addiction or aids, but they don’t inherit the sin but the consequences.

It would appear as if no restitution can be made for sin, and as sin piles upon the shoulders of the old, the load becomes too great, sickness results, and death ensues. Obviously, this is not the truth.

On seeing a man who had been born blind, the Lord’s disciples asked Him, ‘Master, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ [John 9:2](#). The fact that they asked this question doesn’t mean that they were students of someone else.

They asked because among the Jews of that period, there were Rabbis who tried to explain the problem of sickness and disability by declaring that human beings were born disabled as the result of sin committed in a former existence. The sin which caused the sickness may have been committed either by themselves or by their parents.

Morris, in his commentary, says the following.

‘It was widely held that suffering, and especially such a disaster as blindness, was due to sin. The general principle was laid down by Rabbi Ammi: ‘There is no death without sin, and there is no suffering without iniquity.’

This theory is manifestly false, if only because the poor sufferer has no notion and no recollection of the sin he is supposed to commit, and one would have thought that it is an essential element in the dispensing of justice that the accused is given to understand of what offence he is guilty and so, why he is being punished.

Being brought up familiar with this belief, the disciples of Jesus wanted to know where the responsibility lay in this man’s case. Was he suffering as a consequence of his own sins? Or was it because of the sins of his parents? They obviously thought that the responsibility for his blindness lay with either one or the other.

Jesus denies that the man’s blindness is due to sin, [John 9:3](#), and Jesus doesn’t put the tradition to the test here, but removes the idea that the blindness was a result of sin.

He stated, bluntly, ‘Neither this man nor his parents’, [John 9:3](#). The subject is closed! He puts the emphasis on helping the man, not deciding why he should be in the predicament.

Jesus wants to use this man’s disability to demonstrate the work of God, [John 9:3-4](#). Sadly, there follows in [John 9:3](#) a statement that has been rendered in a way that I find quite impossible to accept and which, for me, creates a profound difficulty. More than that, I think it is misleading.

The statement is, ‘the works of God might be displayed in him’, [John 9:3](#). Now, according to this rendering, the man had been born blind and compelled to live in darkness for a considerable period of his life, in order that, when he reached manhood, God could work a miracle on him.

Think about this: if this rendering is accurate, it means, from birth to manhood, even though his affliction wasn’t a punishment for sin committed in some imaginary previous existence, the man had been burdened with this distressing handicap because God had deliberately inflicted it upon him, to use him as an object lesson. It implies that his affliction was intended to play a part in some divine plan.

I suggest that this dilemma has been created because of the manner in which the passage has been punctuated. Look again at [John 9:3](#), and consider the following. Remove the comma after the word ‘parents’ in that verse and replace it with a full stop. Remove the full stop at the end of verse three and replace it with a comma.

This results in [John 9:4](#), no longer beginning a new sentence; instead, it becomes a continuation of the Lord’s statement, and the passage reads very differently. This is what we now read, ‘neither this man nor his parents. But, in order that the works of God may be made manifest in him, I must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night comes, when no one can work.’

The Lord is saying, in effect, ‘this man was not born blind as punishment for anyone’s sin. But, I must do what the One Who sent me to do, whilst I am in this world, because the time is coming when my work will end.’ And notice the word ‘day’, ‘while it is day’, [John 9:4](#).

The ‘day’ to which the Lord referred was the duration, or ‘day’, of His earthly ministry. That ministry must be understood in the light of the statement He made in the synagogue at Nazareth, when, after having commenced His ministry, He first returned to the city in which he had been brought up, [Luke 4:16-19](#).

That day in the synagogue, He spoke about His mission. He was aware that the townspeople were curious to know why, after being baptised by John, instead of returning home as other young men had done, He had begun a ministry of His own. The people had heard that He was preaching and performing miracles.

Therefore, when He returned to the town, He explained His behaviour by referring them to the prophecy in [Isaiah 61:1-2](#) / [Luke 4:16-19](#). John, who records the miracle of the healing of the man born blind, explains that it is one of the ‘many signs’ that Jesus performed in order to convince men that He is the Christ and if we believe in Him, we can live through Him, [John 20:30-31](#).

And, because the Lord was ‘the Great Physician’, this blind man became the recipient of the grace and power of God, demonstrated by the Christ in the course of His ministry. His blindness wasn’t a divinely inflicted punishment for sin.

We must accept this because Jesus tells us. But of one thing we may be sure, it was certainly a consequence of sin, just as, in the final analysis, are all the world’s ills.

Jesus again points to His coming departure and re-teaches the idea of Him being the light, [John 9:5](#) / [John 8:12](#). If we are of the light, then we need to grasp the opportunities that are given to us while we still have the opportunity to do so, [Colossians 4:5](#) / [Ephesians 5:15-16](#).

Jesus gave the man clear instructions on how to receive his sight, and he must have had some faith in Jesus, or he wouldn’t have allowed Him to put spit, manufactured mud, in his eyes, [John 9:6-7](#). There are two other cases where spittle was used, [Mark 7:31-37](#) / [Mark 8:22-26](#).

Morris, in his commentary, says the following.

‘In His ministry to the souls of men, Jesus adopted no stereotyped approach. He dealt with each man as his particular need required.’

Barclay, in his commentary, says the following about the saliva.

‘Spittle, and especially the spittle of some distinguished persons, was believed to possess certain curative qualities.’

Alford, in his commentary, says the following about the saliva.

‘The virtue of the fasting saliva, in the cases of disorders of the eye, was well known to antiquity.’

Jesus sent the man to the pool of Siloam, which was a good way, [John 9:7](#). The blind man needed to negotiate a steep hill while his eyes were covered in mud. This was a test of faith, [2 Kings 5:14](#) / [Luke 17:14](#). The water for the pool came through Hezekiah’s tunnel, which was built in Old Testament times, [2 Kings 20:20](#).

Barclay, in his commentary, says the following concerning the pool.

‘It was called Siloam, which, it was said, meant sent, because the water in it had been sent through the conduit into the city.’

He had some dedication to the desire to be healed and to the man who said he could heal him. The man did as he was told and came home seeing, [John 9:7](#). Some people believed in the curative power of spittle, but it was neither the spittle nor the washing in the clay that cured this man; the healing came from Jesus. The man needed to trust and obey Him.

Morris, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Again and again, John refers to Jesus as having been ‘sent’ by the Father. So now blindness is removed with reference to and with the aid of the ‘sent’.’

In [John 9:8-12](#), we see the result of this healing. The people who know the man are amazed, and they even debate whether or not it is the same man. When asked for an explanation, and the man gives the simple facts, I am the man displaying my faith, [John 9:8-9](#).

They asked, ‘How were your eyes opened?’ and he replied, ‘The man called Jesus’, [John 9:10-11](#). The people must have been familiar with the work of Jesus. The people are still sceptical about this healing, and they don’t feel too comfortable with it, [John 9:12](#).

THE PHARISEES INVESTIGATE THE HEALING

‘They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man’s eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore, the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. “He put mud on my eyes,” the man replied, “and I washed, and now I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others asked, “How can a sinner perform such signs?” So, they were divided. Then they turned again to the blind man, “What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” The man replied, “He is a prophet.” They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man’s parents. “Is this your son?” they asked. “Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?” “We know he is our son,” the parents answered, “and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.” A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. “Give glory to God by telling the truth,” they said. “We know this man is a sinner.” He replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered, “I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?” Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” To this, they replied, “You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out. John 9:13-34

The healing was done to produce faith, [John 20:30-31](#), but in the Pharisees, it only produced hostility. The effect of truth depends on the attitude of the heart of the hearers, [Acts 2:37](#). John says much about the conflict between light and darkness.

The people didn’t like what they saw, and as a result, they took the healed man to the Pharisees, [John 9:13](#). All Jerusalem ought to have rejoiced with this man who had received his sight after a life in darkness.

But no, the healing took place on the Sabbath, [John 9:14](#). The healing required the making of mud, so the Pharisees decided the healing was a sin. Sabbath violations, ‘work’ was defined by thirty-nine actions. Jesus had made clay, kneading it, and put it on the man’s eyes. Anointed, healed, and only allowed in an emergency.

They ask for an explanation, and the man again tells the simple truth, [John 9:15](#). Now a division, ‘schisma’, [John 7:43](#) / [John 10:19](#), arose between the Pharisees. Some declared Jesus a heretic for healing on the Sabbath, while others were not so sure and asked, ‘How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?’ [John 9:16-17](#).

They ask the man his opinion, and he isn’t intimidated by the Pharisees and their reluctance to recognise that the miracle is from God. He declares openly and boldly, ‘The man is a prophet,’ [John 9:17](#).

The entire group of authoritative people had the wrong priorities. They ought to have been rejoicing with this man, but instead, they get out the Law books to decide the obvious.

Those who were favourable towards Jesus aren’t mentioned in the story; perhaps they were intimidated by the bigoted majority. We see the ugly side of the Pharisees is now exposed in [John 9:18-23](#).

They call in the blind man’s parents, and they question them about him, ‘is he your son?’ ‘Was he born blind?’ ‘How come he can now see?’ [John 9:18-21](#). They intimidate the parents, turning them into frightened people and forcing them to pass the buck back to the son. The Pharisees had a typical clergy attitude.

They bullied the people, thinking that they were the big people. Eventually, the parents are afraid of being put out of the synagogue and tell the Pharisees to ask the healed man who is of age, [John 9:22-23](#).

It seems as if excommunication from the synagogue was a powerful weapon used by the Pharisees to intimidate the populace. The one who was unsynagogued was virtually cut off from all religious, social and economic life of the

community. It was all about fear, [John 12:42](#) / [John 16:2](#) / [Luke 6:22](#). Still, the Pharisees didn't acknowledge that a real healing had occurred.

Both the man and his parents said it did, and both say the man was born blind, but the clergy will not accept this clear demonstration of Jesus' power, and so, they decide instead that some trick is being played, but they cannot find anyone to collaborate and agree with them.

The man is again summoned to the Pharisees, [John 9:24-34](#). They want the man to give the glory of this healing to God and not to Jesus, [John 9:24](#). This is a fine idea, giving glory to God, but we know that giving glory to God or the Son is the same thing.

The Pharisees wouldn't agree because they knew that a miraculous healing could only have come from God. The people were telling them that Jesus did the healing. The conclusion drawn would have to be that Jesus was from God, the last conclusion the Pharisees wanted.

The healed man sticks to his guns but the Pharisees declare Jesus a sinner, the man doesn't disagree, but calls on his experience of Jesus and reaffirms Him as the healer, [John 9:25](#).

The man speaks boldly to the Pharisees, he is no normal Jew, he has the courage to stand tall before the Pharisees and so he carefully constructs the question that almost demanded a negative answer, but gave just enough space for a positive one, [John 9:26](#).

He impatiently said, 'I told you already, and you would not listen.' Sarcastically, he said, 'If you listen, will you become his disciples?' [John 9:27](#). How different would the world be if they had taken that chance and believed?

They try to intimidate the man again by insulting him, [John 9:28](#). They were on the brink of defeat, so near to having to accept Jesus as the promised Messiah, so they chose to fight.

They revile him and treat him as a disciple of Jesus. They think they are better because they are disciples of Moses, [John 9:29](#). They demand respect for their elevated position as learned men.

And look at [John 9:30](#), in amazement, he amazingly sarcastically said, 'You do not know where he came from, yet he opened my eyes.' The healed man puts all the facts down on the table

1. He opened his eyes, [John 9:30](#).
2. God doesn't listen to sinners, [John 9:31](#).
3. God listens to Godly men who do His will, [John 9:31](#).
4. This miracle has never happened before, [John 9:32](#). Man cannot do it.
5. If Jesus isn't from God, He could not do these things, [John 9:33](#).

The ex-blind man was telling the Pharisees that Jesus is from God, that He is the one He claims to be, that He is the Messiah. The Pharisees are defeated, and they know it, the man knows it, we know it.

They admit in [John 9:34](#) that he was blind, a sin related to physical disablement, but notice that they don't answer his questions, instead they abuse the speaker, which is a typical debating technique when you don't have an answer.

They say that he was 'steeped in sin at birth', which meant he was an illegitimate bastard, born in utter depravity.

They resort to the last trick in the book: they throw him out. So, this poor man, on the day he received his sight, doesn't revel in his joy but suffers the humiliation of being ostracised by the people.

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

'Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped him. Jesus said, "For

judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.” Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, “What? Are we blind too?” Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.” John 9:35-41

Jesus heard about what happened, and now Jesus goes out to find the man, [John 9:35](#). He showed His compassion for the man who ought to have been so glad at the day’s events. Jesus wants to give more than the mere physical healing to this man; He wants the man to have all the benefits available to a believer.

Jesus asked if he believed in the Son of Man, [John 9:35](#). This was the name Jesus applied to Himself, [John 1:51](#) / [John 3:13-14](#) / [John 5:26-27](#) / [John 6:27](#). This deals with His perfect humanity.

The healed man wants final clarification of that which he must have known ‘Who is he sir?’ ‘kurios’, [John 9:36](#). Jesus’ answer is clear, it is positive, a definite claim to being the Messiah, [John 9:37](#). Jesus reveals Himself to the man, previously Jesus had revealed His identity to the Samaritan woman, [John 4:25-26](#), and now to an excommunicated beggar.

The man accepts Him and worships Jesus, [John 9:38](#), and notice Jesus doesn’t stop the man from worshipping Him, as do other people when they are worshipped in error, [Acts 14:13-15](#) / [Revelation 22:8-9](#).

It’s right to worship Jesus, He is the Son, He is God. The word, worship ‘proskanaio’ in John’s Gospel is always used for worship of Deity, [John 4:20-24](#) / [John 12:20](#).

Jesus sees the humility in the man’s heart and tells him of spiritual blindness, and so, the man’s day was made twice, [John 9:39](#). Not only did he receive physical sight, but he also received spiritual sight.

The word judgment, [John 9:39](#), ‘krino’, means to select or choose. Jesus has already said that He didn’t come into the world to judge the world, [John 3:17](#) / [John 12:47](#), which was referring to the non-Jews.

Now He says He came for judgement, [John 9:39](#). He isn’t speaking here of the final judgement, but the effect that He has on people, [John 3:18](#). His coming means that those who cannot see can have their eyes opened, but those who think they can be blinded by His message because of their own pride and conceit.

In [John 9:40](#), we see the Pharisees are again on hand. It seems as if some always went with Jesus, probably seeking ways to trap Him or ways to accuse Him, but they never found either with a good foundation. The Pharisees are indignant at the idea of them as the leaders of the nation being accused of being spiritually blind.

Jesus reassures them that they aren’t if they so say, but in view of their spiritual sight and their refusal to accept Jesus and the written word, they stand guilty and so, their sins remain because they rejected salvation, [John 9:41](#).

Compare [John 9:41](#), with [John 9:2](#), the Pharisees are the ones who are truly blind but claim that they can see, they study the Scriptures but cannot see the love of God in them.

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION

‘Very truly I tell you, Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognise a stranger’s voice.’ Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.’ John 10:1-6

This is a continuation of the previous chapter. The chapter division is placed to cut the conversation in half. And so, we have Jesus speaking, continuing to answer the question asked in [John 9:40](#), by a group of Pharisees.

Jesus condemns the unfaithful shepherds of Israel, who had cast out the once blind man, [John 9:34](#), but Jesus, the Good Shepherd, had received him and helped him, [John 9:35-38](#).

The blind man had been healed, and this situation with the Pharisees had arisen as a result of Jesus seeking the man after he had been thrown out of the synagogue by the Jewish authorities.

The good shepherd is now denouncing the unfaithful shepherds as did the prophets of old, [Isaiah 56:9-12](#) / [Jeremiah 23:1-4](#) / [Jeremiah 25:34-38](#) / [Ezekiel 34](#) / [Zechariah 11](#).

The term ‘verily’, ‘I tell you the truth’, [John 10:1](#), is used by Jesus to emphasise a point He was making. In this case, the sheep pen was a walled enclosure having no roof and a space or gate at one end in which the sheep were kept for the night. If it were attached to a building or were near a town, it would have a wooden door. Jesus was the gate or door, [John 10:1](#).

However, some people try to prevent the owner of the sheep from having these sheep. These thieves and robbers, [John 10:2](#), are the Pharisees and other Jews, and the methods used are, as seen in the previous chapter, intimidation, bullying, threatening and removal from the synagogue; they were usurping God’s authority over them, His own people.

Jesus uses both the gate and the shepherd to describe Himself. The gatekeeper would look after the sheep in the pen at night, [John 10:2-3](#). He would lie down across the gate so if anything came to attack the sheep, he would defend them.

Sometimes a gatekeeper would be hired to look after the sheep, as he did not own the sheep. He would not put his life at risk to protect them. Several flocks from an area could be kept in one pen to stay the night together.

The true shepherd would have every right to enter by the door. When the shepherd came, all the sheep belonging to him would recognise his voice and follow.

Christians should recognise the voice of Jesus and follow Him, [John 10:4-5](#). Shepherds drive their flocks, and elders and evangelists should lead the flock, [1 Peter 5:1-5](#). Too often, they drive or drag, rather than lead by example; they are reactive rather than active.

The flock ought to listen to the voice of the shepherd. When others try to lure us away from Christ, we can see through them and cling to Christ. It’s not surprising that the Pharisees didn’t understand; they were blind to the spiritual application of Jesus’ words, [John 10:6](#).

I AM THE GATE

‘Therefore, Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:7-11

‘I AM’

There are sixteen signs recorded in John's gospel; eight are things which Jesus did, and eight are things which Jesus said. John is basically saying that the 'I AM' claims of Jesus are signs, selected from many other signs. And he says these signs are selected with a purpose in mind, and that purpose is that you believe that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, [John 20:30-31](#).

Here we find the fourth of seven of Jesus' 'I AM' claims, [John 6:35](#) / [John 8:12](#) / [John 8:58](#) / [John 10:9](#) / [John 10:11](#) / [John 11:25](#) / [John 14:6](#) / [John 15:1](#). Each of His 'I AM' claims are claims that He is God, EGO EIMI, is the Greek equivalent of YHWH, [Exodus 3:13-14](#) / [John 5:18](#). He is Eternal, [Psalm 135:13](#), and self-existent, [Psalm 88:6-7](#).

When we come to the 'I AM' claims of Jesus, we need to remember that Jesus was not giving Himself a Name or a title, but was asserting His Deity. In other words, every 'I AM' reveals some aspect of His nature and purpose.

Because the Pharisees still didn't understand what Jesus was saying, He again explained, using Himself as the gate, [John 10:7](#) / [John 10:9](#). All who enter by the gate are legitimate, as opposed to those who climb over the wall, [John 10:1](#).

Thieves and robbers, [John 10:8](#), are those who had come before claiming Messiahship were illegitimate, they were self-appointed leaders who made havoc on the flock, as they attempted to hijack the masses.

However, Jesus also includes here the Jewish hierarchy at the time, many of whom were only concerned about personal power and gain. The Sadducees were notorious for their money-making schemes, and many Pharisees were covetous, [Luke 16:14](#) / [Mark 12:40](#), and although many listened to these impostors, 'the sheep,' the true people of God did not listen to them, [John 10:8](#).

Jesus emphasizes His 'gate-hood', and that all who enter through Him are safe within the realm of Jesus and can move about in the world but not of the world, [John 10:9](#).

'He can come in and out', [John 10:9](#), means he who listens to Jesus will be safe and sound as he goes in and out of the pen to find his food. Jesus is getting down to the 'nitty-gritty' of Christianity. Entrance into the fold of divine favour is exclusively through Jesus, [John 10:9](#) / [John 14:6](#).

The result of entering 'the gate' is eternal life, [John 10:10](#). The word 'kill' in [John 10:10](#) means to mutilate, rather than annihilate. The religious bodies had no real concern for the people but rather held them in contempt, [John 7:49](#) / [Matthew 23:35](#). Jesus came to give them abundant life, which means 'life to the full', till it overflows, now as in heaven, [John 10:10](#).

Christ is the door for the sheep; if we go the next step with that, it is the crucified and the risen Christ. If we define it in the strictest of terms, he is 'the crucified to atone for our sins and resurrected Christ.'

This indeed is the gate of the sheep; it is the very gate of salvation. The teaching that one comes in without going through this gate of the sheep is a salvation teaching that places no importance on the atonement for sin and makes no importance on the cross or the resurrection.

The teaching of self-justification and self-empowered salvation does not make the need for the atonement for sin. The teaching of the Pharisees was truly like that.

According to them, a person keeps the law and will be saved. A person will arrive at eternal life by his or her good works. If that were so, there would be no need for the atonement, would there?

Also, the heresy that would later be called Gnosticism was the same way. The religious elite who had acquired a special knowledge would be saved. Theirs was a religion of self-empowered deliverance but under a different guise. With them, then, the atonement wasn't necessary.

Or even, today, some who may knock on the gates of our church or some who try to read the scriptures may have thoughts like this, ‘Good things are written in the scriptures. Won’t you become a good person if you study something good? Won’t you be saved if you become a good person?’

The man called Jesus was a man of love. Let’s live by emulating the one named Jesus. Let’s live by keeping his teachings of love. Won’t I too become a person of love if I do that? By doing that, it will lead to saving others and to saving me.’

But if one is saved by that means, the atonement for sin is no longer needed. Neither the cross nor the resurrection would be needed either. If that were true, we might just read Christ’s sermon on the Mount alone, [Matthew 5-7](#).

But as for Christ, Christ says, ‘He who crosses over from some other place without entering through the gate is a thief and is a robber,’ [John 10:8](#). He says that the person who enters in without going through the gate does not bring true life or salvation. Why is that?

Because the Lord knows the depth of humanity’s sin, and because the problem of human sin is not resolved by the law. A human being will not be saved by becoming a little bit better or by improving little by little.

So, instead of our dying, Christ died for us. ‘Once a fool, always a fool to the grave.’ For us like that, Christ died, bearing our sins on His back, in our place. Christ died as a sinner, even though He was sinless, [2 Corinthians 5:21](#) / [1 Peter 2:22](#).

Therefore, when we believe in Christ and are joined to him, we participate in Christ’s death, and we ourselves become dead. This is so that we will live the new life as persons who were once dead. Yes, indeed, we can live anew. Baptism, as practised in the church, clearly shows this fact, [Romans 6:4](#). Christ said, ‘I am the gate. He who enters through me will be saved.’

Coming through the gate called Christ, becoming a sheep of Christ, that is, a sheep which is within Christ’s protective enclosure, means believing in Christ, being dead with Christ, and becoming a person who lives the new life.

That’s where salvation is. Christ has become that kind of gate. He has become the open gate of salvation! So, the sheep who have come through the opened gate called Christ will live by daily nourishment through the true shepherd called Christ, even until their attainment of the completion of that salvation.

I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So, when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not in this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They, too, will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have the authority to lay it down and the authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.” The Jews who heard these words were again divided. Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?” But others said, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” John 10:11-21

In [John 10:11](#), we see the beginning of the contrast between the Good Shepherd and the hirelings. This section concentrates on Jesus as the Good Shepherd. He again uses one of the ‘I am’ statements that are a signature of Christ portrayed by John. Here we find the fifth of seven of Jesus’ I AM’ claims.

The word ‘good’, ‘kalos’, [John 10:11](#), means far more than just good, but could be described as beautiful, in character and service, complete, righteous, loving, Holy, total or protector among other things, [1 Peter 3:3-4](#). That ‘good’ shepherd would and did lay down His life for all with no conditions attached, [John 10:11](#).

The dedication of the paid Pharisees is questioned. The hired hand, ‘misthotos’, [John 10:12](#), means those who merely serve for wages. They do what they do for money, not out of those qualities described by the word ‘good,’ ‘kalos.’ As the gatekeeper, he can lose nothing, he will not endanger his life but rather will abandon the sheep to their danger, [John 10:13](#).

The hired hand’s attitude was shown by the religious leaders, by their treatment of the once blind man. They showed no concern for him, [John 9:13-34](#) / [1 Peter 5:3](#). However, as the shepherd owns everything, He will sacrifice all, [John 10:11](#).

With Christ, we are the highest priority, with the labourer His wages. The shepherd has an intimate relationship with the sheep. He knows them all, and He recognises them all and is known and recognised by them. He knows and is known by the Father, [John 10:14-15](#).

[John 10:16](#) is often misunderstood by a certain religious group. We are known by the Saviour. The word ‘other’ is derived from the Greek word ‘allos’, indicating something of the same sort.

This then refers to other people of the same sort who must also be contacted, and certainly the Gentiles who had not been included in God’s scheme of redemption in Judaism, [Ephesians 2:13-29](#) / [John 12:32](#) / [Galatians 3:25-29](#).

Everyone will gather together, making one flock, which emphasises their relationship and the need for Christian unity, [John 10:16](#) / [Ephesians 4:1](#).

The reference to Jesus’ death and resurrection here, [John 10:17](#), is so remarkable that Jesus goes on in [John 10:18](#) to vindicate it. ‘I lay down my life’ means He would die voluntarily, [Romans 5:1-9](#).

Notice Jesus says, ‘I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again’, [John 10:18](#). As God and man, Jesus requires authority from the Father; His human nature demands that everything He did was with the cooperation of the Father, [Philippians 2:6-8](#).

But as the risen God-man, He has the power over death and Hades, [Revelation 1:18](#). In these verses, we have seen Jesus as a remarkable teacher. He has told of facts about the very basis of Christianity, things that are now complex doctrines, and He made them clear in just a few verses.

In [John 10:19-21](#), we see the Jews’ reaction. The words just passed are the tail end of the incident surrounding Jesus’ healing of the blind man, [John 9:1-41](#). The result of all this teaching is division, ‘schisma’, [John 7:43](#); people don’t believe and are thus confused, [John 10:19](#).

They say, ‘He is a demon and is mad, can a demon open the eyes of the blind?’ [John 8:38](#) / [John 10:20-21](#) / [Matthew 12:22-32](#) / [Luke 11:14-23](#). These are not the sayings of one who has a demon, [John 7:12](#) / [John 9:16](#). The arguments used for and against Him in [John 8:48](#), and elsewhere, are again employed.

FURTHER CONFLICT OVER JESUS’ CLAIMS

‘Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon’s Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” John 10:22-30

The feast of dedication, [John 10:22](#), was and indeed is a feast instituted by man rather than by God. It was an eight-day celebration beginning the twenty-fifth day of Kislev, December twenty-fifth, about two months after the feast of Tabernacles.

It commemorates the cleansing and re-dedication of the Temple after it had been defiled by the evil Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BC. He called himself Epiphanies Theos, the glory of God, but the Jews nicknamed him the donkey. He made possession of copies of the law and the act of circumcision a capital offence.

It is said he defiled the Temple by erecting an altar to Zeus on the Main altar and slaughtering pigs on the main altar, and then spreading the remains about the Temple. He turned the temple rooms into a brothel.

Judas Maccabees led the revolt and freed the nation from oppression. The temple had been left unused for three years after its desecration, and it was re-dedicated in 165 BC. Three years to the day by Judas Maccabees. He then decreed it to be an annual event to be remembered.

The incident is recorded in [1 Maccabees 1:59](#) / [1 Maccabees 4:52](#) / [1 Maccabees 4:59](#), and by the writings of Josephus. It is still celebrated today and is now called the Hanukkah festival of lights. It's now the winter before the spring in which Jesus is crucified, and He was walking under the Colonnades as it was the rainy season, [John 10:22-23](#).

Many explanations have been given as to why Jesus is so reluctant to reveal his true identity to these people, [John 10:24](#). He did eventually go to the woman at the well, [John 4:1-26](#), but this was only after a long discussion and after he had revealed the spiritual nature of His calling.

In [John 10:24](#), they ask a question, 'How long will you keep us in suspense?' No doubt the question was intended to again seek a reason to accuse Jesus. The implication is that He hadn't been explicit in His claims, or said in so many words that He was the Messiah.

The real answer to the question was irrelevant to the questioners. They already considered Him an imposter, and nothing would change the collective mind. They were still missing the point of all He had said and done. He had previously revealed the spiritual nature of the task. But what He had revealed didn't fit in with their preconceived ideas of what the Messiah was like.

They had expected that the Christ would overthrow Roman rule, set up the throne of David in Jerusalem, and bring national and material wealth to the nation of Israel. He had never claimed to be an earthly King.

He wasn't that kind of Messiah, and so He was rejected, [John 6:15](#) / [John 6:66](#). Nevertheless, Jesus says that he had told them plainly! [John 10:25](#). By His words, [John 5:17-49](#), by His works, [John 10:25](#), testify to the truth of His claim.

He's pointing to the works that He had done in Jerusalem, the cleansing of the temple, [John 2:13-22](#), the healing of the lame man at Bethsaida, [John 5:1-18](#), and the healing of the man born blind, [John 9:1-12](#). Each work had been accompanied by the claim to be the Son of God, [John 10:9](#) / [John 2:16](#) / [John 5:23](#).

He tells them, 'You are not of MY sheep', [John 10:26](#). His critics didn't believe because they didn't recognise Him as the shepherd and therefore didn't heed His voice. He has reverted to his previous teaching in [John 10:1-18](#). He is the door, and they refuse to enter.

They refuse to follow Him. His sheep would recognise and obey His voice, [John 10:3-5](#). They were listening to their father; they were children of the devil, [John 8:14](#). Characteristics of Christ's sheep, they hear, listen, [John 10:27](#) / [Matthew 7:24](#), they follow me, [John 10:27](#) / [John 8:31](#) / [John 15:4](#).

The consequence of hearing and following Jesus is eternal life, [John 10:28](#), a present possession, [John 3:36](#) / [John 5:24](#) / [John 6:47](#). They shall never perish, [John 10:28](#) / [John 3:16](#) / [Matthew 24:46](#).

Notice the double security His sheep have, ‘no one will snatch them out of my hand, or my Father’s hand’, [John 10:28-29](#). No external power can remove the divine handclasp of one who listens to Jesus and walks in obedience to Him, [Romans 8:31-39](#).

Notice that Jesus says, that ‘I and the Father are one’, [John 10:30](#). This speaks of the deity of Jesus; it means that the Father and the Son are equal in nature, in essence, [John 17:11](#) / [John 17:21](#) / [Philippians 2:8-9](#).

Barclay says the following.

‘To see what God is like, we must look at Jesus. He perfectly represents God to men in a form which they can see and know and understand.’

PSALM 22-24 TRILOGIES

The suffering shepherd, Psalm 22.

The good shepherd, the Lord, Psalm 23.

The shepherd king, the one who is able, Psalm 24.

Kings were supposed to shepherd the people. The Shepherd King is the Messiah. The staff and rod are mentioned, and Judah has the lion’s sceptre and staff, [Genesis 49:49](#).

In those days, the head, the staff which stands for authority, was planted or placed between his feet whilst his legs were crossed. The rod stood for justice; Judah would become the King.

1. Foretold in Old Testament prophecy is the promise of a Shepherd.

It would be glad tidings for the cities of Judah, [Isaiah 40:9-11](#). He would gather Israel as a shepherd does his flock, [Jeremiah 31:10](#). He would feed them, a type of David, who would be his ancestor, [Ezekiel 34:23](#).

2. Revealed in the New Testament is that Jesus is the Shepherd.

He is the Good Shepherd, who will bring other sheep into His fold! [John 10:1-16](#). He is the Chief Shepherd, who has other shepherds watching His flock! [1 Peter 5:4](#). He is the Great Shepherd, who through His blood makes us complete! [Hebrews 13:20](#).

3. The motif of a shepherd is revealing.

It pictures the blessings enjoyed by those who follow Jesus, and it should remind us of the duties we have as His sheep.

THE BLESSINGS OF JESUS OUR SHEPHERD

He gave his life for us. He laid down His life for His sheep, as foretold in the Old Testament, [Zechariah 13:7](#) / [Matthew 26:31](#). As Jesus told His disciples He would do, [John 10:11](#) / [John 10:15](#). Thus, He is able to offer eternal life to His sheep, [John 10:28](#) / [1 John 5:11-13](#).

Offering security to those who continue to believe. Such that none can snatch them from the hand of God. Though one can fall from God’s hand through neglect, [Hebrews 3:12-15](#) / [Revelation 2:10](#), He now cares for us. Having called us through the Gospel, [John 10:3](#) / [2 Thessalonians 2:13-14](#). Having gathered us into His one-fold, even Gentiles! [John 10:16](#) / [Ephesians 2:11-22](#).

As our Good Shepherd, He knows us, [John 10:14](#) / [John 10:27](#) / [2 Timothy 2:19](#). He feeds us, [John 10:9](#) / [Psalm 23:1-2](#). He guides us, [John 10:3-4](#) / [Psalm 23:3](#). He cherishes us tenderly, [Isaiah 40:11](#) / [Ephesians 5:25-29](#). He protects and preserves, [Jeremiah 31:10](#) / [John 10:28-29](#) / [Jude 28-29](#). Wonderful are the blessings of Jesus our Shepherd! Such blessings are prefigured in that most beautiful of psalms, [Psalms 23](#).

OUR DUTIES TO JESUS OUR SHEPHERD

HEED HIS VOICE

His sheep hear His voice, [John 10:2-3](#). His sheep follow Him, for they know His voice, [John 10:4](#). Thus, Jesus expects His sheep to heed His voice. As proclaimed during His earthly ministry, [Luke 6:46](#).

As stated in the Great Commission, [Matthew 28:18-20](#), which we do today by heeding the words of His apostles, to receive them is to receive Him, [John 13:20](#). Thus, the early church continued steadfastly in their doctrine, [Acts 2:42](#), for they taught the commandments of the Lord, [1 Corinthians 14:37](#).

HOLD TO HIS FLOCK

There is one flock or one body, [John 10:16](#) / [Ephesians 4:4](#). We should strive to maintain the unity of that flock for which Jesus prayed, [John 17:20-23](#), for which Jesus died, [Ephesians 2:13-16](#).

The Chief Shepherd has shepherds to guide His flock; they are the elders in a local congregation, [1 Peter 5:1-4](#), and their duty is to oversee and pastor the flock, [Acts 20:17](#) / [Acts 20:28](#) / [1 Peter 5:1-3](#).

Jesus expects His sheep to respect His shepherds to submit to their oversight, make their duty a joyful one, [Hebrews 13:17](#) and esteem them highly in love, being at peace, [1 Thessalonians 5:12-13](#). Wonderful are the promises for those who follow ‘Jesus Our Shepherd’, [Revelation 7:13-17](#).

“Again, his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?” “We are not stoning you for any good work,” they replied, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.” Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I have said you are “gods”’? If he called them ‘gods,’ to whom the word of God came—and Scripture cannot be set aside—what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’? Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father. But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.” Again, they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.”
John 10:31-39

After declaring that He and the Father are one, [John 10:30](#), Jesus’ opponents pick up stones to stone Him, [Leviticus 24:16](#), obviously because they understood that Jesus was claiming to be God, [John 10:33](#).

Bruce, in his commentary, says the following concerning the works Jesus showed them, [John 10:32](#).

‘All his works were done by the Father’s direction, [John 5:19](#); they were ‘good works’, erge kala, ‘beautiful works,’ not only because they were acts of obedience to the Father but also because they were acts of blessing to men.’

Bruce, in his commentary, says the following concerning Jesus’ response to the Jews, [John 10:34](#).

‘Jesus rebuts their charge of blasphemy by means of an argument from scripture, of a kind with which they themselves were quite familiar. His question would have made an interesting issue for a rabbinical debate.’

Jesus reminds them of the scripture which told them they are gods, [John 10:32](#). This isn’t to be understood in terms of them being gods, rather in terms of being judges, [Psalm 82:6](#) / [Exodus 21:6](#) / [Exodus 22:8-9](#).

Morris, in his commentary, says the following concerning [John 10:35](#).

‘It means that Scripture cannot be emptied of its force by being shown to be erroneous.’

Jesus basically asks them in [John 10:35-36](#), if God gave these unjust judges the title ‘gods’, why did they consider it blasphemy when He calls Himself the ‘Son of God’ in light of His testimony and His works?

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following concerning [John 10:37-38](#).

‘Having vanquished his foes with the argument from [Psalms 82:6](#), Jesus at once returned to his constant theme of oneness and equality with God, although in such terms as to avoid the legal charge they wanted to make. Jesus’ return again and again, as in [John 10:32](#), to the subject of his mighty works was a reiteration of the irrefutable argument proving his oneness with God, [John 10:30](#).’

Once again, the Jews tried to seize Jesus, but Jesus, once again, escaped, [John 10:39](#) / [John 8:59](#).

‘Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptising in the early days. There he stayed, and many people came to him. They said, “Though John never performed a sign, all that John said about this man was true.” And in that place, many believed in Jesus.’ [John 10:40-42](#)

Jesus now goes back to the place beyond the Jordan where John baptised in his early days, [John 10:40](#) / [John 1:28](#) / [John 6:22](#) / [Matthew 19:1](#). While He was there many people came to Him, they acknowledge that John didn’t perform any signs and confessed that everything John said about Jesus was true, [John 10:41](#). Despite all the opposition from the Jews, many people came to believe in Jesus, [John 10:42](#).

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION

‘Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.” “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?” Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.” After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.” His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.” Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”” [John](#)

THE DEATH OF LAZARUS

Jesus was now out of Judea on the other side of the Jordan, and He heard that his friend Lazarus was ill. Lazarus lived in Bethany, a small village about two miles East of Jerusalem, [John 11:1](#). As many Marys are named in the various accounts of Jesus' life, it's important that they be identified.

As John, the Apostle, wrote this account after the fact, he referred to a story not yet written to identify Mary, [John 11:2](#). The complete story of Mary anointing Jesus' feet is given in [John 12:1-8](#).

Lazarus might well have been deteriorating on a daily basis, and the message Jesus receives from the sisters has an urgent ring to it, [John 11:3](#). The Greek has the word 'idle' in [John 11:3](#), suggesting urgency; this can be translated as 'see', 'listen' or 'behold'.

The N.I.V. ignores this word. Lazarus's death is permitted, [John 11:4](#), for the same reason as the blindness, [John 9:3](#). Time and again, we see how Jesus's miracles back up the claims that He makes; no wonder He so often referred to His critics of the work that He was doing.

He claims He can give men new spiritual life. What greater evidence and assurance than Lazarus' return from the dead after four days in the grave! In [John 11:4-6](#), we see Jesus making a bold declaration, 'This sickness will not end in death'.

He had already made up His mind about what to do about Lazarus. He doesn't mean that Lazarus will not die, but that the final result of this illness will not be death.

He predicts that the result will be the glorification of the Son. Although Jesus loved the sisters, He didn't depart immediately for Bethany, [John 11:5-6](#). He needed to wait to ensure that Lazarus was dead and buried before He arrived. Lazarus must have already been dead when Jesus received the message that he was sick; in fact, he must have died soon after the messenger left Bethany.

One day's travel from Bethany to Jerusalem, two days Jesus delayed, and one day to journey from Jerusalem to Bethany. This all adds up to the four days mentioned in [John 11:17-19](#).

There was a belief among the Jews that the spirit remained with the body for three days after death. Perhaps this is why Jesus delays, allowing Lazarus to be dead for four days before raising him, and so leaving no room for doubt.

In [John 11:7-10](#), we read that Jesus decides to return to Judea to see the sisters and Lazarus. As people had tried to kill Him there, the disciples are reluctant to agree to the trip, but Jesus doesn't let this very real fear and danger affect His decision.

The words spoken in [John 11:9-10](#), by Christ, reveal His feelings about the time left to do His work. He is eager to make the best of the time available, and He encourages the men not to depend on physical light but the spiritual light available in Him, [John 11:9](#).

Jesus assures the man that a good, strong walk in the light will not lead to falling, but the arrival of all who walk at the heavenly destination, [John 11:10](#). The term 'asleep', [John 11:11](#), became quite popular as Jesus said that they were going to 'wake him up'. It ought to have been clear what the Lord was considering, but it wasn't.

Following on in [John 11:12-13](#), we see Jesus trying to tell the disciples that Lazarus is dead without alarming them. However, on hearing that he is 'asleep', they conclude that it is the best thing for the sick man. Neither the disciples nor the two sisters could understand Jesus's behaviour, but the result for all of them was renewed trust in Him, [John 11:15](#) / [John 11:27](#) / [John 11:42](#).

To ensure the disciples understood, Jesus had to tell them in plain language, [John 11:14-15](#). He also points out that if He had been present at the time of death, He would have prevented death and healed the man.

In this case, He has the opportunity to perform a far more convincing miracle, raising the dead. Jesus could have healed Lazarus immediately, but allowed him to die; in [John 11:14-15](#), we are given the reason, ‘So that you might believe’.

Thomas was the spokesman and called all the disciples to join the trip to Judea, [John 11:16](#). Peter normally plays this role, and it may indicate that Peter isn’t present.

This may explain why the raising of Lazarus doesn’t appear in the other three Gospels if Peter dictated what he says to Mark, who was helpful in writing the other Gospels. The words spoken by Thomas, ‘that we may die with him,’ [John 11:16](#), could refer to one of two things.

1. Die with Lazarus, an indication that they would mourn his death together with the sister or.
2. Die with Jesus, people have grand ideas. In this case, he referred to the possible death of Jesus as He moves into an area where the people would like him dead.

As they are disciples of Jesus, Thomas suggests they die fighting on his side. When the crunch came, they were too frightened to support the Christ and ran, [Matthew 26:56](#) / [Mark 14:50](#). I believe the second option to be true.

JESUS COMFORTS THE SISTERS OF LAZARUS

“On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.” After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” [John 11:17-37](#)

A burial frequently took place on the day of death, [Acts 6:6-10](#). As Jesus knew Lazarus was dead, He had been placed in the tomb four days before, after being dressed with herbs and so forth, as the current day tradition demanded. Lazarus was dead, [John 11:17](#). Two miles, [John 11:18](#), is literally fifteen stadia; a stadium is approximately an eighth of a mile.

In [John 11:19](#), we see that many people had come to mourn and comfort, so quite a crowd was present, but before Jesus arrived at the village, Martha, one of the sisters go out and met Him. Mary, the other sister, may have been too overcome with grief to even be told of Jesus’ imminent arrival.

Resurrection was a subject not normally taught in Jewish teaching, as most didn’t even accept the possibility, and many never even considered it. Jesus mentions it here for the first time.

We draw our doctrine of the resurrection from the resurrection of Jesus, [John 11:25-26](#) / [Mark 16:6](#) / [Luke 24:6-7](#) / [1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#) / [1 Thessalonians 4:14](#) / [1 Peter 1:3](#). Obviously, Jesus hadn't yet been resurrected, so little was known on the subject; it was somewhat hazy, [1 Corinthians 15:12-19](#).

Martha has no doubt that had Jesus been there before Lazarus had died, he would still be alive, [John 11:21](#). She speaks half with reproach, but also, she notes that nothing is impossible for Jesus, a hint at her faith in Jesus' ability to bring him back, [John 11:22](#).

But also, perhaps like the 'royal official', [John 4:46-47](#), she believed that Jesus would have to actually be present for Him to have saved Lazarus. The messenger had brought back reassuring words, 'This will not end in death', [John 11:4](#). Her mind is struggling against sorrow and disappointment; she knew that Jesus could raise the dead, yet the doubts of despair reign strong.

Jesus' statement in [John 11:23](#), and Martha's in [John 11:24](#), are quite remarkable. [John 11:23](#) could be seen by some as a normal term of conventional condolence, but Jesus wasn't being conventional; he was stating a fact.

Was he referring to what He was about to do, or was he referring to the future general resurrection on the last day? [John 5:28-29](#) / [Acts 23:8](#). Martha agrees that he will live again after the last day, [John 11:24](#), but appears hopeful that she will see him alive again before the general resurrection.

‘I AM’

There are sixteen signs recorded in John's gospel; eight are things which Jesus did, and eight are things which Jesus said. John is basically saying that the 'I AM' claims of Jesus are signs, selected from many other signs. And he says these signs are selected with a purpose in mind, and that purpose is that you believe that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, [John 20:30-31](#).

Here we find the sixth and seventh of Jesus' 'I AM' claims, [John 6:35](#) / [John 8:12](#) / [John 8:58](#) / [John 10:9](#) / [John 10:11](#) / [John 11:25](#) / [John 14:6](#) / [John 15:1](#). Each of His 'I AM' claims are claims that He is God, EGO EIMI, is the Greek equivalent of YHWH, [Exodus 3:13-14](#) / [John 5:18](#). He is Eternal, [Psalm 135:13](#), and self-existent, [Psalm 88:6-7](#).

When we come to the 'I AM' claims of Jesus, we need to remember that Jesus was not giving Himself a Name or a title, but was asserting His Deity. In other words, every 'I AM' reveals some aspect of His nature and purpose.

‘I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE’

In [John 11:25](#), Jesus guarantees life for those who believe in Him. This is an absolute statement, one we can rest on without fear. He promises life as a result of this superficial physical death we need to enter. Note, He doesn't say He will give the resurrection and the life, He says 'HE IS' the resurrection and the life.

He is the resurrection, He is the cause of resurrection, [John 6:54](#). Jesus is indeed the cause of resurrection since life is in Him, [John 1:4](#). Hence, we can confidently say 'amen' to what Paul has to say in his letter to the Romans, [Romans 6:8-9](#).

Jesus has power over death is clear; even more, He has given the ultimate proof of this by virtue of His own resurrection. He is indeed the first-begotten from the dead, [1 Corinthians 15:20](#) / [Colossians 1:18](#).

Those who believe in Christ and keep on believing him in trusting obedience will be raised by him to eternal life and not to condemnation, [John 5:25](#) / [John 5:28-29](#) / [John 3:36](#).

What an exhortation of love, a love that shows concern for those who do not merit it, since we are all sinners. The love is infinite and true indeed! He is the life, and those who are in Christ already have eternal life. Christ Jesus is our life, [Colossians 3:3-4](#) / [Romans 8:11](#).

That the life we thus have in Christ is eternal is clearly stated, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death,' [John 8:51](#) / [John 3:16](#) / [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17](#).

All this has been achieved because God Incarnate gave Himself for our salvation, [John 3:16](#). The second death, i.e. the eternal separation from the presence of God, is not for those whose life is hidden in God with Jesus. The fact of Christ's life in glory with the Father is a guarantee of our eternal life, [John 14:19](#).

As He promised in His discourse as the Good Shepherd, [John 10:10-11](#). Jesus offers a peace the world cannot give, [John 14:27](#) / [John 16:33](#) / [Philippians 4:6-7](#). He gives us His love, which passes knowledge, [John 15:10](#) / [Ephesians 3:19](#). He provides His joy, which is inexpressible, [John 15:11](#) / [1 Peter 1:8](#).

Jesus then specifically asks if Martha agrees with his statement, [John 11:26](#), and she is, and more. She declares her conviction that He is the promised Messiah, [John 11:27](#) / [John 6:6-9](#).

This series of statements by Martha is one of the few speeches of great doctrinal words ever given by a woman and ensures Martha a place in the book of great faithful women.

Jesus then calls for Mary, the other sister. Martha quickly goes and fetches her and brings her to the place where Jesus was waiting outside the village, [John 11:28-30](#).

[John 11:31](#) notes how Mary got up quickly to greet Jesus. It appears as if she also had some hope restored on hearing Jesus' name. All the Jews with her in the house follow her to Jesus.

In [John 11:32-37](#), we see that when Mary arrives at Jesus' feet, she falls to His feet in respect and worship. Again, faith in Jesus is displayed by Mary acknowledging His ability to prevent Lazarus's death.

Jesus saw the emotion of the people, especially the two sisters and felt for them, [John 11:33](#). The phrase, 'deeply moved', [John 11:33](#), is a verb which originally meant to snort like a horse, to be agitated, troubled, literally He troubled Himself, He was inwardly deeply moved and outwardly visibly distressed.

However, He doesn't relieve their pain by restoring Lazarus to life immediately or even telling them what He proposed to do, [John 11:34](#). Jesus feels with them; He too is disturbed. So much so, that when they arrived at the tomb of Lazarus, 'Jesus wept,' [John 11:35](#). Three arguments are given to explain why He wept at this time.

1. He was overwhelmed by emotion at the time.

His good friend was dead, the others with Him who He loved were heartbroken, and it was all too much for Him. His tears would bring comfort to the other mourners.

2. He was greatly disturbed by the lack of faith evident.

Why would Jesus cry for one he was about to raise? Would this not be superficial and prolong the pain of those he came to comfort? This ought to have been a happy occasion, not one for mourning a man about to be raised.

Jesus knew what He was about to do and must have known that the sisters knew it was possible. By joining in with the mourning, it would surely cause them to believe Jesus mourned Lazarus' final departure.

3. He identified and empathised with all the misery and pain that resulted from the far-reaching consequences of sin, which included the effect of death represented by this dead man and all the sorrowing, broken-hearted people around him. There was also righteous wrath against the sin that could cause so much sorrow.

I personally agree with argument number three. Jesus sees things that we can't see or refuse to see. The company of Jews present are again arguing about Jesus; some sympathise with His caring nature, others scorn His apparent lack of action.

They acknowledge that He has the power to open eyes, proving that the people of Jerusalem now accept that Jesus did perform miracles and that the restoration of sight was a true miracle, [John 11:36-37](#).

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

“Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odour, for he has been there four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.” John 8:38-44

In [John 11:38-42](#), we see that Jesus was deeply moved once more as He went to Lazarus' tomb. It was a communal grave, consisting of a cave inside of which the dead were placed, normally on shelves, covered in grave clothes and normally in something similar to a rudimentary coffin. The cave could either be manmade or natural. A large slab of stone was placed in front of the cave to protect it from wild animals and grave robbers.

Jesus takes control of the situation and His commands are short and sharp, [John 11:39](#). Once the stone was removed, Martha's faith, which was so strong just a few moments before, wavered a little and so, Jesus reminds her of their earlier conversation, to restore that faith, [John 11:40](#).

Jesus prays, thanking God for the coming sign which Jesus knows will occur. He thanks God on behalf of or for the sake of those around, that they might believe, [John 11:40-41](#).

The command 'Lazarus, come out' is given, [John 11:42](#). He spoke out loud so that all could hear it and would understand that Lazarus was to come forth by the command of Jesus no other means, indisputable evidence of His power to raise the dead, [John 11:43](#).

One day the same voice will raise ALL the dead, [Matthew 5:28-29](#) / [1 Thessalonians 4:6](#). Notice the short command was directed only at Lazarus, [John 11:43](#), if He hadn't specified Lazarus, then all the dead in that tomb may have walked out, a harrowing ordeal indeed.

Lazarus comes out, still dressed in grave clothes, and the family is reunited, [John 11:44](#). The bandages were wrapped around the body, and the cloth was probably a towel under the chin. Jesus tells them to remove Lazarus's grave clothes and let him go, [John 11:44](#).

CONCLUSION

Like Mary and Martha, we may have moments in our Christian lives where we want Jesus to show up straight away and help us in our time of need. Jesus loved them, but when He received the message about Lazarus, He didn't come to their aid straight away; He stayed where He was for two more days.

This can be a tough lesson for Christians to learn. There are times we need to hang in there until God decides to intervene. It's not that He's abandoned us or left us to it; it's not that He doesn't love us anymore, but for our benefit, God allows us to experience pain.

The big question when difficult times come our way is simply this: Do we believe our pain will end in glory? How can we give God the glory when we're going through really difficult times? Maybe when we understand why God allows pain in our lives, we can be patient and give Him all the glory He deserves.

THE PURPOSE OF PAIN

1. God can use pain to get our attention, [Proverbs 20:10](#).
2. God can use pain to guide us, [Hebrews 12:7](#).
3. God can use pain to gauge us, [James 1:2-3](#).
4. God can use pain to guard us, [2 Corinthians 12:7-10](#).
5. God can use pain to help us grow, [James 1:4](#).

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

‘Therefore, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. “What are we accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.” Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was a high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all! You do not realise that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.” He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. So, from that day on, they plotted to take his life. Therefore, Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the people of Judea. Instead, he withdrew to a region near the wilderness, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples. When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple courts, they asked one another, “What do you think? Isn't he coming to the festival at all?” But the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who found out where Jesus was should report it so that they might arrest him. John 11:45-57

The event is decisive, for faith and life, on one hand, [John 11:45](#), for hatred and death on the other, [John 11:53](#). As a result of the raising of Lazarus, many people who had witnessed the miracle believed, [John 11:45](#) / [John 20:30-31](#). However, as always, some wouldn't believe and decided instead to inform the Pharisees of what had occurred, [John 11:46](#). The effect of Jesus on a person depends entirely on the person's attitude of mind.

This miracle must have caused quite a rumpus in Jerusalem, so much so that the chief priests and Pharisees called all the members of the Sanhedrin together for a special meeting, [John 11:47](#).

Many of the Jews, including some of the rulers, now believed, [John 12:42-43](#) / [John 19:38-39](#), drastic action had to be taken before the whole nation was won over. They admitted that Jesus did many signs but wouldn't admit to what those signs pointed out, [John 11:47](#) / [Acts 2:33](#) / [Acts 10:38](#).

These men were afraid; the Romans were in a position to destroy the nation if they found the need and the nation was built up around the Jewish theology, [John 11:48](#).

Now, Jesus was going about destroying that foundation. The Romans could, if too many people followed Jesus, decide that the unifying factor, Judaism, was no longer prevalent among the people. More than that, Jesus threatened the position and didn't want them out of a job, [John 11:48](#).

The high priest of that year, Caiaphas, spoke up, and he was very rude in his dealings with the people present, [John 11:49](#). He was an evil politician and wealthy ruler. His idea was to kill Jesus and save the nation, [John 11:50](#). He portrays himself as a concerned patriot, while in fact, he was scheming to rid himself of Jesus, who was distracting from his own popularity. His idea was all wrong, [John 11:51-52](#).

Jesus died for the nation, He died at the hand of the nation for them, [Acts 2:36](#), and everyone on earth, [John 3:16](#). Jesus died for all, the death of Jesus didn't cause or guarantee the safety of the nation, as just forty years later the Romans did move in an attempt to destroy the nation.

They were successful in destroying the temple, and as a result, no temple has ever been rebuilt. Judaism, at its very roots, is no more. The result of this meeting was a decision to seek and kill Jesus. So, the net slowly closed around Him, [John 11:53](#).

Jesus left the immediate area and went to Ephraim, [John 11:54](#), a village about twelve miles north of Jerusalem, and He was with the disciples at this time. As the Passover drew closer, people started talking about Him. Again, He seems to be the main topic of conversation, with people unsure if He would arrive, [John 11:55-56](#).

The order was out, any who saw Him must report that sighting, [John 11:57](#). If they didn't, they would be thrown out of the synagogue. He is seen now as an outlaw, yet He is king, [Luke 7:36](#) / [John 12:1-8](#) / [Matthew 28:6-13](#).

CHAPTER 12

INTRODUCTION

There has been a lot of activity between [John 11:54-55](#), none of which is mentioned by John. I think it would be useful to highlight some of those missing events.

1. Healing of the ten lepers, [Luke 17:11-17](#).
2. The parables of the widow and the judge and the Pharisee and the tax collector, [Luke 18:1-14](#).
3. Teaching on divorce, [Matthew 19:1-12](#) / [Mark 10:1-12](#).
4. Blessing little children, [Matthew 19:13-15](#).
5. The rich young ruler, [Matthew 19:16-30](#).
6. The parable of the wicked tenants, [Matthew 21:33-46](#).
7. The healing of Bartimaeus and another, [Matthew 20:29-34](#).
8. Meeting with Zacchaeus, the parable of the pounds, journey to Jerusalem, [Luke 19:1-28](#).

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

'Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here, a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot,

who was later to betray him, objected, “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.” He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.” John 12:1-8

After Jesus finished speaking about the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and His return, He now prepares His disciples for what was going to happen to Him, [Luke 22:1-2](#) / [Matthew 26:1-5](#) / [Mark 14:1-2](#). In [John 12:1](#), we find some confusion over the timing.

John tells us six days before Passover. [Matthew 26:2](#) and [Mark 12:1](#) suggest that this occurred at different times, two days before Passover. It may have been that Jesus arrived on Friday, but the dinner took place on Tuesday.

Jesus returns from Ephraim to Bethany after spending some time there. This coming Passover, [John 12:1](#) / [Mark 14:1](#), would occur after His death on the cross but before His resurrection. Jesus is going to be handed over to be crucified, [Matthew 26:2](#). He was going deliberately to His death, [Mark 10:32-34](#).

While Jesus spoke about His upcoming death to His disciples, the religious leaders met together at Caiaphas’ palace to discuss how they could secretly arrest and kill Jesus, [John 10:28](#) / [Matthew 26:3-4](#) / [Mark 14:1-2](#).

They did it secretly because under Roman law, they didn’t have the official right to kill Jesus without the consent of the Roman governor, who was at this time Pilate.

However, they couldn’t kill Him during the festival, just in case it caused a riot among the people, [Matthew 26:5](#); those who believed Jesus was who He claimed to be, [John 21:46](#).

DON’T GET CONFUSED!

As we approach this text, many people make the mistake of mixing this Simon with the Simon we find in Luke’s account in [Luke 7:36-50](#). The Simon referred to in Matthew’s account is the Simon who had been cured of leprosy, [Matthew 26:6](#) / [Mark 14:3](#), and possibly out of thankfulness, hosted a dinner in his home in honour of Jesus. Robertson, in his commentary, says the following.

‘This anointing has nothing in common with that given by Luke, except the fact of a woman anointing the Saviour’s feet, and the name Simon, which was common. The former was in Galilee; this is at Bethany near Jerusalem. There, the host despised the woman who anointed; here, her brother is one of the guests, and her sister is an active attendant. There, the woman was a sinner, a notoriously bad woman; here it is the devout Mary who ‘sat at the Lord’s feet and heard his words,’ months before. There, the host thought it strange that Jesus allowed her to touch him; here, the disciples complained of the waste. There the Saviour gave assurance of forgiveness, here of perpetual and worldwide honour. Especially notice that here the woman who anoints is anticipating his speedy death and burial, of which at the former time he had never distinctly spoken. In view of all these differences, it is absurd to represent the two anointings as the same, and outrageous on such slender grounds to cast reproach on Mary of Bethany.’

The ‘supper’ is the main meal, usually in the evening, and it was a dinner in Jesus’ honour, [John 12:2](#). It was in the house of Simon the leper, [Matthew 26:6](#) / [Mark 14:1](#), probably one whom Jesus had healed.

Assuming Simon was host, there were fifteen men present, Simon, Jesus, the twelve, Lazarus, and Martha ‘served’, [John 12:2](#) / [Luke 10:40](#). Jesus has the opportunity to spend some last moments with the people He loves, His good friends Lazarus and the sisters, [John 12:2](#).

These must have been very precious moments for the Lord as He knew His time was drawing closer. It seems likely that a four-day gap occurred between [John 12:1](#) and [John 12:2](#).

Mary is mentioned in [John 12:3](#), but in Matthew and Mark, she isn't named. She took 'a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume,' [John 12:3](#) / [Matthew 26:7](#) / [Mark 14:3](#), its value was around three-hundred denarii, which is equal to three-hundred days' wages for a working man, [John 12:5](#) / [Matthew 20:2](#).

The nard that Mary used is better known as spikenard, an expensive perfume imported from India. It was far more expensive than the ordinary man in the street could ever hope to be able to afford, and it is possible that this had been a much-prized possession of the woman. It was highly scented and was normally used on the hair as a perfume and oil together.

She 'anointed the feet of Jesus,' [John 12:3](#). [Matthew 26:7](#) and [Mark 14:3](#) tell us that she anointed His head also. Anointing the head was a way of honouring a special guest, [Psalm 23:5](#) / [Luke 7:46](#). John recalls that Mary's loving act went beyond the customary practice, [John 12:3](#).

A respectable Jewish woman wouldn't let down her hair in public because in doing so, she might be regarded as a woman of loose morality, but Mary was forgetful of propriety under the compulsion of love.

This was the second time something such as this had happened to the Lord, [Luke 7:38](#), and it was a great act of humility for Mary to wipe Jesus' feet with her hair, as the washing of feet was normally done by a servant, [John 13:1-17](#) / [Matthew 26:17-35](#).

The fact that John was present is proven by his remembering the strong scent filling the house, [John 12:3](#). Note that each time we meet Mary in the narrative, we find her at the feet of Jesus; we see that here, and in [John 11:32](#) / [Luke 10:39](#).

In [John 12:4-6](#), we see Judas Iscariot object to the 'wasting' of this expensive perfume. Matthew and Mark both tell us that Judas found some support among the twelve for his objection, [Matthew 26:8](#) / [Mark 14:4](#).

It seems that they, too, were more concerned with the value of material things. At first glance, we may even have some sympathy for Judas as the poor of the region would have benefited greatly from the money to be made by selling the perfume, [Matthew 26:8-9](#) / [Mark 14:4-5](#).

However, we see that it's clear that Judas was the treasurer, and John tells us that he wasn't really concerned about the poor but more concerned with lining his own pocket, [John 12:6](#).

Mary's act is an act of love towards her Master, and she had her priorities right because she could have sold it and given the money to the poor. She chose instead to use it to anoint Jesus and seized an opportunity she would never have again. It was a personal expression of her true feelings and her thanks for the raising of her brother Lazarus just a few weeks earlier, [John 11:38-44](#).

When we examine the motive behind Judas' apparent indignation, one sees a rather sad picture. Jesus demands total honesty from His followers and here, amid the group of believers, is this thief. Judas, the man who was to sell the Lord for thirty pieces of silver, was already guilty, [Matthew 26:14-16](#).

The lesson to be learnt here is interesting: anyone given the responsibility of keeping the 'church funds' needs to calculate the spending without error. They must keep an unquestionable account of all entrusted to them, and they must be unscrupulously honest, ready to give account at all times.

A hint toward balance is given in [John 12:7-8](#) / [Matthew 26:10-12](#) / [Mark 14:6-8](#). We must balance our giving as individuals as well as a church, and we need to ensure we don't squander the Lord's money on trivialities such as expensive gardens, excessive buildings and decorations while people around the building are starving either physically or spiritually. Balance in all things is always demanded of the Christian.

Mary was being criticized by Judas, and if we seek the parallel account in the Gospels, by the other disciples present, Jesus comes to her rescue, He tells them to leave her alone, [Mark 14:6](#).

It's clear from [John 12:4](#), that Judas spoke directly to Mary about the waste and I'm sure they would have stepped in to stop her from wasting any more oil on Jesus if Jesus hadn't stopped them.

I love it when Jesus speaks up and defends the innocent as He does here; He even pays her a high compliment. Mary was more concerned about showing her love and appreciation of Jesus than the others were, and Jesus wasn't about to stop her. Nothing was too valuable in her eyes for Jesus.

'It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial', Jesus says, [John 12:7](#) / [Matthew 26:12](#) / [Mark 14:8](#). Mary believed that Jesus was soon to meet His end, and she knew she wouldn't have the opportunity to show her love by being involved with the preparation of His body, so symbolically she did it now. Nothing can take away from the great love that this act expressed to our Lord. Mary had taken her opportunity to express her love. Jesus was soon to depart, the poor were always present to give an expression of love, [John 12:8](#) / [Matthew 26:11](#) / [Mark 14:7](#), but alas, Jesus did not. Jesus said that this act of love would be her memorial wherever the Gospel was preached, [Matthew 26:13](#) / [Mark 14:9](#).

When we think about the disciples, they have been with Jesus for over three and a half years now, but they never seem to understand anything Jesus spoke about to them concerning His upcoming death. Mary, on the other hand seem to have this great insight as to what is about to happen to Jesus.

I can imagine the heartbreak in Jesus' mind when all this was going on, the disciples didn't get it because they were too busy arguing amongst themselves as to which one of them would be the greatest, [Matthew 18:1-4](#) / [Mark 9:33-36](#) / [Mark 10:35-45](#) / [Luke 9:46-47](#) / [Luke 22:24](#). I believe that men like to look at the facts and the figures, while women seem to be more sensitive to what is going on around them.

What a marvellous acclamation Jesus gives Mary, it's one of those prophecies which is often overlooked and dismissed, [Matthew 26:13](#) / [Mark 14:9](#). This humble act of servitude that Mary performed would become the memorial of her love for Jesus, [Hebrews 11:4](#).

She had the right spiritual attitude by giving Jesus the very best she had to offer, which is a lesson we can all learn from. Her name will go down in history because of this one moment with the Christ, as the Gospel is spread throughout the world, her name and her deed will follow along beside.

This is just one of the things she will always be remembered for, but what about us today? What will people remember about us when we go to be with the Lord? I've often said and believe this with all my heart that I could preach a hundred of the best sermons you've ever heard preached, and most people would forget them within a few days or weeks or months.

But if I were to do one act of kindness for someone, [Matthew 10:42](#), they would remember that one act of kindness all the days of their lives. Some people will be remembered for their Bible knowledge, some will be remembered because they were great preachers of God's Word, and some will be remembered as great cooks or bakers. Some are great singers, great hosts, but then there will always be some Marys around, who lovingly serve the Lord without making a song and dance about it. Those little acts of love speak louder than words. What will you be remembered for doing?

CONCLUSION

You can always tell when it's election time in the UK as the political parties begin to promise many good things to come, especially for the poor. In our world today, there are many countries that are really poverty-stricken; we read about it in the newspaper and see it in front of our eyes on the TV screen.

We only have to walk down our city centres to see the hundreds of homeless people sleeping rough on the streets. I guess the question is, what are we doing about it? What are we doing to help these people?

We will always have the poor among us, which means there will always be an opportunity for us to help meet some of those needs, [John 12:8](#) / [Deuteronomy 15:11](#) / [Mark 14:7](#) / [Galatians 2:10](#).

It's so easy to focus on the negatives in this story; we could focus on Judas and his attitude, and we could focus on why the disciples seem to agree with Judas. But I'm wondering, what will people say about us when we leave this world?

What will be written on your gravestone? It's so easy to focus on the negatives in this story; we could focus on Judas and his attitude, or we could focus on why the disciples seem to agree with Judas. But I'm wondering, what will people say about us when we leave this world?

'Here lies a Christian who loved God so much, they always gave God the very best of what they had to offer.'

'Here lies a Christian who cared for the poor so much, they continually gave food, clothing and drink to the poorest on our streets.'

'Meanwhile, a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So, the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.' [John 12:9-11](#)

'The great crowd', [John 12:9](#), refers to those mentioned in [John 11:55-56](#). Hearing of His arrival in Bethany obviously, His coming to the feast, they go to see Jesus and Lazarus, [John 12:9](#). The latter is living proof of the power of Jesus, and not surprisingly 'many were going away and believing in Jesus', [John 12:11](#).

The chief priests saw a developing mass movement in support of Jesus, [John 12:11](#) / [John 1:45](#), and so, they plotted 'to put Lazarus also to death', [John 12:10](#). He was a double embarrassment to the Sadduceean Chief Priests. He was a living demonstration of Jesus' divine power, and a demonstration of the falsity of Sadduceean teaching, [Acts 4:1-22](#).

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

The triumphal entry is recorded in all four Gospels, [Luke 19:24-44](#) / [Matthew 21:1-11](#) / [Mark 11:1-11](#), and John's account is the briefest, [John 12:12-19](#). The fact that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, [John 11:38-44](#), was well known by now, and the people of Jerusalem and other surrounding villages heard that both Jesus and Lazarus were to be seen together, [John 12:9](#), so typically they flocked to see this 'show'.

The chief priests realised that Lazarus's presence now also constituted a threat to their power, [John 12:10](#), so in their ruthlessness, they decided to rid themselves of this problem.

The fact that Lazarus had died and then had been resurrected was now a great source of embarrassment to the Pharisees and other Jews of high religious standing. They wanted to put Him to death in order to prove, to themselves, that they were greater than Jesus.

'The next day, the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." At first, his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realise that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him'. [John 12:12-16](#)

It is about five days before the Passover feast, [Exodus 12:3](#) / [Nehemiah 8:15](#) / [Zechariah 14:4](#). The ‘next day’, [John 12:12](#), we know from the Gospels that this was the first day of the week.

The crowd, already excited at his potential arrival, [John 11:56](#), now hear that Jesus is on His way to the feast, as Jesus and His disciples approached Jerusalem and arrived at Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, [Luke 19:28-29](#) / [Matthew 21:1](#) / [Mark 11:1](#).

THE DONKEY

Jesus tells His disciples to go to a nearby village and get a colt, which was tied, which no one has ever ridden, [Luke 19:29-30](#). [John 12:14](#) tells us that ‘Jesus found a young donkey.’ [Matthew 21:2](#) tells that He sent two disciples to find and bring an ass and a colt. [Luke 19:30](#) says, ‘a colt on which no one has ever yet sat’, as does [Mark 11:2](#).

Why would a donkey and a colt both be needed if Jesus only rode one into Jerusalem? The simple answer is that the colt was young and still attached to the mother, and vice versa.

They would travel together as a mother and offspring naturally would among many animal species. The donkey was traditionally ridden by kings who came in peace; if He had come on a horse instead, that would have reflected a more aggressive tone.

Jesus said to His disciples, ‘if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly,’ [Matthew 21:3](#) / [Mark 11:3](#) / [Luke 19:31](#).

According to Matthew all this was done to fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah, [Matthew 21:4-5](#) / [Zechariah 9:9](#). The disciples go and found things just as Jesus said, and united the donkey, [Luke 19:32](#) / [Matthew 21:6](#) / [Mark 11:4](#).

Some standing by asked what they were doing, as did the owner, [Luke 19:33](#) / [Mark 11:5](#). The disciples told them and the owner what Jesus told them to say, [Luke 19:34](#) / [Mark 11:6](#). This implies that Jesus possibly already knew the person who owned the donkey, hence why the owner gladly did as Jesus asked, [Mark 11:6](#).

Jesus was the first on the back of this donkey. The disciples laid their garments over the donkey to make a saddle upon which Jesus could comfortably ride, [Luke 19:35](#) / [Matthew 21:7](#) / [Mark 11:7](#) / [2 Kings 9:13](#). The horse was the symbol of war and conquest, and the donkey was the symbol of peace.

The disciples only made this connection between Jesus, the King of peace, the donkey and the Scriptural quotation after Jesus had ascended and they had received the Holy Spirit, [John 12:13](#). Much became obvious to them at that time.

JESUS COMES TO JERUSALEM AS KING

As Jesus goes, they spread their cloaks in the way, [Luke 19:36](#), and as He was getting nearer to Jerusalem, [Luke 19:37](#), ‘a great crowd’ appeared, [John 12:12](#) / [Luke 9:37](#). In Jerusalem crowded with Passover pilgrims, many of whom would be disciples of Jesus, [Luke 19:37](#).

A whole multitude of Jesus’ disciples rejoiced and praised God for all the mighty works they had seen and said, ‘Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest! [Luke 19:37-38](#) / [Psalm 118:26](#).

In [Luke 19:39-40](#), we read that the Pharisees objected, ‘Teacher, rebuke your disciples,’ but Jesus tells them, ‘I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out!’

The Pharisees objected, but Jesus tells them that the very things we would assume could never speak or respond, that is, the stones, [Habakkuk 2:11](#), would actually give testimony to the Sonship of Jesus.

If the stones of the city of Jerusalem were in the mind of Jesus when He made this statement, the meaning again would be obvious: Jerusalem would be levelled by the Romans in A.D. 70. [Matthew 24:1-35](#).

Jesus was basically saying to the Pharisees, ‘you can’t hide from what is happening right now, even if you could silence everyone, these very stones would have shouted glory to God because even they recognise that it’s God’s Son who is entering Jerusalem’.

The Pharisees didn’t greet the arrival of Jesus with all that much enthusiasm, and they wanted Jesus dead. This crowd would make it all the more difficult, [John 12:19](#). They seem somewhat frustrated by these goings-on, and their difficulty in finding Jesus in a quiet, dark alley where that could finish all this ‘foolishness’.

The Pharisees saw Jesus as a serious threat to their position as leaders in the religious community. Even if they did have some idea that He was the Messiah, it was now too late to acknowledge Him, for they would lose too much. The ‘Pharisees’, who were the Sanhedrin officials, were extremely worried, and they had reason to be because huge crowds were involved, [John 12:19](#).

JESUS’ SORROW OVER JERUSALEM

As Jesus drew near to the city and He wept over it, He foresaw and described the disaster coming to a people who rejected the Messiah, [Luke 19:41-44](#) / [Matthew 23:37-40](#). We can almost feel the emotions of Jesus’ words here. Barnes, in his commentary, says the following.

‘If thou had known, says he, even thou, with all thy guilt, the things that make for thy peace, if thou had repented, had been righteous, and had received the Messiah, if thou had not stained thy hands with the blood of the prophets, and shouldn’t have with that of the Son of God, then these terrible calamities would not come upon thee. But it is too late. The national wickedness is too great; the cup is full: mercy is exhausted and Jerusalem, with all her pride and splendour, the glory of her temple, and the pomp of her service, ‘must perish!’

The days did indeed come when Jerusalem fell, and the temple was destroyed, the days indeed came when not one stone was left on another, [Matthew 24:1-35](#). This was done by Titus in 70 A.D., about thirty years after this was spoken.

All this was done, says Christ, because Jerusalem knew not the time of its visitation, that is, did not know, and ‘would not’ know, that the Messiah had come.

‘His coming’ was the time of their merciful visitation. That time had been predicted, and invaluable blessings promised as the result of his advent, but they would not know it.

They rejected him, they put him to death, and it was just that they should be destroyed. Matthew and Mark give us details about what happened when Jesus approached Jerusalem.

As He approached the city, a crowd accompanied Him, and another crowd went out whom meet him, [Matthew 21:8](#) / [Mark 11:8](#). The crowd, already excited at His potential arrival, [John 11:56](#), now heard that Jesus was on His way to the feast.

Great excitement overtakes them; they have heard of the raising of Lazarus and all the other miracles He had done before. Many must have believed that He was the Messiah and was about to restore the Kingdom to that which was in David’s time.

A KING'S WELCOME

A welcome for a king is being written of here, as they, 'spread their garments on the road, also spread leafy branches before Him, [Psalm 118:25-26](#) / [Leviticus 23:40](#) / [Matthew 21:8](#) / [Mark 11:8](#). Many carried branches of palm and spread them over the road, [John 12:13](#) / [Matthew 21:8](#) / [Mark 11:8](#).

These were symbols of victory, [Revelation 7:9](#), and of the righteousness and vigorous spirituality of God's children, [Psalm 92:12](#). They point to the joy of victory, the feeling that everything will now be better. The people were expecting something to change.

People were continually shouting that Jesus was the Messiah, the King of Israel. Jerusalem was packed with Passover pilgrims, 'was thrown into confusion', [John 12:13](#) / [Matthew 21:9](#) / [Mark 11:9](#). A popular uprising looked possible, and that would bring savage reprisals from the Romans, [John 11:48](#).

THE SAVIOUR

'Hosanna!' they cry, [John 12:13](#) / [Matthew 21:9](#) / [Mark 11:9](#) / [Psalm 118:25-26](#). This was a joyous call meaning 'save' or 'save us now'. It hadn't become a simple exclamation of surprise, such as we use 'hurrah' today. The call had a great deal of meaning to it.

THE MESSIAH

Jesus' claim to be the Messiah, His so coming, is in fulfilment of [Zechariah 9:9](#) / [Isaiah 62:11](#) / [Matthew 21:4-5](#). The crowd of disciples wanted Him to assert publicly that He was the Messiah, and He did, but in such a way as to assert the peaceful nature of His kingdom, [Zechariah 9:10](#).

'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' [John 12:13](#) / [Matthew 21:9](#) / [Mark 11:10](#) / [Luke 19:38](#) is an extract from [Psalm 118:25-26](#). This Psalm was part of the 'Great Hallel', [Psalms 113-118](#), recited at the Feast of Tabernacles. They now acclaim Jesus as the Messiah, [John 12:13](#) / [Matthew 21:9](#) / [Mark 11:9-10](#) / [Luke 19:38](#). The context of the Psalm is of a Messianic tone, indicating that they considered Jesus the Messiah, still expecting Him to establish some sort of earthly kingdom. The balance of the call that rang out seems to confirm this idea, 'Blessed is the King of Israel,' [John 12:13](#).

Jesus, having found a young donkey, sat on it to fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah, [John 12:14-15](#) / [Zechariah 9:9](#). John records that Jesus' disciples didn't understand what was going on, but they eventually would after Jesus was glorified, [John 12:16](#).

THE REACTION

Look at the reactions to all of this: 'All the city was stirred', 'agitated', 'went wild with excitement,' [Matthew 21:10-11](#). Remember that most in the crowd had seen Lazarus raised from the dead, so they would be witnesses to this, [John 12:17](#).

The local people informed the visitors to Jerusalem who Jesus was, Matthew 21:10-11. He was the prophet, Deuteronomy 18:18 / John 1:21 / John 1:25 / John 6:14 / John 7:40 / John 9:17 / Acts 3:22-26 / Acts 7:37. But Jesus was more than a prophet; He was the Messiah, He was the Son of God.

CONCLUSION

We're living in a society where Christians are being told to 'shut up' by the 'politically correct' brigade. If we speak out against sin, any sin, we get told we're judging and need to 'shut up'. It's almost like we're allowed to have our faith, but we're not allowed to express our faith in any shape or form, as some people will find it offensive.

Society is permitted to speak out against Christians, but it seems that as time goes on, Christians aren't being permitted the same freedom of speech to defend their beliefs.

The world can try and silence Christians because they find their faith offensive, but the truth is, God would be even more offended if Christians didn't share their faith with others.

Let's continue to praise Him and lift up His Holy Name before the world because the time is coming when every being in heaven, everyone on earth, and every demon in hell is going to bow down and confess what Christians have been confessing for years, Philippians 2:9-11.

'Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. So, the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!" John 12:17-19

The crowd who had seen Lazarus raised 'bore witness,' John 12:17. As Jesus approached, the whole town became more and more excited. News of the Messiah approaching spread around the city, and the people eagerly waited to hear what the Lord was to say, how He would instruct them on the road to re-establishing David's throne. All eyes were pointing to Jesus, John 12:18.

Once again, the Pharisees didn't greet the arrival of Jesus with all that much enthusiasm, and they wanted Jesus dead. This crowd would make it all the more difficult, John 12:19. They seem somewhat frustrated by these goings on, and their difficulty in finding Jesus in a quiet, dark alley where that could finish all this 'foolishness'.

The Pharisees saw Jesus as a serious threat to their position as leaders in the religious community; even if they did have some idea that He was the Messiah, it was now too late to acknowledge Him, for they would lose too much. The 'Pharisees', who were the Sanhedrin officials, were extremely worried, and they had reason to be because huge crowds were involved, John 12:19.

People were continually shouting that Jesus was the Messiah, the King of Israel. Jerusalem was packed with Passover pilgrims, 'was thrown into confusion', Matthew 21:10. A popular uprising looked possible, and that would bring savage reprisals from the Romans, John 11:48.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

"Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip, in turn, told Jesus. Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very

truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me. “Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’?”

No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. The crowd spoke up, “We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man’?” Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.” When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them’. John 12:20-36

In John 12:20, we see the Greeks getting involved. The Greeks, Hellenes, and Greeks as to nationality, but converts to Judaism, were people who had given up their worship of foreign gods and idols and had turned to the one true God. They belonged to the large group of people called proselyte Jews or ‘God-fearers’.

They weren’t allowed any farther than the court of the Gentiles in the temple, but Isaiah 56:7 teaches that they were allowed to render religious service in the temple, John 20:20, but they didn’t like nationalism or circumcision.

These Greeks wanted to have an interview with Jesus but weren’t keen to approach Him directly, so they went through the disciples, John 20:21, thereby proving that the disciples were well known to be Jesus’ disciples at this time.

Strangely, Philip couldn’t deal with this request on his own, so he went and sought Andrew’s advice, and both then approached Jesus, John 20:22. In reply, almost as if He knew the question the Greeks intended to put to Him, Jesus entered a discourse on the cost and reward of following Him.

He tells the people listening that his hour has come, John 12:23, probably reinforcing the idea held by the crowd that the revolution against Rome was about to start. Jesus declares His death as a way of producing life and encourages those around to give up their normal lives and live as one dedicated to Jesus. The reward? Honour from the Father.

In John 12:24-25, we see a metaphor of the seed, which has two applications: His death was necessary to bring people of all nations to God. As for the Lord, so for the disciple, he must die to live.

The word ‘troubled’, ‘tarasso’, ‘agitated, distressed’, John 12:27, is the same word used in John 11:33 / John 14:1. Some translations read ‘Father, save me from this hour’, a question as RSV. Others make it an actual prayer, as in the KJV.

But we can be certain that here the Saviour’s humanity is revealed; He is ‘troubled’ as He sees the cross before Him. His human reaction is to avoid it if possible, Matthew 26:39, but how can He make such a request when His purpose in coming is to die for humanity?

‘No, for this purpose I have come to this hour’, John 12:27. Jesus explains to the listeners that he came for the things soon to take place; this was the whole purpose of His visit.

He will not ask for freedom from His task but desires to let it be done. He pleads to God the Father to glorify His own name, John 12:28, the result of which was a voice from heaven the very voice of God, ‘I have glorified it and will glorify it again,’ John 12:28.

There are three recorded occasions of the Father speaking to Jesus, here, John 12:28, His baptism, Matthew 3:16-17, His transfiguration, Matthew 17:5. Here, His Father says, ‘I have glorified it’. This was done in Jesus’ signs, John 2:11 / John 5:36 / John 11:40. The Father also said, ‘I will glorify it again’, in death, resurrection, glorification, etc. The people around weren’t sure what they had heard; some said it was the voice of an angel, others the sound of thunder. Jesus said the voice was for their sake. The crowd thought, ‘it thundered’, others thought, ‘an angel spoke to Him,’ John 12:29.

Perhaps what people heard depended on their spiritual attitude and capacity. Ezekiel among the exiles in Babylon, saw visions of God, but there is no evidence that others there saw them. But the voice was heard, not exclusively for Jesus' sake but also for the sake of those present, [John 12:30](#) / [John 4:21](#) / [John 12:44](#).

In [John 12:31](#), we see that the cross will be 'judgement', 'krisis', for the world, 'kosmos'. In rejecting Jesus, the world condemned itself, [John 3:18](#). 'The prince' or 'ruler', 'archon', [John 12:31](#), of this world is Satan, [John 14:30](#) / [John 16:11](#) / [2 Corinthians 4:4](#). What appeared to be Satan's triumph, the death of Jesus, was, in fact, his defeat, [Hebrews 2:14-15](#) / [Genesis 3:15](#).

Jesus tells the people not only of His impending departure but also of the nature of His death. He uses the term, 'When I am lifted up', [John 12:32](#), the crowd knew this referred to crucifixion, and [John 12:33](#) tells us that the Lord wanted the people to know what type of death He was to experience.

'Lifted up' means crucified, [John 12:32](#) / [John 3:14](#) / [John 8:28](#), and in doing so, Jesus 'will draw all men to myself', [John 12:32](#). The people looked for a nationalistic kingdom, however, the cross would be the magnet by which He would attract to Himself people of all nations, He is the Saviour of the whole world, [John 4:42](#) / [John 11:51](#) / [John 10:16](#).

In [John 12:34-36](#), we see that the crowd were expecting an eternal Messiah, now Jesus, who they were sure was the Messiah, was telling them that He was soon to be crucified. They point out this apparent error to Jesus and ask for an explanation of the idea of the Son of Man.

They understood from the 'law', Scriptures, that the Messiah would be an invincible leader, who would establish an endless kingdom and reign forever, [John 12:34](#).

This is how they interpreted Old Testament predictions, for example, [Psalm 39:3-4](#) / [Psalm 110:4](#) / [Isaiah 9:7](#) / [Ezekiel 37:25](#) / [Daniel 7:14](#). They ask, 'What do you mean by saying that the Son of Man must be lifted up? What Son of Man is this?' He doesn't answer their question but deals with the attitude.

He, the Light, will be among them a little while longer, [John 12:35](#) / [John 7:33](#). Those who did believe in Him would become 'Sons of light', truly enlightened people, [John 12:36](#). He encourages those listening to seek the light and walk in it.

The danger of getting lost in the dark is made clear, and the urgency of putting their trust in the light while it is still available is emphasised. Jesus doesn't say that it isn't possible to put one's trust in the light after the resurrection, but that it is better to do so now, [John 12:36](#).

Jesus then hid, [John 12:36](#), possibly because He needed rest from the crowds, or to escape the encroaching Pharisees; this was predicted by Isaiah. His public ministry now ended, 'he departed and hid himself from them,' [John 12:36](#). He has come to Jerusalem to die, but His death will be when He chooses.

BELIEF AND UNBELIEF AMONG THE JEWS

'Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. This was to fulfil the word of Isaiah the prophet: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" For this reason, they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them." Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him. Yet at the same time, many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees, they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved human praise more than praise from God.' [John 12:37-43](#)

This is John's summary of the whole ministry of Jesus, not merely an observation of what happened on that occasion in Jerusalem. The terrible truth is revealed, Jesus worked for three years and in that time, He covered many miles, spent many hours with people, healing the sick, raising the dead and doing many other miracles.

He was well known; he had spent time talking to people, teaching and encouraging them. He had always expressed in a very practical way His love and concern for mankind. But still, regardless of all this, many, even most wouldn't accept Jesus as the Messiah, [John 12:37](#).

As a result, many still watch for the arrival today of the one who has come, done His task, and left. He will come again, but in a way causing fear in the hearts of those who didn't recognise Him when He first came.

In [John 12:38](#), we find [Isaiah 53:1](#) and [Isaiah 6:10](#), which saw the glory of the coming Christ and foretold of the many that would not receive Him, just as He told so much else of the Saviour's life, people didn't believe.

Isaiah's message was rejected, and He was killed, so with the Messiah, His own people rejected and killed Him, [John 1:11](#). This wasn't a result of Isaiah's prophecy, but the prophecy as a result of this unbelief. Isaiah had it revealed to him as if it had already occurred.

In this quote from [Isaiah 6:9-10](#), God didn't mean that those to whom Isaiah spoke couldn't believe the message, nor did John mean that Jesus' hearers were predestined to be unbelievers, [Matthew 13:14-15](#). In each case, hearers hardened their hearts against the truth.

The 'authorities' were the rulers, leading men, among them 'many' believed, [John 12:42](#), including Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea and others, [John 3:1-2](#) / [John 19:33](#).

Perhaps this was even more saddening to the people, when even leaders who did believe in Jesus, those who saw the light but were intimidated into not proclaiming it.

The Pharisees had said that all believing in Jesus would be put out of their local synagogues and would not be able to worship at the temple, [John 12:42](#). Nothing could be worse, and so these people chose the recognition of man rather than that of God, [John 12:43](#).

'Then Jesus cried out, "Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. "If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So, whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.' [John 12:44-50](#)

These verses represent Jesus' summary of His claims; it was a public declaration, but John doesn't say when or where it was made. Jesus makes His claims in reference to belief, light, judgment, and eternal life.

This was the last time that Jesus addressed the crowds before being arrested, and so, He makes one last, almost desperate plea to the people to accept Him as the Light, and He refers to His authority, [John 12:44-46](#).

The word 'seeing,' [John 12:45](#), means to observe, contemplate Him, observe, contemplate the Father, [John 1:18](#) / [John 13:20](#) / [John 14:9](#). He came as the divine light to dispel spiritual darkness, [John 12:46](#) / [John 8:12](#). He came to save, not to judge the world, [John 12:47](#) / [John 3:16-17](#).

He emphasises that His task isn't to judge but to bring light and salvation, [John 12:47-48](#). One who rejects Jesus' teaching will finally be judged by that teaching, [John 12:48](#). His teaching isn't of human origin; it is the Father's commandment, bringing eternal life to the believer, [John 12:49-50](#).

Take Jesus and escape judgement, which comes not only from the Son but from the Father as well. He is the Father's ambassador; to believe in Him is to believe in the Father, [John 12:49-50](#).

CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION

In [John 1-12](#), we see Jesus' ministry to His one nation, the nation rejected Him, [John 1:11](#), He withdraws from public ministry, and in [John 13-17](#), we have teaching given to the apostles.

There is a difference in emphasis. In [John 1-12](#), the dominant words are 'life' and 'light', introduced in [John 1:4](#). The theme of 'life' occurs fifty times, and the theme of 'light' occurs thirty-two times.

But in [John 13-17](#), the 'life' theme occurs only six times and the 'light' theme not at all. By contrast, 'love' is mentioned six times in [John 1-12](#), but thirty-one times in [John 13-17](#).

In the farewell narrative, John is showing us love in action, [John 13-19](#), dealing with the final week in the earthly life of Jesus, and we see two significant actions in [John 13:1-30](#).

JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

'It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so, he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realise now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.' John 13:1-17

Before beginning His systematic instruction of the apostles, Jesus does two significant things: He washes His disciples' feet as an object lesson in love and humility, and He gives a piece of bread and instruction to Judas, setting in motion the chain of events that led to His death.

The words, 'before the feast of the Passover,' etc. [John 13:1](#) doesn't necessarily mean that the events here recorded took place before the Passover. We see in the Old Testament that Ezekiel refers to the Passover as a feast of seven days, [Ezekiel 45:21](#), and we see in the New Testament that the Festival of Unleavened Bread is called the Passover, [Luke 22:1](#).

Up to this point, Jesus's hour had not yet come, [John 2:4](#) / [John 7:30](#) / [John 8:20](#) / [John 12:23-27](#), but now He knows His hour has come to go to the cross and return to the Father, [John 13:1](#). [John 13:1](#) is used as a way of introducing the event now to occur.

The reason why Jesus did this is given as ‘He now showed them the full extent of His love’. He loved the men He had spent the last three years training, now He used this opportunity to show them the full extent of His love and His humility.

Judas Iscariot already knew what he was to do, he had shown his true colours as a materialist by being guilty of stealing, [John 12:6](#) / [Matthew 26:15](#). Luke tells us that Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, [Luke 22:3](#). After he entered Judas, John tells us that the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas to betray Jesus, [John 13:2](#).

How Satan entered Judas we don’t know but the Bible clearly tells us that he is working in Judas to get him to betray Jesus. And please know that Judas wasn’t forced to obey Satan any more than he was forced to follow Jesus. He had free will like you, and I do to choose who he will obey.

Judas now goes to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discusses with them how he might betray Jesus, [Luke 22:4](#) / [Matthew 26:14](#) / [Mark 14:10](#). Judas asks them how much are they willing to give him to deliver Jesus over to them and so they counted out thirty pieces of silver, [Matthew 26:15](#).

Notice they were delighted and agreed to give him money, [Luke 22:5](#) / [Mark 14:11](#). Judas then consents, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present, [Luke 22:6](#) / [Matthew 26:16](#) / [Mark 14:11](#).

Judas Iscariot is probably one of the most memorable disciples of Jesus, but sadly for all the wrong reasons. Now I think Judas could have got a lot more. I mean, this shows how far Jesus has sunk in his eyes. He could have pushed for much more from the chief priests.

Thirty pieces of silver were just the price of a common slave, [Matthew 26:15](#) / [Exodus 21:32](#). The priests were very aware of what Zechariah wrote, [Zechariah 11:12-13](#), but their anger toward Jesus clouded any objectivity they had in applying prophecy to what they were actually doing, [Matthew 26:14-16](#).

By the way, have you ever wondered why they needed Judas? They didn’t need Judas to recognise Jesus. They didn’t need Judas to find out where Jesus was. Do you know what my theory is? Three times in the Gospel of John, they sent guards to arrest Jesus, and all three times the guards couldn’t do it.

I think they were beginning to fear that Jesus was un-arrestable. And they said, “We need someone on the inside, someone that can catch Him when his guard is down, someone that won’t surprise Him so that we can get Him before He knows what’s going on.” And Judas said, “I’m your man.” And Judas got his bargain. And the Jewish leaders got their insider. And Satan got his opportune time to come back and attack Jesus.

Because by this point, Judas is now the disciple of Satan. And so he makes his deal. Now he had the opportunity to earn money by selling Jesus to the Sanhedrin, [John 13:2](#). He decides that the time is right; perhaps if he lingers longer, someone else will earn the thirty pieces of silver. The decision was already made.

At this moment in time, it was important for Jesus to know the Father had given all things into His hands, [John 13:3](#). Knowing His past with God the Father, and His future with God the Father, Jesus was determined to glorify Him in the present, [John 13:3](#).

Feet washing was practised because the roads were unsurfaced and uncleaned, in summer, dust, in winter, mud. Feet washing was an essential social requirement. In times of riches, a servant performs this service.

How was it taken care of by the apostolic group? No doubt they took turns, but on this occasion, no apostle was willing to do it, [Luke 22:24](#). If [John 13](#) records the observance of the Passover, then on this occasion, they were arguing about who should be greatest, [Luke 22:24-30](#).

Jesus had all assurance that His objectives were to be reached; He now needed to show the way of humility, not arrogance. The feet washing was the lowest task in a household.

It proved one's servanthood, so Jesus, fully understanding His Deity as well as His imminent death and return to God, became that lowly servant, [Philippians 2:5-8](#). Jesus washes and dries the feet of those around Him, using the towel wrapped around His waist, [John 13:4-5](#).

The lowest servant's role is taken on by God Himself and note the 'garments' in [John 13:4](#) / [John 13:12](#). It was customarily for the slave who washed his master's feet to remove both outer cloak and inner tunic and be clothed only in a loincloth, [Philippians 2:7](#).

In man's view of things, you have many people at the bottom of a ladder in a company, family or even a church or denomination. Jesus shows His disapproval of such views by washing the feet of the disciples. He shows the need for the leaders, as Jesus truly was, to be servants to the masses. It's a great lesson in humility that we all need to learn.

Jesus washed the feet of all, including Judas, [John 13:12](#), who had already conceived the plan to betray his Master, [John 13:2](#). Jesus knew this, [John 13:11](#) / [John 6:70-71](#), but Jesus washed Judas' feet because He loved him, [John 13:1](#).

Agape love isn't a mere emotional response to someone we like, it is a deliberate act of the well determination to do good to others, no matter how badly they treat us.

MAN'S LADDER

Managing director
Area managers
Office managers
Office workers
Tea women
Cleaners
Messengers etc

In man's view of the road to success, many are at the bottom of the ladder, and all are trying to ascend it. The man at the top is served by those below him.

JESUS' LADDER

Non-Christians
Congregation
Teachers
Deacons
Elders
Jesus Christ

Jesus' view of the same ladder taught us the need to accept our place at the top but struggle to serve, and descend the ladder, becoming more like Him at each rung. In [John 13:6-9](#), we see that Jesus eventually works His way around to Peter. Now Peter had a strong tendency to put his foot in his mouth without thinking of the potential consequences. Peter's protest, 'Lord, do you wash my feet?', [John 13:6](#), is incongruous that his 'kurios' should wash His own servant's feet. He ought to have known that a lesson was being taught by the Master.

Even if he didn't understand the lesson, it was amply clear that Jesus wasn't involved in a foot cleaning session for the simple sake of it. However, his heart is in the right place.

Jesus says, 'You do not realise now what I am doing, but one day you will understand', [John 13:7](#). Peter immediately shows that he doesn't appreciate the significance of what Jesus is doing through his violent protest; this shows Peter's character, a curious blend of humility and arrogance, [John 13:8](#).

Peter's totally unacceptable that His Master should perform this menial act shows his humility and then in the same breath we see his arrogance, he, the servant, is presumed to dictate to his Master, [Matthew 16:22](#).

Jesus says, 'Unless I wash you, you will not share with me', [John 13:8](#), and look at Peter's response, 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!' [John 13:9](#).

Peter was a very unstable man. He had just told his Master that He, Jesus, was doing too much. He now tells Him that He isn't doing enough! One moment, he courageously walks on the sea, the next moment, he is pleading, 'Lord, save me!' [Matthew 14:28-30](#).

He confesses that Jesus is 'the Christ, the Son of the living God,' then soon after he dares to rebuke His Master, [Matthew 16:16-22](#). In the Upper Room, he declares that he will die rather than deny Jesus, but soon he will deny him three times, [John 18:25-27](#) / [Matthew 26:69-75](#).

But there is no denying Peter's love for Jesus, even here in [John 13](#), he seems to be saying, 'I want to belong to you completely' not just my feet, but all of me, Lord, [John 13:9](#). He was impetuous and unreliable, but in him 'grace gradually won the victory' and made him the man Jesus wanted him to be.

He seems so emphatic that Jesus will not clean his feet until Jesus tells him his options, then he swings around to the opposite extreme and wants his whole body washed.

The lesson isn't one of bodily cleanliness, but spiritual humility. It's a vital lesson all must learn, but it is even more pronounced for those who are in leading positions in the church; they must lead by example, and in humility, with all love and compassion.

Peter didn't feel worthy of having his feet cleaned by the Lord, and he was well justified in this idea. However, none of us deserved or do still deserve redemption, but God's love for us exceeds His hate for sin. We must be most precious in the eyes of God, or He would never have sent His Son on our behalf.

In [John 13:10](#), Jesus uses an everyday example, a man going to a feast first bathes completely at home, then, on arrival, his feet only would be washed. Likewise, 'you, 'plural' are clean', i.e. spiritually. 'But not everyone of you', [John 13:10](#). Judas had already made a bargain with the Sanhedrin to betray Jesus, [Matthew 26:14-16](#) / [Mark 14:10-11](#).

Jesus has reassured Peter that he is now clean and now turns His attention to one of the numbers who aren't. He doesn't yet tell the gathering who is to be guilty, but we can be sure both Jesus and the guilty party knew who was being discussed.

Judas may have had a bath, but he could never wash away the spiritual dirt he had allowed and was now allowing to accumulate within him. We can do nothing to affect spiritual cleansing and need to rely totally on Jesus' grace and blood; there must also be a daily cleansing, [1 John 1:6-9](#).

In [John 13:12-17](#), we see Jesus as the example of humble service. Jesus then completed the task of washing the rest of the disciples' feet, [John 13:12](#). No one else commented on the action, although they may have been somewhat perplexed by the entire incident. The word 'know' means understand; they knew what he had done, but did they appreciate its spiritual significance? [John 13:12](#).

Jesus re-joined them at the table and started to discuss the event just passed, and He pointed out to them the relationship between them: Jesus is their teacher and their Lord, [John 13:13-15](#).

They rightly called him ‘The Teacher’, ‘didaskalos’ and ‘The Lord’, ‘Kurios’. If He, their Kurios and didaskalos, had lovingly served them, they ought lovingly to serve one another. By performing this most menial task, He had given them an ‘example’ for them to copy, [John 13:15](#).

The words, ‘truly, truly’, [John 13:16](#), always preface a solemn statement, ‘a slave’ ‘doulos’ is not greater than his Master, it is surely not too menial for his slaves. The words ‘He who is sent’, [John 13:16](#), are apostolos, its sole occurrence in John’s Gospel. They were His sent ones, apostles, [Matthew 10:2](#); He was their sender. Jesus tells them, ‘If you know this, happy are you if you act upon it,’ [John 13:17](#).

IS JESUS INSTITUTING AN ORDINANCE OF ‘FEET WASHING’?

Foot washing in both the Old and New Testaments was a social custom; it met a real need. The present denominational practice of washing feet cannot be compared with it.

There is no New Testament evidence that it was ever practised congregationally as an ordinance. In [1 Timothy 5:10](#), washing the feet of the Lord’s people is classed with bringing up children, showing hospitality, all defined as ‘doing good in every way’.

If churches make feet washing a church ordinance, then it would be equally logical to suggest that bringing up children be made a ‘church ordinance’. Jesus gave them an object lesson in humility, which rebuked their pride. They argued as to who was greatest, [Luke 22:24](#). He had taught them often in word, [Matthew 20:25-28](#).

Now He teaches them in His kingdom true greatness is measured by the yardstick of loving service, [Galatians 5:13](#). It was an example of loving service which should characterise every true disciple in His dealings with other disciples, [John 13:15](#). We aren’t told to wash each other’s feet as some sort of ceremony, but to be involved with actively serving each other as well as the people around us.

This doesn’t mean that the disciples are greater than Jesus, but that our response to our greatness in Christ, having our sins forgiven, and enjoying eternal life, ought to be a response in humility and servanthood, not arrogance, as is the norm in the world. We are urged to do these things as Christ did, [John 13:17](#).

JESUS PREDICTS HIS BETRAYAL

‘I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfil this passage of Scripture: ‘He who shared my bread has turned against me.’ “I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me.” After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.” His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, “Ask him which one he means.” Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So, Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do quickly.” But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.’ John

Luke placed Jesus' announcement of His betrayal after the institution of the Lord's Supper, whereas Matthew and Mark located it before that event in their Gospels.

Ellicott, in his commentary, says the following.

'On the whole, the order of the first two Gospels seems here the most probable. and agrees better with the fourth. The date before us does not enable us to say with certainty whether Judas partook of the memorial; but, if we follow the first two Gospels, it would seem probable that he did not.'

JUDAS

What kind of man would bargain for Jesus? The man is the man Judas, and although he's not a pleasant person to study, he gets a lot of attention in the Gospels, and so we need to ask ourselves why. I don't believe that anybody suddenly becomes influenced. I don't believe that Judas was ever a second-class disciple.

Remember, he was chosen by Jesus to be numbered among the twelve after Jesus spent a full night in prayer, [Luke 6:12-16](#). Judas was treated, he was taught just the same as all of the other disciples, and he was sent out by Christ to minister by the same apostolic authority.

Yes! Judas went out in the name of Jesus and healed the sick, imagine that? Imagine looking back years later, and when you realise that your baby is alive because Judas healed him.

Yes! Judas went out in the name of Jesus and cast demons out of people. And yes, Judas went out and preached the good news of the kingdom of heaven to the multitudes. Judas was just as much a disciple as anyone else.

I think a lot of our portrayals of Judas are way off the mark. Every picture I've ever seen, an artist's portrayal of the disciples, always has Judas off in the corner.

I don't know why, but he's always a skinny-looking guy. Kind of small and thin, he's always got dark hair and a goatee beard, but I don't know what that means. But he's always a sinister-looking guy, and when you take one look at the picture, you will always say, 'That guy is Judas!'

Because if he wasn't Judas, he probably is a gang leader. How do we know that he wasn't a big guy, with a big old smile on his face? How do we know that Judas didn't have the heartiest laugh of any of the disciples?

This man was as zealous as any of the twelve. The other twelve trusted him enough that when they needed someone to take care of the money, they picked Judas.

I think Judas, probably like the others, was just as passionate in the beginning as any of them. He was a nationalist just like Peter, John and Simon. He thought Jesus was going to launch the political liberation of Israel, and he was on the ground floor to make it happen.

But what I think happened, I think sooner than the others, Judas was the one who realised that Jesus wasn't willing to be the king, he wanted him to be. I believe that Judas became disillusioned. Imagine that he is the treasurer of a nearly bankrupt movement, following a man that, in Judas' opinion, cannot take advantage of the moment.

I think for Judas, the real turning point is in [John 6](#). Jesus feeds the multitude, and the crowd try to force Him to become king, [John 6:15](#). This is the moment all the twelve have been waiting for. 'Let's crown Jesus, let's round up the troops, let's ride into Jerusalem and let's liberate Israel.'

Do you know what Jesus did? He refused. He withdrew from the multitude when they came to find Him the next day, and He preached one of the fieriest sermons He ever preached.

He says, ‘The only reason you’re here is for the food.’ He started talking about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, and the Bible says that after that, many people turned away, [John 6:66](#). And in Judas’ mind, Jesus blew it. And that’s when Jesus said something very interesting that he hadn’t said yet. He chose the twelve, but one of them would later betray Him, [John 6:70-71](#).

I don’t know if, at this moment, Judas plans to betray Jesus; that’s still two years away. But at this moment, already in the heart of Judas, is frustration and disillusionment that Satan is going to start to work on. From that moment on, Judas began to live more and more of the life of an impostor.

I think for some time, Judas started to live that way. He started to do the stuff but did not listen to the music. In fact, at some point, it says that every now and then he would put his hand in the money to get a little out. He was determined to get something out of his association with Jesus. And with every small act of treachery, his heart grew a little bit harder.

When we get towards the last week of Jesus’ life, He’s anointed at Bethany by Mary. Who opens a bottle of perfume, which is worth a year’s wages, her life’s savings, and then she just extravagantly pours it on Jesus. And the Bible says Judas wasn’t happy about it, because he used to help himself to the money in the money bag, [John 12:4-6](#). For Judas, the final straw was Jesus giving a blessing to Mary for her extravagance. In [Matthew 26:14-16](#), we find Judas making his agreement with the leaders to hand Jesus over for thirty pieces of silver.

I think Judas could have got a lot more. I mean, this shows how far Jesus has sunk in his eyes. He could have pushed for much more from the chief priests. Thirty pieces of silver were just the price of a common slave.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS BETRAYAL BY JUDAS

And so, we shift now to a few days later, and we go to the upper room. All the disciples are gathered together to have a Passover meal, [Exodus 12:18-20](#). The disciples suggest that they prepare for the Passover by finding a place to have the meal together, [Luke 22:15](#).

Jesus knew His time to go to the cross was nearing, [Luke 9:51](#), but His disciples never really understood what He meant. They didn’t understand that Jesus Himself was the Passover lamb, [Luke 22:7-13](#).

As they were getting on with the meal, Jesus interrupts and announces that one of them would betray Him, [Matthew 26:21](#) / [Mark 14:18](#), which sent shockwaves through the disciples.

Jesus hints at the coming events, and He reminds the disciples present of [Psalms 41:9](#), in which it is prophesied that one close to the Lord would betray Him, and so He ensures that the men know when the incident occurs, ‘He who ate my bread’ etc., [John 13:18-19](#) / [Psalm 41:9](#).

They’re introduced to ‘even my close friend, someone I trusted’, [John 13:18](#) / [Psalm 41:9](#). This is a picture of a close, personal friend, enjoying a relationship of trust, betraying his host. Sharing a meal was more than a social occasion; it guaranteed mutual trust between host and guest.

The disciples now know that one of them will betray Jesus. And John says something very interesting, ‘the evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus,’ [John 13:2](#). We have to wonder if the blood money on Judas that night? Were the thirty silver coins in his pocket when he sat down to have supper with Jesus? Something else I think about is this: what was going on in the minds of both men when Jesus washed the feet of Judas? [John 13:11](#) / [John 13:5](#).

Judas knew what he was going to do, and Jesus knew he was going to do it, [John 13:11](#). What were both men thinking when Jesus washed his feet? I think Jesus was about to get really personal with this battle.

I think the Lord was about to make one last appeal to His deserting disciple. I want to show you what happened at the Supper because it was a real battle, [John 13:18-30](#).

Notice that Jesus basically said three things. A prediction, an answer and a command. Jesus said, ‘one of you is going to betray me’, [Matthew 26:21](#) / [Mark 14:18](#).

Can you imagine the gulp that Judas had to restrain when Jesus said that? Can you imagine the shock that he had to try to keep from registering when Jesus said that?

This text makes us face the sovereignty of God and the free will of men. Jesus predicted His betrayal, but predicted doesn’t mean predestined. In other words, Jesus’ awareness of Judas’ betrayal doesn’t excuse Judas from responsibility for his actions.

God does not design treachery, but God can design treachery in His plan. God doesn’t make men do evil, but God can use evil men. Later, Judas’s remorse is evident that betrayal was his choice, [Matthew 27:3](#). He did not have to betray Jesus, but God used that betrayal to save the world.

The reason Jesus made the prediction was to let the other disciples know that He was in control. The situation wasn’t out of hand. Later, looking back, the apostles would remember that Jesus’ betrayal and death were exactly what He had predicted, [John 13:19](#) / [John 12:16](#).

In other words, later they were going to reflect, they were going to look back on that night. And they are going realise that Jesus saw that coming, it was all part of a plan, He knew what was about to happen.

And they were going to realise He really is the Son of God, He really is in control, He really is the Lord. That’s why Jesus made that prediction. He wasn’t the helpless victim of superior forces; He was totally in control of the situation. One sent by God to effect God’s purpose going forward calmly and unafraid, to do what God had planned for him to do.

It will reinforce their conviction that He is the one written about so many years before. He shows that even at this late stage He is concerned about the spiritual well-being of the men who are to carry the message to all the world. He uses this opportunity to assure the disciples that all who accept the word they are to bring accept Jesus and therefore accept God as well, [John 13:20](#).

Again, in [John 13:20](#) we find the words, ‘very truly,’ which is solemn assurance, ‘and one whom I send’, an apostle, [Matthew 10:40](#) / [Luke 10:16](#). These men are to be His inspired representatives, [John 14:26](#) / [John 15:26-27](#) / [John 16:13](#). To receive them, heed their teaching is to receive the Lord Jesus and to receive Him is to receive the Father who sent Him.

Notice that Jesus ‘was troubled in spirit’, [John 13:21](#) / [John 11:33](#) / [John 12:27](#). His prediction, ‘one of you will betray me,’ is His third reference to the betrayer in [John 13](#). One terrible thing lay in the heart of the Lord, He knew the time was coming close, so He needed to tell of this thing, [John 13:21](#).

The Bible says, ‘He testified’ as opposed to ‘He told’, [John 13:21](#). This infers more of a declaration, a speech of significant importance, something that He had seen, or been witness to. Thus, this was a prophecy that, of course, was soon to be seen to be trustworthy.

The words, ‘one of you is going to betray me’, [John 13:21](#) / [Matthew 26:21](#) / [Mark 14:18](#), must have cut to the heart of this group of men. The disciples were perplexed, ‘at a loss to know which of them he meant’, [John 13:22](#).

They looked at each other, each wondering who was to be guilty of this most hideous crime, [Matthew 26:22](#) / [Mark 14:19](#). The one whom Jesus loved, [John 13:23](#) / [John 19:26](#) / [John 20:2](#) / [John 21:7](#) / [John 21:20](#), is a reference to John. Tradition has always understood this to be John.

All the Gospels describe this event, and all show concern to ensure the individual would not be the guilty party. In his humility, John never names himself in the account, and the other accounts describe John as the one Jesus loved.

In [John 13:24](#), we see that each guest was reclining at a low table; John was next to Jesus. When Jesus said, ‘one of you will betray me’, [John 13:21](#) / [Matthew 26:21](#) / [Mark 14:18](#).

Peter made a sign or gesture to John, asking, ‘Who is it he means?’ [John 13:24](#). John merely leaned back and asked Jesus, ‘Lord, who is it?’ [John 13:25](#). The way he recounts the incident with [John 13:27-29](#) suggests that this was a private interchange, question and answer not heard by the others.

Notice that all the other disciples address Jesus as Lord, [John 13:25](#) / [Matthew 26:22](#), but Judas simply addressed Jesus as Rabbi, meaning teacher, [Matthew 26:25](#). Jesus was more than a teacher; He was the Son of God, [John 20:30-31](#). I think the disciple’s amazing lack of suspicion about Judas tells us a couple of things.

1. It tells us that Judas hid his dishonesty very well.

You can be a bargainer for Christ, and other people will never know it.

2. Jesus must have treated Judas as well as any of the other disciples.

If they had seen over the years that Jesus had a problem with Judas, they would have suspected Judas, but they didn’t. Because there was nothing about the way Jesus loved Judas that gave them any hint that Judas would sell his Lord.

Why do you think Peter wants to know? Peter wanted to take preventative action. Peter’s got a sword, [John 18:10-15](#) / [Luke 22:49-51](#) / [Matthew 26:51-55](#). And all he needs to know is who in this room would sell out Jesus.

With the lifting of one finger, Jesus could have saved His life and ended Judas’s life like that. Peter would have jumped up and cut off his head so fast that Judas wouldn’t know about it until he sneezed. Jesus didn’t do that.

Instead, He gave an answer that only Judas could respond to. He said in [John 13:26](#), ‘It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.’ We might ask, well, why didn’t they figure it out then?

How many of you have seen a copy of Leonardo da Vinci’s famous portrait of ‘The Last Supper’? It’s a magnificent work, but it’s so wrong. They didn’t sit at a long table, in chairs, with a white tablecloth. Passover was eaten lying on the floor, [John 13:23](#) / [John 13:13](#).

They would have a U-shaped table, with the host up at the front, in the very middle. There was someone on the right in a special place of honour. And someone on the left is in a very special place of honour. And everybody else would be down the sides. They would lie down on their left elbow and eat with their right hand.

That’s why the Bible says that ‘John was up against the breast of Jesus,’ [John 13:25](#). He didn’t have bad table manners; John was right here, to the right of Jesus. Right up against His breast as they ate. Now let me ask you, who would have been right to the left of Jesus in the very special place of honour?

Somebody so close to Jesus could take a piece of bread and hand it to him. Jesus gave Judas the place of honour at the Passover. And all that the disciples thought was happening, in fact, we know later from Matthew that Jesus and Judas were able to have a very private conversation.

We read that although Judas was aware of the decision he had made to betray the Lord, he didn’t want to reveal himself, [Matthew 26:25](#). We see a piece of bread or meat dipped in the sauce, which was bitter herbs, [John 13:26](#) / [Matthew 26:23](#) / [Mark 14:20](#).

Giving a piece of bread to a guest was a sign of friendship or special favour, this would mean that Jesus wasn’t only identifying the traitor to John but also assuring Judas of His love for him.

It was love's last appeal. He knew what Judas planned, but in the end, he held out the opportunity to turn from the wickedness of his heinous crime. I believe He was making a special appeal to Judas' heart. He was holding that piece of bread there, and He was looking right into his eyes.

And both men knew what He was saying, 'Judas, I know it's you, I know what you're struggling with, I know what you're thinking about doing to me, Judas, can you go through with it? Can you turn on me like that? Can you sell me out?'

Jesus was knocking at the door of his heart and Judas threw open the door and told Jesus to stay outside and he invited Satan in, [John 13:27](#) / [Luke 22:3](#). As someone once said, 'it was Judas' Gethsemane.'

Just like in Gethsemane when Jesus made His decision, and the angels came to give Him strength. Judas made his decision, and the dark angel showed up that quickly to make sure he didn't change his mind.

And at that moment, Jesus knew that He had lost him. The whole betrayal of Jesus was foreordained. Jesus would suffer the death of the cross, [Isaiah 53](#) / [Psalm 22](#) / [Acts 2:23](#). Jesus says it would be better for His betrayal to have never been born, [Matthew 26:24](#) / [Mark 14:21](#) / [John 17:12](#).

When we read [John 13:28-29](#), we need to ask, why didn't John expose Judas? He and other disciples knew nothing of Judas' plans, and he may not have thought that the betrayal was imminent.

All the apostles said, 'Is it I?', [Matthew 26:22](#), so probably they were thinking not of deliberate, calculated treachery, but involuntary betrayal, e.g. Peter's denial.

Also, the apostles refused to accept that Jesus was going to be crucified. On the other side of the cavalry, it must have seemed incredible that Jesus should urge Judas to do his work of betrayal quickly, [John 13:27](#).

This is the only time in Scripture where God and Satan gave a man the same command. Judas was arranging for Jesus' crucifixion, [John 13:27](#) / [Luke 12:50](#).

Jesus was thinking, 'I have a baptism to undergo, what tension I must suffer, till it is all over! As if He said to Judas, Get on with it. I must get it over with!' [Matthew 26:24](#) / [Mark 14:21](#).

The disciples think Jesus is referring to some act of kindness, [John 13:29](#), but the most extreme opposite is true. He is referring to the most terrible crime ever committed against man or God, [Matthew 26:24](#) / [Mark 14:21](#).

Judas casts aside all hesitation and gives himself up wholly to Satan's work. Up to this point, he had doubts and impulses to do better, but now he plunges headlong into the bottomless pit. Judas rejects Jesus' last plea of mercy, and Judas goes out into the night, [John 13:30](#).

Although it was night, I'm sure that John was referring to more than the obvious: Jesus is the light, [John 8:12](#) / [John 12:46](#). It's always dark when you leave Jesus! The word 'night', [John 13:30](#), marks the time, but probably symbolic also, the forces of darkness were gathering around Jesus, [Luke 22:53](#).

Also, Judas deliberately rejected the Light of the World, [John 8:12](#), and went out into total spiritual darkness. He ceases to follow and loses the light of life. The picture painted is gloomy and intensely sad, [Matthew 26:24](#) / [Mark 14:21](#). He had a chance to repent for his betrayal, but his worldly sorrow led him to hang himself, [Matthew 27:5](#) / [2 Corinthians 7:10](#).

CONCLUSION

The problem with reading about Judas is that over the centuries, he has been so despised that we can't relate to him, but the disciples could. The question they asked when Jesus said, 'one of you is going to betray me' is 'Is it I?' 'Could it be me?'

I think that's the question we're supposed to ask ourselves because I think if we look deep into our hearts, we will admit that there have been times in our lives when we have made some hard bargains for Jesus. Judas sold out Jesus for thirty pitiful pieces of silver, but I've sold Jesus out for less than that, haven't you?

'When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'" John 13:31-35

In between [John 13:30](#) and [John 13:31](#), the Gospels place the institution of the Lord's Supper, ignored here by John. Judas 'had gone out; he hadn't been forced out, or driven out, but had gone out voluntarily. Jesus knew all along what Judas would do, but foreknowledge is not causation.

Jesus speaks of the coming glorification of the Son and the Father. The two will give each other glory, cause each other to be glorified; the one cannot receive glory without the other also receiving it, the two are one, [John 13:30-31](#). Note the repetition of 'glorified, glorified, glorified, glorified.' Both He and His Father would be 'glorified', i.e. honoured, exalted. 'Now is the Son of Man glorified,' refers to the departure of Judas, the prelude to Jesus' death. There are three facts that we need to remember here.

1. His death would be His glorification, exaltation.

In the eyes of His enemies, He suffered defeat. In the purpose of God, He was victorious.

2. The Father would be glorified in the death of Jesus.

God sent His Son for this purpose.

3. God will glorify Jesus 'in himself,' [John 17:5](#).

Death will be followed by resurrection, ascension, and coronation.

God will do this 'at once', [John 13:32](#). He is on the threshold of Gethsemane, Gabbatha and Golgotha. In a matter of hours, He would be arrested in Gethsemane.

The term 'little children' in [John 13:33](#) is 'teknea,' and it's only used once in the four Gospels and in 1 John. It's a term of tenderness and affection, as a parent would use for little children greatly loved.

The immediate nature of this occurrence is highlighted; indeed, it was now early evening. Gethsemane was little more than an hour away; soon would that great act of passion commence.

[John 13:34-35](#) tells us that soon He will die on the cross, be betrayed by a close friend, but His first thought is for the eleven, and not for Himself. The great new commandment is given, 'love one another', and by this all Christians must live.

The word 'love' is 'agapao'; this isn't an impulse from the feelings. It doesn't always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered.

It's a 'new commandment' but not new because love is commanded under the Old Covenant, [Leviticus](#)

[19:18](#) / [Matthew 22:37-40](#). It's new as to quality and degree, 'even as I have loved you', [John 13:34](#) / [1 John 3:16](#).

The word 'love' is also present tense, which means we are to keep on loving one another. [John 15:12](#) / [John 15:17](#).

The words, 'by this, all men will know', [John 13:35](#), mean that love is the badge of discipleship. Jesus' love was of the highest possible order. He loved all so much that He was about to surrender the gift of life so that each individual would have the chance of eternal life, [John 3:16](#).

His love drove Him out of heaven down to earth. God became man because of love. This love is the love we need to have between ourselves and those still outside in the dark.

The word for ‘love’ used here is ‘agape’ and refers to the finest love you can ever have for another. This is the love so powerful that it encompasses all the commands given in the Old Testament, leaving nothing outside. The result of this love, as all mankind sees it, is knowledge that these are of Christ.

Does the world recognise in you that love? Do people know that you are a Christian by your love for them and others? [John 13:35](#). Love is the test of commitment, enduring unchallengeable love.

JESUS PREDICTS PETER’S DENIAL

‘Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.” Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!’ [John 13:36-38](#)

It’s clear that Satan wanted to use Simon to stop Jesus from going to the cross, [Luke 22:31](#). Jesus specifically prayed that Peter be strong, [Luke 22:32](#). He also prayed for all the twelve on this occasion, [John 17:9](#) / [John 17:11](#) / [John 17:15](#). His prayer was that their faith be strong enough to withstand the trials through which they were about to go in the next few days.

The Lord was about to foretell the denial of Peter and the flight of the twelve but He began by appealing to the prophecy, [Matthew 26:31](#) / [Mark 14:27](#), quoted from [Zechariah 13:7](#).

God had revealed Himself in the Old Testament under the extensive use of the metaphor of ‘the shepherd of Israel’, [Psalm 23](#) / [Ezekiel 16](#), but here it was stated that the Shepherd would strike the Shepherd, thus God laid upon Himself in the person of the Son, the iniquity of us all. Inherent in this was the failure of all human support.

Christ here went far beyond the detailed prophecies of His passion and calmly set up an appointment to meet the twelve in Galilee after the great sacrifice had been offered, [Matthew 26:32](#) / [Mark 14:28](#). Christ promised to meet them after His resurrection, and He did, [Luke 24:6](#) / [Matthew 28:7-10](#) / [Mark 16:7](#) / [John 21:1-6](#).

Jesus told the disciples that they would all fall away, [Matthew 26:33](#). The disciples still didn’t fully realise what was soon to occur and so, Peter asks where Jesus is going, [John 13:36](#). Jesus answered him and tells him he can’t follow Him now but he will later, [John 13:36](#).

Jesus was going voluntarily to death but it wasn’t yet time for Peter to die. He would eventually ‘follow’ his Master to death by crucifixion, [John 21:18-19](#). Peter retorted that, though the others might, he would never abandon Him, [Matthew 26:33](#) / [Mark 14:29](#). Peter asked why he could not follow Jesus immediately, which shows three things about Peter’s personality.

1. His devotion. He wants to be with his Master.
2. His impatience. ‘Why can’t I follow you right now?’
3. His self-reliance. ‘I will lay down my life for you.’

All of these are shattered for that time when he was guilty of denying the one he loved. Even though Peter wasn’t perfect, he made mistakes as we do. Christ replied that he would deny Him three times that very night, [Luke 22:34](#) / [Matthew 26:34](#) / [Mark 14:30](#).

It's important to see that Peter was sincere in this assertion; he meant it, but he didn't know himself as well as Jesus knew him. He revived and became a great apostle for the Lord. Peter promises all for Jesus but Jesus knows better, Peter would deny his Lord three times that evening, [John 13:38](#) / [Luke 22:34](#) / [Matthew 26:34](#) / [Mark 14:30](#).

Matthew referred to the event of the cockcrow, a phenomenon taking place every morning, [Matthew 26:34](#). Mark and John had reference to the beginning of a cockcrow, [John 13:38](#) / [Mark 14:30](#), which always starts with one or two roosters leading all the rest.

Again, Peter denied it, saying that he would even be willing to die with Him, [Luke 22:33](#) / [Matthew 26:35](#) / [Mark 14:31](#). Perhaps Peter's overconfidence was one reason he fulfilled this very prophecy a few hours later. Jesus knew the truth of what was to happen.

Peter wouldn't lay his life down for the Lord, but the Lord for him. Peter wouldn't follow; he would deny. The prophecy Jesus gives in this regard tells of three great truths of Jesus.

1. Jesus, the great prophet.
2. Jesus, the great sufferer.
3. Jesus, the great Saviour.

'The cock will not crow' etc., [Luke 22:34](#) / [Matthew 26:34](#) / [Mark 14:30](#). [Mark 13:35](#) indicates that it marked the third of the four 'watches', 'evening', six through to nine, 'midnight', nine through to twelve.

'Rooster-crowing' twelve through to three, 'morning', three through to six, hence, what Jesus means seems to be that before three am, Peter will deny him three times.

The prediction shattered Peter; throughout the Upper Room discourse afterwards, he is silent. Jesus, just moments before His departure, takes time to teach Peter, who was in many ways the leader, to become a great leader in the future. This lesson is recorded so we can learn from its experience.

Peter wasn't alone in rejecting the idea of their failure, for both Mark and Matthew relate how 'all the disciples' made the same affirmation of loyalty, [Matthew 26:35](#) / [Mark 14:31](#).

What none of them realised was that the source of true spiritual strength hadn't yet been provided through the death of Christ and that it was, therefore, impossible for them to have stood without that strength. It was at this time that the events and statements of Jesus in [John 13-17](#) took place. Jesus had a private meeting with the apostles as recorded in [John 13-17](#).

There were actually two meetings going on at the same time: this one, where Jesus said He was about to be crucified during Passover, and the other meeting when the chief priests were saying He can't be killed during Passover, [Mark 14:1-2](#), but as usual, Jesus' plans are always first; He will die when He chooses to die.

In the [John 13-17](#) meeting, Jesus made specific promises to the apostles that applied only to them. In [John 17](#), He made a specific prayer for the apostles and for those who would not believe in Him through their preaching.

ALLEGED CONTRADICTION

Matthew, [Matthew 26:34](#), and John, [John 13:38](#), both say that, 'before the rooster crows', Peter will have denied the Lord three times. Mark says that 'before the rooster crows 'twice,' Peter will deny Christ three times, [Mark 14:30](#). Although some see this as a contradiction, when we actually take a moment to slowly read the text itself, we will soon realise there's no contradiction. Notice how Matthew and John don't expressly state how many times the rooster

will crow. They both simply say that Peter will deny Jesus three times, ‘before the rooster crows’, but they don’t tell us how many times it will crow.

I believe it’s reasonable to accept that Mark is being a little more specific in terms of how many times the rooster will actually crow. In fact, if you look at the word ‘twice’ in [Mark 14:10](#) and [Mark 14:72](#), you will notice that it has a footnote, which tells us that ‘some early manuscripts do not have ‘twice’.

In other words, it’s possible that different accounts are due to an early copyist error in Mark, which resulted in the insertion of the word ‘twice’ in early manuscripts.

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION

‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me, that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.’ John 14:1-4

JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES

This is a continuation from [John 13:38](#) of the previous chapter. The chapter division splits Jesus in the middle of the full answer to Peter when he asked, ‘Why can’t I follow you now?’

It could be said that Jesus now addresses the entire group, not Peter exclusively. Indeed, all these questions could have been asked by any of the disciples, and thus the answers are relevant to all.

The disciples were scared and confused because their Lord had said He was leaving, and He had just accused the most faithful of the group of disowning Him, [John 13:31-38](#).

Jesus sees their worried expressions, particularly Peter’s, and takes a moment to put them at ease, and so, He encourages them to trust and not to allow themselves to become over-anxious.

The words, ‘do not let your hearts be troubled’, [John 14:1](#), literally mean, ‘stop being troubled’ or ‘set your troubled hearts at rest.’ The word ‘heart, ‘kardia,’ doesn’t speak of the physical heart.

It’s speaking of man’s active mental and moral activity, both the rational and emotional elements, [John 12:40](#) / [John 16:6](#) / [John 16:22](#). Notice how Jesus views death, it’s really no big deal.

The phrase, ‘My Father’s house’, [John 14:2](#), is usually understood to be heaven, the rooms, abiding places, all referring to the fact that in His Father’s house, there will be plenty of room for all who get there.

He could be thinking about the temple because there were many rooms within the temple, and so in a sense, Jesus could be saying that death is no big deal, it’s just like going from one room to another.

When Jesus says, ‘I go to prepare a place for you’, [John 14:2](#), He assures them personally that the separation will not be permanent. This same verb is used in [Mark 14:12](#), concerning preparing the Passover, and so as they prepared for the Passover, so he was preparing a place for them.

What does Jesus mean in **John 14:3**? He could be speaking about His resurrection as a coming again, or He could be speaking about the death of every faithful disciple as a coming again.

He could be speaking about the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost as His coming again, or He could be speaking about His future coming from heaven, **John 12:25-26 / 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**.

It's possible that all of these are correct. Jesus goes on to teach them that He is the way to God, **John 14:4 / John 14:6 / John 10:9**, and He tells them that He is going to return, and when He does, they will know the way to the new home.

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

'Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" **John 14:5-6**

Jesus talks with Thomas, but I'm quite sure that all the men were thinking the same thing here. They didn't know the way; they were going backwards and becoming more and more confused, **John 14:5**. The disciples not only didn't know the way, but they also didn't even know the destination. Here we see Thomas making two mistakes.

1. He may have thought the Master was leaving in death, or that He was to go to another area.

In the latter case, the way would be an ordinary road, and Thomas would have made a mistake similar to that made by the Jews in **John 7:35**. Was this work a failure, and was he now abandoning it for other areas?

2. He thought Jesus was referring to the way He needed to travel, but Jesus makes it quite clear that He had the road the disciples and all else who follow later in mind.

Thomas does make one very relevant point: if we don't tell of the destination, how will the lost ever possibly find 'the way'? Notice also that Thomas didn't pretend to have knowledge that he didn't have, **John 20:24-25**.

'I AM'

There are sixteen signs recorded in John's gospel; eight are things which Jesus did, and eight are things which Jesus said. John is basically saying that the 'I AM' claims of Jesus are signs, selected from many other signs. And he says these signs are selected with a purpose in mind, and that purpose is that you believe that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, **John 20:30-31**.

Here we find the seventh of the eight of Jesus' 'I AM' claims, **John 6:35 / John 8:12 / John 8:58 / John 10:9 / John 10:11 / John 11:25 / John 14:6 / John 15:1**. Each of His 'I AM' claims are claims that He is God, EGO EIMI, is the Greek equivalent of YHWH, **Exodus 3:13-14 / John 5:18**. He is Eternal, **Psalms 135:13**, and self-existent, **Psalms 88:6-7**.

When we come to the 'I AM' claims of Jesus, we need to remember that Jesus was not giving Himself a Name or a title, but was asserting His Deity. In other words, every 'I AM' reveals some aspect of His nature and purpose.

'I AM THE WAY'

Jesus never went outside of scripture for an illustration. **Isaiah 35** talks about the kingdom, the WAY of holiness. **Hebrews** talks about boldness and a new and living way, **Hebrews 10:19-20**, the word for way is 'hodos', which means the road.

The High Priest would take the blood, and the blood was spilt on the way to the Holy of Holies, sprinkled blood on the way, a blood-stained way. Jesus says He is the way, **John 14:6**; He's not showing the way because He is the way. Three times on the same day, the high priest would sacrifice for the following reasons.

1. For his own sins.
2. For the sins of the priesthood and
3. For the sins of the people. Jesus' blood has created the way, **Hebrews 6:19**.

Matthew 26:1-5 tells us it was at Passover that Jesus wanted to die for them. Jesus wanted to let it happen in Passover. Jesus died on a day when a one-off event took place, Passover, the Day of Atonement was once a year, Jesus didn't die on this day.

The veil was Jesus' flesh; the veil was torn when He died. A careful reading of the Book of Acts tells us that the early church was called the way; they were in 'the way'.

The blood-stained way into the very presence of God. Two of the most remarkable statements by Jesus are found in one verse. 'I am the way, the truth, and the life,' **John 14:6**.

Jesus says, 'no one comes to the Father but by me', **John 14:6**. These words on the lips of man, would brand him as narrow egotistical, or even mad, but on the lips of Jesus, it is a statement that does New Testament seem out of character.

He is the only way to God, which can only be true if He is truly the incarnate deity, **John 1:1-2 / John 1:14-18 / Colossians 2:9**. If Jesus isn't deity, then this statement is stupid and blasphemous. Are there other ways to God? Hinduism, or Buddhism, this verse says No.

Jesus claims exclusivity. These statements were made in a discussion with His disciples. As He prepared them for His impending death, **John 14:1-4**, prompted questions by Thomas and Philip, **John 14:5 / John 14:7-9**. In making such statements, Jesus claims to be three things: 'The Way, The Truth, and the Life,' **John 14:6**.

Let's take a closer look at where we first observe that Jesus is. Jesus is the only way to God. Jesus clearly claims to be the only way to God, **John 14:6**. As Peter would later proclaim, there is no salvation but through Him, **Acts 4:12**. This may sound politically incorrect, but Jesus states it nonetheless.

How is Jesus the Way to the Father? By revealing Him, stressed in the Gospel of John, **John 14:7-9 / John 1:18 / John 12:44-45**. By opening the way to Him, emphasised in the book of Hebrews, **Hebrews 10:19-20**.

By serving as our high priest, another theme in Hebrews, **Hebrews 2:17-18 / Hebrews 4:14-16 / Hebrews 10:21-22**, He now intercedes for us as our Advocate, **1 John 2:1**.

At the right hand of God, **Romans 8:34**. The one (and only) Mediator between God and man, **Titus 2:5**. Whoever lives to intercede for us! **Hebrews 7:24-25**. By virtue of His life on earth, His death on the cross, and now His service in heaven, Jesus is truly the only way to God! **Isaiah 35:8-9**.

Christ is the 'way', the 'means', the Person by whom we can come to a knowledge of God, **John 1:18**. How wonderful to know that all man has to do to know the Father is to look to Jesus.

Jesus says, 'He who has seen me has seen the Father,' **John 14:9**. Via Jesus, the Father has fellowship with us and we with the Father, **Romans 5:12 / Matthew 11:27-28**. How awful would our situation be without Jesus, our Mediator! There would be an abyss so wide and deep and dark between God and mankind that man could never make any contact with God, and thus man would be lost forever.

Is it difficult to come to God via Jesus? No, definitely not! Since, once we accept Jesus in our lives, he will protect us, **Isaiah 27:3**. Jesus teaches us the way, by speaking the truth, **Luke 20:21**. By showing us the way, **Matthew 16:24 / 1 Peter 2:21**.

All we have to do is follow Jesus, knowing that we shall never be tempted beyond our strength, **1 Corinthians 10:13**, and that if we submit to God and resist the devil, **James 4:7**, the latter will flee from us, **Isaiah 4:7**.

It is via Jesus that we come into the sanctuary, the presence of God, to whom Jesus is the living way, **Hebrews 20:19-20**. I cannot help feeling that when Jesus said, 'I am the way', He puts the emphasis on 'I' indicating he is the only way as indeed he is, **Acts 4:12**.

And so, Jesus declares Himself to be the way, He isn't a guide to show the way, nor a map to help those lost upon the path. No, Jesus is 'The Way'. He is God, and so, all life is available through Him, and only in Him is the truth to those eternal questions found. He wants to answer the questions of life for all mankind. He has the ability, He has the knowledge, and He has the life.

The disciples had received so much teaching, they had had the opportunity to learn all of Christ, but how often did they neglect the teaching? They allowed points the Lord had made to pass; they could have really known Jesus, but they didn't.

Now that Jesus has fully exposed Himself to them, they have the chance to fully understand, know and see the Father as well. In knowing Jesus, they know the way to the eternal Father, which means life. Jesus was the 'Way', 'Hodos', the Road, the one through whom we have access to the Father.

'I AM THE TRUTH'

In his famous 'Essay on Truth', Roger Bacon wrote, 'What is truth?' the jesting Pilate asked and did not stay for an answer.' I am not convinced that Pilate was jesting. He may have terminated the discussion and left the Praetorium because he did not believe that anyone could answer his question.

But here is an interesting and curious fact. You will recall that the Governor, Pontius Pilate, was a Roman. His native language was undoubtedly Latin, and he may well have posed his question in Latin. If that is the case, the question he asked was.

'QUID EST VERITAS?' WHAT IS TRUTH?

Now here is a curious fact: you may take the same fourteen letters of 'Quid Est Veritas' and with them form an anagram, that is, you may rearrange those letters, and, if you do, they will give you. 'Est Vir Qui Adest,' which means, 'it is the man who stands before thee!'

If only Pilate had been aware of the identity of the One who stood before him that day! If only Pilate had known! But, of course, when Jesus made that startling revelation, 'I AM the truth', it was not to Pilate that he spoke, but to His own disciples. And we are naturally interested to know just what he meant.

What about the word truth? Think about it because it's an interesting word. If you consult your dictionary, you will find that it is defined as 'The quality or state of being true, accurate, honest, sincere.' 'The statement of things as they are.'

But I am not really satisfied with that definition, because all that it tells us is that according to the English word, there may be different levels of truth. It does not take into account the fact that one may speak what he believes to be the truth and yet be honestly and sincerely in error. And this is easy to demonstrate.

For instance, if I were to tell you that, 'I sincerely believe that, at this moment, there is a blizzard raging outside this building', and you were to go to the door to discover that it really is snowing, I have spoken truth.

If, on the other hand, you discovered that the sun is shining and it is one-hundred degrees outside, not only would it be a miracle! I would have proved myself, at the very least, to be guilty of error, sincere as I may have been.

In that sense, 'truth' would mean, 'The statement of things as they are', and even an atheist would agree with that definition. And in that case, truth is something which is relative or comparative.

Now, we need a definition which is much more precise than that. We need a definition which is absolute and unconditional, and for such a definition we must turn to the word which Jesus used in the text before us.

Well, the word for 'Truth', which is used in the Greek New Testament, is 'Ale Theia', and it basically means, 'unconcealed'. It is a word which is developed from the word 'Lanthona', which means 'to be unknown, or to be hidden'.

When the Greeks wished to change the meaning of a word so that it meant the very opposite, they replaced the letter 'A', 'Alpha', in front of it. You may take, for example, the word 'righteousness', which is 'Dikaiosune'. If we place the letter 'A' in front of it, it becomes 'A Dikaiosune', which is 'unrighteousness'.

Well, the word 'truth' has been formed in the same way. Place the letter 'A' in front of 'Lanthano', 'unknown, or hidden', and you create the word 'Alethia', so that it now means, 'Unconcealed'.

Therefore, the New Testament word for 'truth' means, 'that which is open and evident and exposed', and which is capable of withstanding any examination; any scrutiny, any investigation'.

If we take it a step further, 'truth', in the New Testament sense, means 'reality' or the manifestation of things as they really are. Think about the phrase which we meet many times in the Bible, the phrase, 'the only true God'. It literally means the only real God, because the word 'Alethinos' indicates the genuine as opposed to the false.

For this reason, when William Tyndale came to **John 15:1-8**, in which Jesus says, 'I am the true vine', he translated it, 'I AM the Verri vine'. Truth, then, in the Bible sense, is reality and revealed in a person.

That is why, when we say that 'God is truth', we mean that God is the ultimate reality, the Origin, the Creator and Sustainer of all things and that apart from Him there is no reality.

It follows, therefore, that if God is truth, His is the only Mind which knows reality perfectly, and truth is that which corresponds with His mind and will. In other words, we only possess the truth on any level and on any subject when what we say about it is what God says about it.

If, for instance, someone were to say that the purpose of life is to have a good time and look after number one, that would only be true if it were what God said about it.

Now, this is the consistent teaching of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. In **Genesis 32:10**, Jacob, coming out of Mesopotamia on his way back to Canaan, gave thanks to God for his mercy and truth and praised God because he had dealt with him in Truth and faithfulness.

In **Deuteronomy 32:4**, Moses called God a ‘God of truth’, whilst in **Exodus 34:6-7**, when on Mount Sinai, God revealed Himself to Moses. His own description of Himself was ‘YHVH, YHVH, merciful, slow to anger, gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth.’

The psalmist never ceased to sing about the ‘God of Truth’. ‘All his works are truth. His truth endures to all generations. He keeps truth forever. His truth reaches to the heavens.’ **Psalm 100:5**. Turning to the prophets, twice in one verse, **Isaiah 65:16**, the prophet Isaiah called God, ‘The God of truth.’

Over in the New Testament, Paul described Him as ‘the God who cannot lie’, **Titus 1:2**. And in **Revelation 15:3**, the redeemed praise God as ‘just and true in all his ways. God, then, is Himself, ‘Truth.’

But, let us now take this a step further, and notice that the God of truth, whose Word is truth, **John 17:17**, in the fullness of time, is, when the right moment came, **Galatians 4:4**, revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, who came to us as ‘the truth incarnate’. The truth manifested in a physical body. The Word became flesh, **John 1:1-2 / John 1:14**.

This is why, in **Revelation 3:7**, Jesus Himself is described as, ‘The Holy One, the True One.’ And why, later in **Revelation 3:14**, the Lord Jesus describes Himself in words which cannot logically be understood in any other way than as a claim to Deity. ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.’ Jesus is actually saying, ‘I AM the Amen.’ Now, this is a statement which arrests attention immediately. You see that word ‘amen’, comes to us straight from the Hebrew language. It is a word which has not been translated. It is not English. It is not Greek.

Even the Greeks did not translate it. The word is also ‘Amen’ in the Greek language, and although we are in the habit of using the word as a convenient way in which to close a prayer, and have been told it means, ‘so be it’, it has a vastly more profound meaning than that.

Although the connection may not appear at first glance, there is a very close relationship between the words ‘truth’ and ‘amen.’ The root meaning of the word ‘amen’ is that of ‘nursing, nourishing, building up’, hence it has to do with ‘establishing, establishing, making sure.’

And in its original use, it takes us back to God as the nursing Mother of His people. Now that is a thought to consider! The fact of the Motherhood of God. In **Isaiah 66:13**, God Himself said, ‘As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you’.

Now, if the thought of the ‘motherhood’ of God is new and strange to you, perhaps I might throw in the additional fact, and say that one of the compound names for God, which is found in the Old Testament, is ‘El Shaddai.’ It is used no fewer than forty-eight times, and when you read the name, ‘God Almighty’, or ‘Almighty God’, that is the translation of ‘El Shaddai.’

But, it has long been a puzzle as to why the men who translated the Old Testament rendered ‘El Shaddai’ as ‘The Almighty God’, when Hebrew scholars have long known, that it really suggests the ‘Mother-love’ of God and the fact that God never tires of bestowing His bountiful goodness and fullness and riches on His people, as a mother bestows her tender care on her child.

And for this reason, ‘El Shaddai’ is literally, ‘El’ God, ‘Shaddai’, the Breasted One, for that is what the word ‘Shaddai’ means. And this is why, besides calling God ‘the truth’, you may place this other name for God, ‘the Amen’, ‘the nourisher’, ‘the sufficient One’, the One who nurses, and nurtures His people.

And so, in **Revelation 3:14**, the Lord Jesus presents Himself to the church at Laodicea, a church which has been faithless and false in its witness, and He comes as ‘The Amen, the Faithful and True witness’ The One who is true to His own nature, who will never cease to provide for His people. He is faithful and true because He is the ‘Amen.’ As a title, ‘The Amen’, is equivalent to the title in our text, ‘The Truth’, because when Jesus says, ‘I AM the Truth’, it means that He cannot lie. He is true in all His words. He is true in all His actions.

All truth lies within the compass of that word. I think that this ought to be a source of great comfort to every child of God because it is the guarantee of the total reliability and faithfulness of everything He ever says or does.

When he makes an assertion, that assertion is absolutely dependable. When He makes a promise, you may rest all your weight on it, in the certain knowledge that it can never fail.

When He warns of judgment, depend upon it, that judgment will follow as surely as night follows day. And because He is ‘Truth’, He will never make terms with a lie.

I expect that it has occurred to you by now that, when we hear Jesus say, ‘I AM the truth’, we are, in fact, dealing with yet another assertion of His Deity. I say, ‘yet another’ because such declarations of Deity come at us from all directions if only we have eyes to see them.

For example, the Hebrew word for ‘Truth’ is yet another name for God Himself. It is the word ‘Emet’, and it consists of the First, the Middle and the Last letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Now in the first chapter of the Revelation, **Revelation 1:8**, we read, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’ In other words, I am the First, and I am the last.

I now turn to the last chapter, and in **Revelation 22:12**, we read, ‘Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense to repay everyone for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.’

And who is the speaker? He is the Lord Jesus Himself, and the last Book in the Bible, and the Bible itself, closes with this statement, ‘Surely I am coming soon. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus,’ **Revelation 22:20**.

In the light of all this evidence, it must be obvious that, because Jesus is the ‘Truth’, it is not enough simply to say that He is the greatest teacher the world has ever known, or that what He taught was true.

He does not say, ‘I know the truth’, or ‘I teach the truth’. Instead, He makes a claim for himself that no other teacher would dare to make. He says, ‘I AM the Truth’.

And any modern-day educator who dared to make such a claim would immediately be looked at as unbalanced. Indeed, no teacher of any worth would ever consider making such a claim, because it is a claim to deity.

After all, the wisest and greatest thinkers the world has ever known have confessed themselves merely to be seekers after truth, and have admitted that truth has evaded them.

The great Socrates said that he was aware of how little he understood. Sir Isaac Newton described himself as a child who had gathered a few pebbles on the shore of a great ocean. But Jesus was able to say, ‘If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples. And you will know the truth and the truth shall make you free,’ **John 8:37**.

Just consider what Jesus is actually saying here! The claim is stupendous. He says that ‘if we abide’, ‘meno’, remain, stay, in His word, that is, if we continue to be obedient to Him, we shall know the truth.

Our lives will be controlled and governed by truth, and there will follow an ever-deepening awareness of truth and an ever-increasing capacity for truth, and we shall be made free by the truth.

I come back to the same point, time and time again. I am compelled to say that I cannot imagine any teacher in history who would dare to make such a claim and expect to be treated seriously by normal, intelligent, balanced people. But Jesus says, 'I AM the truth', **John 14:6**. Do you wish to know truth? 'Then follow Me and stay with Me,' Jesus says.

I think that it is tragic that today, men and women, even members of the Lord's church, are coming under the influence of liberal theologians and their so-called new hermeneutics, teachers who appear to have little or no regard for the authority of the Word, or the Christ of the word for that matter.

It is sad to find them eager to spread their old, warmed-over critical theories among less mature members of the church. I know one man who told a group of young Christians, 'We cannot be sure that we have the truth, because we cannot know anything with certainty.'

Now, such a statement as that sounds very profound, wise and advanced to impressionable people. They think it is wonderful evidence of deep thinking and a beautiful demonstration of tolerance. But I do not believe I need to point out to you just how dangerous and destructive such teaching is.

If we accept the notion that we cannot be sure of anything, the gates are thrown wide open to allow anything and everything into Christianity. 'We cannot know. We cannot be sure that we have the truth; therefore, others may have the truth, and we don't know it!'

This is modern agnosticism, remember that the Greek word 'Agnostic' identifies one who does not know and is the exact equivalent of the Latin word 'Ignoramus'. This is the modern agnosticism which so often parades as Christian scholarship. It is the ignorance which pretends to be wisdom.

If you ever hear anyone say that we cannot be sure that we the truth, you ought to tell that person that he has a controversy with the Christ, who said, 'I AM the truth', and he who follows me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life. He who abides in me shall know the truth and the truth will make him free.'

Oh! That members of the Lord's church would steep themselves in the Word of Truth and the Truth Who is presented in the Word! I truly believe that the crying need of our age is for Christians who have taken hold of the Word and who have allowed the Word to take hold of them.

Men and women who are mastered by the truth, because they have been mastered by the Master Himself. If you seek the truth, look no further than the Word of God. Jesus is the 'Truth', 'Alethea', the embodiment of ultimate reality, **John 14:6**. When Jesus speaks of truth, it describes that which corresponds to reality, what is factual and absolute, not relative. How then is Jesus the truth?

He proclaims that truth is real and knowable, **John 8:32**. He proclaims that truth can set one free from the bondage of sin, **John 8:32-34**. His doctrine is the way to the truth that frees one from sin, **John 8:31-32 / John 8:34-36**. He faithfully proclaimed His Father's Word, which is truth, **John 17:14 / John 17:17**.

By abiding in Jesus' teachings, we can know the truth and the freedom it offers! Freedom from the bondage of sin becomes even more meaningful when we consider how Jesus is.

The very life of Jesus was a representation of the truth. He is Truth Incarnate, **John 5:32-33 / John 8:46 / John 1:17**. Let us always bear in mind that there is only one Truth. The Lord God to whom we can go through Jesus Christ, our Mediator, Saviour and Truth.

'I AM THE LIFE'

There is a very logical and natural progression in the text, for commencing with Jesus as the Way, we find that it is the way truth, which leads us to life. Jesus is the ‘Life’, ‘Zoe’, **John 14:6**, the source, no life apart from him, the sustainer, all life depends on Him for instruction.

Before we consider Jesus as the life, we ought to ask the question, what is Life? How should we define that word? I ask this because finding an adequate definition is not as easy as you might have imagined.

1. Don’t go to the poets, because they are no help!

John Dryden wrote, ‘When I consider life, ‘tis all a CHEAT.’ Robert Burns wrote, ‘O life, thou art A GALLING LOAD, along a rough and weary road, to wretches such as I’.

2. And don’t turn to the philosophers; otherwise, you will meet up with people like Kierkegaard, who wrote, ‘MY life is absolutely meaningless.’

And Frederic Nietzsche, Adolph Hitler’s favourite Philosopher, whose theories he followed in pursuit of a ‘Master-race’, with such devastating consequences for millions of men, women and children, actually said: ‘If you look into Life you look into suffering.’ And you may be interested to know that twelve years before he died, Nietzsche, Hitler’s favourite philosopher, was certified insane!

3. Don’t go to the playwrights either.

The most famous of them all. William Shakespeare wrote those oft-quoted words, which pessimistically declared that life is ‘a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.’

4. And if you turn to your dictionary, looking for a less emotional, more rational definition, you will still be disappointed.

What do you make of this? The Oxford Dictionary says that life is ‘the State of functional activity peculiar to organised matter, especially to the portion of it constituting an animal or plant, before death’.

The simple fact is that Poets, Philosophers, the Playwrights, and you could add Scientists to the list, are all at a loss to tell us much about life. Therefore, the definition for which we are looking must come from the realm of the spiritual.

In other words, the mystery of life is a puzzle for religions to solve. And for that reason, when Jesus says, ‘I AM...the life’, **John 14:6**, we should be ready to listen to what He has to say and to look at what He has to offer.

1. The scriptures reveal that Jesus was always concerned with ‘life’ and willing to talk about it.

All through the Gospel accounts to John, I say, more than twenty times, Jesus had something to say about life. And, indeed, if the number of times a subject is referred to in a book says anything about its importance, I can tell you that if you care to search John’s Gospel, you will find the word ‘life’ used at least thirty-seven times! And thirty-seven times in twenty-one chapters is very impressive, by any standard.

When the Lord used that word, He was not speaking about mere physical existence, or about meeting ordinary physical needs, but about real life, life in its fullness.

He was concerned about the quality of life, concerned that we should experience the life which God intends us to enjoy. That is why he said, ‘I have come that they might have life, abundant life!’ **John 10:10**.

The word which is here translated as ‘abundantly’ is a word which means ‘vehemently, passionately, ardently, life to the full’, ‘perissos’. And this is what the church, with its good news, is seeking to help people understand: to know Jesus Christ is to really live, to experience life at its richest and finest.

1. What gives Him the right to say, ‘I AM ...the life’?

Because, as we have already seen, and as John tells us in the very first chapter, ‘In Him was life, and the life was the light of men’, **John 1:4**. Jesus is able to say. ‘I AM the life’ because He possesses an independent and self-sustained life. And by that, I mean that Jesus has life in Himself because that is what it means when He says, ‘in him was life’, **John 1:4**.

In **Acts 17**, when Paul spoke to the distinguished members of the Areopagus, the council of wise men of Athens, he spoke to them about the One true God, **Acts 17:26-28**.

The point which Paul was making, in view of all the pagan altars and Temples he had seen as he walked through the Agora, the Market-place, was that the One True God, unlike the gods which they worshipped, did not need to be maintained and looked after and kept in good repair.

Paul says He, the True God, ‘is not served by men’s hands,’ **Acts 17:25**. And why not? ‘Because He made the world and everything in it,’ **Acts 17:24**. This means that whilst God is dependent on no one, our lives, yours and mine, are entirely dependent on Him. But, in contrast, Jesus was able to state, ‘As the Father has life in Himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in Himself,’ **John 6:26**.

What do you make of that claim? Is it not staggering? The only thing you can reasonably make of it is that the Lord Jesus claimed to share the nature of Deity, and, consequently, He possessed the attributes of Deity. And it is this fact that throws light on that statement in **John 1:4**.

2. Further, Jesus was able to ‘I AM...the life’, because His is an indestructible life, everlasting life.

We are not indestructible! I hardly need to remind you that there are many agencies or forces at work which are capable of bringing our physical life to an end. We could meet with violence in an increasingly violent society.

We could contract some ailment or disease which brings us to a premature death. And, even if we do not meet a premature end, and are allowed to enjoy a relatively untroubled life and live our allotted span, it comes to virtually the same thing; we shall still die.

As Shakespeare quaintly expressed it, ‘Golden lads and girls all must, like chimney-sweepers, come to dust!’ But nothing could touch the life of the Lord Jesus! Violence?

When the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, said, ‘Don’t you know that I have the power to release you or the power to condemn you?’ And Jesus said, ‘You could have no power over me at all unless it were given you from above’, **John 19:10-11**.

DEATH ITSELF!

Death is the consequence of sin, **Romans 6:23**; it is the legacy which sin has left the whole human race, **Romans 5:12**. But Jesus was sinless. He could throw out the challenge, which of you convicts me of sin? **John 8:46**.

This means that death had no claim on Him. He was not subject to death, as we are, and He did not have to die! **John 10:18**. And in all of human history, no one has ever dared to make such a claim! Even when the leader of some outlandish cult has claimed immortality for himself and persuaded his deluded, brainwashed followers that he could not die.

Time has rolled on and proved him to be a fraud. But not Jesus! In other words, He is the Creator and Sustainer of all life, **John 1:1-3** / **Colossians 2:15** / **Hebrews 1:2**. And that is why He can say, ‘I AM.....the life.’

3. He is the life, because, as the Word who existed in the beginning with God, He has independent and self-sustained life, **John 5:26-29**.

He is the life because His life is everlasting and indestructible. After surrendering, sacrificing, His life in order to 'pay the price of sin', He took it up again, because it was not possible for death to hold him, and He ever lives in the power of His resurrection, **Revelation 1:17**.

He is the life because as the author of life, He is able to give life to those who follow Him. In **John 6:21**, He makes yet another astounding claim. 'As the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will'.

This, then, is the Saviour whom we celebrate and serve today. The one who comes to our restless world, and says to men and women who find that their lives are unfulfilled and unsatisfying, **John 4:14**.

So, what is this life which is to be found in Jesus Christ and which Christians claim to experience? Do you want to know if it is possible? Does it exist? You may be sure of this: People certainly want it to exist! Because one thing is certain, we all long for life. And that is a fact!

The famous Poet John Keats expressed this very powerfully when he wrote to his beloved Fanny Brawne. 'I long to believe in immortality. If I am destined only to be happy with you here, how short is the longest life! I wish to believe in immortality.

I wish to live with you forever.' Keats could not believe that we can form friendships and love people, only to have those affections end at death. Hence, his longing for immortality.

And do you remember the Rich Young Ruler's question? **Matthew 19:16-21**. It is not surprising, therefore, that whenever Jesus spoke about life, people listened! There was an instant response because they wanted to hear about life.

Are we any different today? You know we are not! We are always ready to listen to anyone who is able to tell us something that will improve the quality of our lives. This is what makes millions for the advertisers on your T.V. and in your newspapers and magazines.

Do you think our fellow men ever feel tired of life the way it is? Do they feel the constant anxiety, worry and strain of modern living? Do they ever grow weary of the incessant demands that are made upon them? In fact, let's make that personal!

Do you ever wonder, when you are feeling low, what it all means and what purpose there is to it, and if it is really worthwhile? Well, that is the problem which Jesus offers to solve!

The burden He is prepared to ease! So, let's ask the question, when Jesus says, 'I AM the Life', and promises that 'He who follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life'.

Just what is it that He offers? How can we best describe the kind of life that you, if at this moment, you are not a follower of Jesus, may begin to experience if you let Him into your heart?

Well, the New Testament describes life under several different metaphors. For instance, in **John 8:12**, Jesus promises that if we follow him, we 'shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'

1. In **John 8:12**, life is likened to light, the light of life.

And, for that reason, followers of Jesus are described as 'the children of light,' **1 Peter 2:10**. Notice the mention of darkness and light. And the contrast. Jesus offers light.

2. Liberty.

He also offers the liberty of Life, **Isaiah 61:1-2**. Notice the statement 'To proclaim liberty to the captives', because when we come over to the New Testament, we discover that, in **Luke 4:16**, Jesus takes this prophecy and applies it to His own ministry.

Read **Luke 4**, and you see that he had just emerged from the wilderness of Judea and had gone to the river Jordan to be baptised by John the Baptizer. Then he had launched out on his own ministry.

Back home, in Nazareth, away to the north, the people had heard about this, and all kinds of stories were finding their way back to them, about the things which Jesus was doing and saying.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when He eventually returned to his home village, his arrival created something of a sensation. So much so that, when the Sabbath day came around, since they knew that he regularly attended the synagogue on that day, the synagogue in Nazareth was filled with curious and excited people.

The villagers of Nazareth were wondering why he was doing what he was doing, why he had not come home to carry on his normal life, like other young men who had gone out to John at the river. There is no doubt that they expected him to explain himself and perhaps see him do some wonderful thing.

So, when He stood up, indicating his willingness to read the scriptural appointed for the day, their excitement knew no bounds. The official in charge of the sacred scrolls handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, and when Jesus had found the place, he began to read this very scripture.

This is how He explained his conduct. ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... He has sent me... to proclaim liberty to the captives.’ ‘He has sent me to set people free.’” And in **John 8:36**, he makes this claim, ‘If the Son makes you free, you are truly free’. And so, Jesus, the way, brings us to light and to liberty.

3. Light, liberty and then life, the strongest metaphor of all, **John 11:25**.

I want you to think, very briefly, about these three metaphors, these descriptions of the Christian life.

1. Think about coming to Christ as coming to the light of Life, **Isaiah 61:1**.

Have you ever experienced real darkness? Oh! I am not talking about being out at night when the moon and the stars are obscured by clouds. I mean real darkness, the kind of darkness that you can almost feel! The coal miner knows what I am talking about!

I, too, have been down a coal mine, over one-thousand yards deep, I know what it is like to have the lights turned out! I give you my solemn word that it is an eerie and unpleasant sensation.

Or, let me ask you to use your imagination. Imagine that it is nighttime, in some tropical country, and you are alone in the heart of the jungle. You are, in fact, lost.

There is no moon, and no stars because no light is able to penetrate the dense canopy of the forest. The dense tropical growth and the massive trees tower above you, blotting out the sky. And so you stumble along, and the undergrowth trips you up.

The branches of the bushes whip across your face, and the thorns tear at your clothing and bite into your flesh as you stagger on through the darkness. Panic fills your mind. You experience an overwhelming sense of being closed in by the darkness.

And then, as dawn breaks and the first glimmer of light filters through the trees, you find a tree which you manage to climb in order to try to get your bearings. Out there, to your right, you catch sight of a distant mountain range. And to your left, the morning light is glinting on the ocean.

You learn the general lie of the land, and so, as the morning unfolds, you begin to move with greater certainty because you now know the direction you need to take.

Of course, you have not reached the end of your journey, but you are at the end of your wandering. The way ahead of you may still be long, but you have the peace of mind which comes from knowing that you are on the right course.

And why is this? Because light has broken, the dawn has come. Darkness has given way to light, and you have found the way home.

Now, becoming a Christian is something like that. Getting to Jesus is like that. It means that light has entered and driven out the darkness of your life, the confusion, the uncertainty, and you are on your way home, walking in the way.

2. Then, think about that second metaphor, liberty, **Isaiah 61:1**.

The New Testament teaches that, because Jesus is the life, coming to know Him as your Saviour is like passing from slavery to liberty. 'He breaks the power of cancelled sin; He sets the prisoner free,' **Isaiah 61:1**. The old hymn says, 'Have you ever been in prison, No! I am not asking if you have ever been to prison as an inmate.'

Have you ever visited a prison? You don't have to be a prisoner to appreciate what a miserable existence prison is for most of those confined there. I assure you that when I visited a prison for the first time, I found it to be probably the most depressing, claustrophobic experience I had ever known.

The oppressiveness of the atmosphere inside a prison is something which, once experienced, is never forgotten, no matter how many times one may visit. The first thing you notice has to be the constant clanging of steel doors and the rattle of keys.

The warder walks by your side. The steel door ahead of you is unlocked, and locked behind you. Somewhere else in the building, another door slams and echoes through the hollow-sounding building.

The door ahead of you is not unlocked until the one behind you has been secured, and so you are always enclosed between locked doors, always shut in; and thus, it continues until you eventually reach the cell of the poor soul you are visiting.

Can you imagine what it must be like for a man to be taken to such a place as a prisoner, and to have the cell door locked behind him? That is how the Bible describes the condition of men and women who are not yet reconciled to God through the Lord Jesus. They are prisoners. Prisoners of sin. Sin is slavery. Sin is bondage, sin is captivity, sin is imprisonment.

But Oh! The joy when the cell door is thrown open and the prisoner is led to the massive outer gate, and it is unlocked for him, and he finds himself outside! Imagine what it is like for one who has served a long sentence to stand outside the prison knowing that he is a Free Man! Life! Liberty!

3. And then there is what I have described as the strongest metaphor of all, life!

Because Jesus says, 'I AM the life,' **John 14:6**, we may have new life in Him, and becoming a Christian is a passing from death to life. Some years ago, a group of archaeologists were at work in the Valley of the Kings, in Egypt, where so many marvellous discoveries have been made.

The tragedy is that when many of them were found and opened, they were already empty because they had been plundered by grave robbers, probably centuries earlier, and many of the bodies of the Kings of Egypt had been removed.

But on the occasion about which I am speaking, the archaeologists discovered a tomb which had remained untouched for about three-thousand years, and inside they discovered a beautiful little coffin, the coffin of a child. Over the coffin, they found an inscription which read, 'Oh! My life! My love! My little one! Would God that I had died for thee!'

The archaeologists were so moved by this inscription that they removed their hats and stood bareheaded. And then they softly withdrew from the cool and darkness of the tomb, into the blinding heat and sunlight of the Valley of the Kings, and they sealed up the tomb again and quietly went away.

What they felt, we may feel, when we read **John 11**, which records the story of the death and burial of Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, and a dear friend of Jesus.

Jesus comes to the tomb, the entrance to which has been sealed by a huge stone. And He weeps! But then, he commands them to roll away the stone, and he calls out the name of the dead man, 'Lazarus! Come forth!' Or, as he would really say it in the Aramaic of that time, 'Lazarus! Here! Out'. And Lazarus rose from the dead and came out of the Tomb.

What must it have been like to have been there that day, when Jesus commanded death to yield to life, and to have seen the joy that lit up the faces of Martha and Mary and the looks of startled amazement on the faces of those who stood by!

There is something even more marvellous than that, and it is the glorious fact that, when we come to know Jesus as Saviour, it is nothing less than a passing from death to life. So, there we have just three metaphors, light, liberty and life.

This is what it means to find that Jesus is the life. I do not think that I overstate the situation when I say that out there is a world of darkness, of lost men and women.

Wherever you care to look today, at home or abroad, you see a world which has lost its way, and if Jesus were present right now, I am sure that he would describe our world in the very terms used so long ago, 'helpless and harassed, like sheep without a shepherd,' **Matthew 9:36**.

Speaking of shepherds, is there one world leader who makes you feel absolutely confident that he knows where he is going? The day I prepared these notes, the 'Daily Telegraph' published the result of a nationwide survey, i.e., conducted throughout the British Isles, seeking the public's view of Mr Major, our prime minister at the time.

Of those interviewed, seventy-seven per cent said that he is not effective. eighty-four percent said that he is unable to unite the nation. Eighty-five per cent said that he is not really in charge. And I suggest that he is not the only national leader of whom such things might be said. None of them is able to lead the way to the right.

Take that word 'prison'. I am not thinking about the places in which our lawbreakers are confined. There is another kind of imprisonment, and they are chains that cannot be seen. There are vast numbers of our fellow men who are the prisoners of life and soul-destroying habits.

Addicted to drugs, alcohol, and gambling and who are held in the grip of all kinds of fear. In fact, not to put too fine a point on it, but the Bible says that we are all the slaves of sin until we are set free by Jesus Christ.

Take the word 'death'. I know that there are people who cringe at the very mention of that word. They don't care to talk about it, and if there is anyone who feels that way, I am sorry, because I have to speak about it. And if it disturbs you, perhaps some good will come from it, if it causes you to face up to something which is vitally important.

I believe in life after death. But you need to know that when Jesus promised eternal life to those who follow him, He was thinking of more than just a life in heaven when you die. I've heard people say, 'they don't want pie in the sky when they die, they want pie now'.

The inference is that Christianity offers them pie in the sky, and people can get it for them now! But that is as far from the truth as one can get! The poor souls who are deceived by atheistic political philosophy don't get pie in the sky when they die, and they don't even get it now!

It is the Christian who has the blessings of both worlds, because when Jesus said, 'I have come that they might have life,' **John 10:10**. He was talking about this life and the life to come! On the other hand, there are men and women walking our streets at this moment who are already dead.

That is how Paul described them. 'Without God and without hope in the world', **Ephesians 2:12**, and he spoke of certain people who, looking for pleasure and fulfilment in all sorts of ways, are 'dead whilst they still live', **1 Timothy 5:6**.

The life which Jesus offers us is not just life after death, and that is comforting enough, to be sure. It is life now! You do not have to wait until this life draws to a close before you begin to experience eternal life, the life of the ages. Jesus wants us to live today. Now! This very moment!

Now, you may think that I am overdramatising it when I say that outside of Christ, the world is dead. And I know that there are many who are not Christians who seem to be nice people. Jesus Himself tells about one such person in the story of the Prodigal Son, in **Luke 15**.

You all know the story, and I have to tell you that, in my opinion, and I admit I may be wrong about this, of the two sons, the younger one was the more likeable fellow! A much more attractive person than his selfish, stay-at-home elder brother!

That young fellow was probably the sort who would not do anyone a bad turn, and if you had been able to get to know him, you may well have found yourself liking him, for all his obvious faults.

But wait a minute! That is not the whole story! Even if he was an appealing rascal, Jesus, who is telling the story, says that he was dead! He was lost! **Luke 15:24**. Those are the very words which the Lord puts into the mouth of the boy's father.

Now, when the young man left home, he did it because he thought he was going to live! For the first time, out from under the shadow of his father. He was going to enjoy freedom, liberty! And you know what happened to him in the far country, you know the depths to which he sank and the privation to which he was reduced, **Luke 15:14-16**.

And you know also that he eventually came to himself, **Luke 15:17**, which literally means that he regained his sanity, and he made up his mind to come home, hungry, ragged and dirty, and very much ashamed of himself. To say nothing of feeling sorry for himself.

But when he reached home, do you recall all that the father said? 'This is my son, who was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found,' **Luke 15:32**. Now that is what Jesus is able to do. He is able to give life because He Himself is the life.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus is able to give your life? To set you free so that you may enjoy life? To enlighten your way and show your life at its very best, beginning here and now?

Maybe someone will say, 'Well, if you had told me that thirty years ago, it would have been different, but I am too old to change now!' I heard that not very long ago! Let me remind you of three of the favourite words of Jesus.

They are the words least, last and lost. The least shall be the greatest in the Kingdom of God, **Matthew 5:19-20**. The last shall be first, **Matthew 20:16**. The lost may be found, **Luke 15**.

If these things are not true, the New Testament is a lie, and Jesus is a deceiver. If it is not true that men and women can change, and be changed, regardless of their age, and whatever their past history of failure and frustration.

I say if that is not true, then Christianity is a sham, and I, personally, have wasted many years of my life on a fantasy. But I know that what I am telling you is no myth, no fantasy, because I have seen the change that Jesus can make in men's lives.

Throughout the world, when prodigals have returned, men and women, they have received the ring, the robe and the shoes of life, liberty and service. And know that there are many alive today who are able to look back on their lives and see the changes that coming to Christ has made. He changes people! He changes lives.

I know that is true because I know what Jesus has done for me and what He continues to do for me. He has not finished yet, but we are getting there! And if you will commit your life to Him, you will discover what He can do. In some cases, the change is gradual, and in others, it comes quickly, and in a few, it is instantaneous.

But, surely and certainly, once you make a commitment to Jesus, the way, the truth and the life, you find that He lifts you from darkness to light. From the slavery of sin to the liberty of the children of God. From death to Life that is eternal.

And the greatest change is yet to come! Some of us are aware of getting older. Eyes are beginning to fail; Hearing is not as acute as it used to be. Joints are stiffening. We are feeling more aches and pains.

What is it, rheumatism? Arthritis? Faces are beginning to show the lines! But don't worry! You are going to be changed! **Philippians 3:21 / 1 John 3:2-3**. In a moment! No! Quicker even than that!

In the twinkling of an eye! **1 Corinthians 15:52**. John sets the tone of his entire Gospel for us as early as **John 1:4**. In His prayer Jesus reveals his own definition of life, **John 17:3**.

This theme continues right through the Gospel, we find that there are, no fewer than fifteen chapters in the Gospel according to John that, either in word or deed, connect Jesus with life. And then, in the penultimate passage in **John 20:30-31**, we find that definitive statement.

During his brief ministry, he travelled through Judea and Galilee. Just as when He met that woman by the well in Samaria, **John 4:1-42**. Jesus saw the unhappiness and tension in the strained and care-worn faces of the crowds who came to listen to him. He was deeply moved, **Matthew 9:35-38**. The word 'compassion' reveals that He was filled with emotion.

From that point onwards, we hear Him saying. 'I have come that they have life and have it more abundantly.' **John 10:10**, 'I am the bread of life, feed on me, and you will never hunger,' **John 6:35**.

'I am the water of life, drink of me, and you will never thirst,' **John 4:14**. 'I am the resurrection and the life, believe in Me, and you will never die!' **John 11:25-26**.

'He that hath the Son hath life he that obeys not the son shall not see life,' **John 3:36**. 'I am the good shepherd; and I give to my sheep who follow Me eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand,' **John 10:27-28 / Isaiah 38:16**.

Christ is indeed the manifestation of the life that was with the Father, **1 John 1:1-2**. He is just like the Father, the source of life, **John 5:25-26**. When those who are dead in sin hear, i.e. heed the voice of Jesus, they 'will love' i.e. find salvation, eternal life, **John 10:28 / John 3:16 / John 1:4**.

For the man born blind Jesus was his physical light, **John 9:25**, but also for us the spiritual life, **John 9:33**. He eventually comes to recognise the whole truth about Jesus and worships Him,' **John 9:38**. Jesus is the one who has come down from heaven to give life to the world, **John 6:33 / John 10:10**. The words were spoken by Peter, **John 6:68-69**, also on behalf of the other disciples and this should include us are indeed appropriate to Jesus.

'If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.' **John 14:7**

The word 'known', 'ginosko' in **John 14:7**, means to know by personal experience. They knew Jesus personally, but they didn't have full and accurate knowledge of His character and designs.

They had a wrong concept of His Messiahship and kingdom, and they refused to believe that He would have to die and come back again. They would know and understand these things after the resurrection, **Luke 24:45-47**.

'Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. **John 14:8-14**

Jesus talks with Philip, and Philip has been accused by some commentators of being very slow to reach spiritual maturity. He failed the test when the five-thousand were fed, and had sought assistance from Andrew when the Greeks asked to interview Jesus, **John 6:5-7**, and **John 12:21-22**, respectively.

However, I'm quite sure that all the disciples would have asked the same question if they had thought of it; he shows very little understanding of what Jesus had just said. When Philip asked, 'Lord show us the Father', **John 14:8**, Jesus declares the complete unity and relationship with the Father in the following verses.

Philip ought to have known that by seeing the Son, he had seen the Father, **John 14:9-10**, but he still needs further explanation of the point; he may even want to see a Theophany, a manifestation of deity. A visible form of God, not truly understanding that that was indeed what Jesus was, **Exodus 33:17-33 / Exodus 24:9-11**.

Despite being with Jesus and hearing Him teach for nearly three years, the apostles did not really know Jesus, who was deity incarnate, **Colossians 2:9 / Colossians 1:19**. All of God in Christ, He is deity incarnate, **2 Corinthians 4:4 / Colossians 1:15**.

The ikon, image of God. Jesus again explains the point. He seems disappointed that Philip didn't understand after the previous explanation. He stresses the closeness of the relationship between Himself and the Father, **John 14:9-10**. The mystery of Deity, everything as to character and nature, essential Deity is resident in Jesus. A deity that a man cannot see has been made possible by Jesus limiting himself, as the Son, not the Father.

As Deity, He and the Father are one, glorify Me with the glory I had, not an angel but Deity. Father and Son are accommodating terms to help us understand God.

Jesus cannot help what He is, in Him Deity dwells naturally, **Colossians 2:9**. We have Deity put in us, we are true ikons, we are His representatives, **Romans 8:9-11 / 1 Corinthians 3:16 / Galatians 4:6 / Ephesians 3:16**.

Notice the word, 'seen', **John 14:9**, this means perfect harmony, mirror image, see face to face. Delving into John's Gospel is like using a bottomless well with a bucket; the more you bring out, still there is more down there.

In **John 14:10**, Jesus stresses that the words He speaks are the Father's and He stresses that the two are one. Even the words Jesus speaks aren't His but the Father's, the work is the Father's, and the life is the Father's. He claims by His deeds to be God, His people hear His voice and obey Him, **John 10:6-17**.

If you don't believe that Jesus is God, you don't hear and obey Him. When Jesus had claimed this earlier, the Jews had tried to stone Him, **John 10:30-39**. All of Jesus is common with the Father; the miracles are proof of this.

If Jesus weren't from God, He couldn't come up with these impressive miracles, so He is from God. Coming from the Father, He must be totally honest, and He says the two are one, so we all can believe this fact, **John 14:10-11**.

Jesus doesn't ask for blind faith, because He has proved His trustworthiness and His power through His resurrection, **Romans 6:4**. Believe because of the 'works', 'erga', 'ergon'.

What to man is a miracle is to Jesus' normal activity; He never looks amazed when He does something, it's part of Him. He who made everything and sustains everything is our brother, **Hebrews 1:3**.

Again, in **John 14:12**, we find the words, 'very truly', and this is important; this isn't a promise to all believers. Jesus was speaking to the twelve who were to have special miraculous powers. Later, they were able to do the works that He was able to do, **Acts 2:43 / Acts 3:1-10**.

The term, 'greater things', **John 14:12**, isn't in type but quantity. Jesus raised Lazarus, **John 11:38-44**, but He will die again. We who proclaim the Gospel bring people to life forever through the Gospel, resurrected to eternal life, **Romans 6:3-5**.

Jesus discusses the power of the believers, the great things they are to do needn't be limited to miracles. If that were the case, the lack of these miracles today would imply that no Christians were around.

The believers who came after Jesus would have a far greater scope than Jesus did. He came to the Jews of Judea and Galilee, spending very little time in the surrounding areas. The apostles and others have travelled all over the world teaching as they go, **Luke 24:47 / Acts 1:8 / Acts 8:1**.

These things are greater than Jesus' with all else being equal, this promise cannot be for all believers. We again would find no believers if this were a sign of believers; the promise was made to the apostles for the work they were about to launch.

Jesus says in **John 14:13-14**, 'ask anything in my name.' They were to recognise the authority of Jesus; we can approach God not with demands but by recognising our dependence and relationship with Christ.

When we pray for the sick, we don't demand that they be returned to good health, but under the permissive will of God, we accept His decision, **1 John 5:14-15**.

JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY SPIRIT

“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day, you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them’.” **John 14:15-21**

In **John 14:15**, we find the fundamentals of Christian living. We have given ourselves to Christ; no longer do we seek for ourselves, all for Him. We need to seek out the will of God and put that straight into practice, rejecting the ideas and opinions of man that are in contradiction to the Word. Genuine love for Jesus must lead to willing obedience to His commands; the love of God demands obedience, **John 14:15**.

The Greek for 'another Counsellor', **John 14:16**, is 'allon Paraklator' and is derived from 'allos Parakletos'. The words refer specifically to another, 'allon', councillor, advocate, comforter or helper, with councillor being the favourite modern choice, is translated from 'Paraklator'.

The inference is that we will get another of the same sort as Jesus; we know that this was referring to the coming of the same sort as Jesus. We know that this was referring to the coming Holy Spirit, so we can safely gather that Jesus and the Spirit are the same; we have the Spirit of Jesus with us now.

The words, 'Spirit of truth', **John 14:17**, tell us He is a divine source who speaks through the apostles. The context indicates that this refers to the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, 'He dwells with you and will be in you', **John 14:17**.

But the principle holds good in other ways; Jesus' resurrection guarantees present spiritual life and future glory to every believer, **1 Peter 1:3-4**.

Jesus continues in **John 14:18**, saying that He will not leave us alone, as we will have this counsellor, but not Jesus in the flesh. The words, 'I will not leave you as orphans', **John 14:18**, 'orphanous', forlorn, fatherless, orphans, is the same word in **James 1:27**. They wouldn't be left as orphans, but He would come to them in the Person of the Holy Spirit.

The words, 'before long', **John 14:19**, means soon He would die and the world would see Him no more but they would see Him in resurrection appearances, **Acts 1:3**. Notice He says, 'because I live, 'present tense' you will live also, 'future tense', **John 14:19**.

In **John 14:20**, we find the words, 'on that day,' which means in the new dispensation, beginning with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the disciples will recognise and joyfully acknowledge the closeness of the relationship between the father and the Son. They will then also understand that this union is, in turn, the pattern for the relationship between Christ and His followers.

There's a great spirit of unity between God the Father, the Son and the Spirit, which is developed, in the words, 'You are in me as I am in you,' **John 14:20**. Love of the Father is proven by obedience to the Son and will result in love and a relationship being returned, **John 14:21 / Exodus 33:13 / Exodus 33:18**.

'Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. "You heard me say, 'I am going away, and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.' **John 14:22-28**

Jesus now talks with Judas, **John 14:22**. This is obviously not Judas Iscariot, who had previously left the group, going into the night, **John 13:30**. John here refers to Judas son of James, **Luke 6:16 / Acts 1:13**.

In both **Matthew 10:3**, and **Mark 10:18**, he is referred to as Thaddaeus, while Luke and John as well as Luke's account of the activity of the early church referred to him as Judas, Thaddaeus was his Surname.

In **John 14:22**, we find a very good question, one which could have serious implications for us if Judas' understanding had been correct. It seems as if Judas wants Jesus to perform some act so great that all would see it. Obviously, He has performed many miracles greater than the world had ever seen before and still some people would not believe Him, so even exposing Himself physically to the world had not helped.

He continues to expose himself spiritually each day through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Even after Jesus' resurrection, the apostles still clung to a materialistic view of His kingdom, **Acts 1:6**. Perhaps Judas thought of Jesus revealing Himself by some great miracle. A popular view was that the Messiah would suddenly drop from the sky!

Now it seems that the Lord has changed His plan; He is the Messiah, and He surely wants everybody to believe in Him. The point of His manifestation would be to prove that He is what He claims to be, but now He talks about revealing Himself only to the apostles.

It seems almost as if Jesus doesn't answer the question that Judas asks, but carries on in a very similar vein as He previously was, but on closer inspection, it can be seen that these two verses make up the answer.

He assures Judas that the Father will make a dwelling within each believer's heart, **John 14:23**. In that way, God will be revealed in each person accepting the truth. A very close relationship is indicated, and a good knowledge of one for the other is hinted at.

That relationship is available to all, and all can get a knowledge of the potential relationship by lifting up God's word and reading it. The way Jesus will manifest, disclose, and reveal Himself to the apostles is entirely spiritual.

It will be a manifestation to the one who 'loves', **John 14:24**, which means, keeps on loving Jesus and who consequently will 'keep' His word. With him, both Father and Son will, in the person of the Spirit, make their 'home', **Romans 8:9**, 'monen,' which is the same word used in **John 14:2**. As God dwelt with His people in the tabernacle, **Exodus 25:8**, Deity dwells with the obedient disciple, **1 Corinthians 3:16**.

Please note that **John 14:25-31** is promised for the apostles only, not for us today. In **John 14:25-26**, we see a specific promise to the apostles, not to all the disciples. All necessary for the citizens of the kingdom, all power in heaven and earth, **Matthew 28:19-20**.

The Holy Spirit will teach the apostles all things and will remind the apostles of everything Jesus has said to them, **John 14:26**. Many people today claim that these gifts are all supposed to be guided by the Spirit. Why different? If the inspirational ability were here today, then all would be the same?

The word 'peace', **John 14:27**, means a right relationship with God, an inward serenity that is the result of reconciliation to God, as opposed to disquiet, upset, apprehensive.

The word 'leave', **John 14:27**, is a word used for a legacy. His peace is not as the world gives.' The apostles weren't to be afraid or troubled, **John 14:27 / John 14:1**.

The word 'afraid' is a word used medically to describe palpitations of the heart. Jesus is saying, 'Peace is My parting gift to you, My own peace, such as the world cannot give. Set your troubled hearts at rest and banish your fears.'

He had told them often that He must go away and return, **John 14:2-3 / John 14:12 / John 14:18-19 / John 14:21 / John 14:23**. This should have made them rejoice, but it didn't because their thoughts were on themselves, not on Him, **John 14:28**. Jesus says, 'The Father is greater than I', **John 14:28**.

IF JESUS WERE GOD, WHY DID HE SAY, 'THE FATHER IS GREATER THAN HIM'?

Many Christians acknowledge that Jesus is God, but wrestle with the question, if Jesus was God, why did He say, 'the Father is greater than Him'? This question isn't a new question, but it's a question which is often thrown at Christians by other religious groups in an attempt to disprove the deity of Christ. Many people make the mistake of forgetting that Jesus was also human. Throughout His life, we see glimpses of both natures.

AS GOD

Jesus is worshipped. **Matthew 2:2 / Matthew 2:11 / Matthew 14:33 / Matthew 28:9**

Jesus is prayed to. **Acts 7:59 / 1 Corinthians 1:2**

Jesus was called God. **John 20:28 / Hebrews 1:8**

Jesus was called the Son of God. **Mark 1:1**

Jesus is sinless. **1 Peter 2:22 / Hebrews 4:15**

Jesus knew all things. **John 21:17**

Jesus gives eternal life. John 10:28 / John 17:2
 The fullness of deity dwells in Jesus. Colossians 2:9

AS A MAN

Jesus worshipped the Father. John 17
 Jesus prayed to the Father. John 17:1
 Jesus was called a man. Mark 15:39 / John 19:5
 Jesus was called the Son of Man. John 9:35-37
 Jesus was tempted. Matthew 4:1
 Jesus grew in wisdom. Luke 2:52
 Jesus died. Romans 5:8
 Jesus has a body of flesh and bones. Luke 24:39

Jesus was fully God but also fully man, **John 1:1-3 / John 1:14**. When He came to earth as man, He voluntarily chose to restrict some of His divine attributes, **Philippians 2:6-8**.

Paul tells us that Jesus ‘emptied Himself and humbled Himself.’ He emptied Himself so that He could serve, ‘He made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.’

When the Bible says, ‘that he emptied himself’, it doesn’t mean He became less than God; when He was on earth, it means He became more than God, in the sense that He was God, but now He was also a man.

He didn’t get rid of deity; he emptied deity into humanity. He could never stop being God because God is His nature. This is something the Jews certainly did understand, **John 8:58-59 / John 18:4-8**.

We must also remember that He voluntarily ‘humbled Himself’, **Philippians 2:8**, in other words, Jesus lived a life which was in complete submission to the Father, and so set us the supreme example of what sacrifice is all about. When we read of Jesus doing things that only God can do, and knowing things that only God can know, it’s because, at those moments, the Father was telling Him what to say, and showing Him what to do.

He submitted to the Father but still remained One with the Father, **Matthew 26:39 / Matthew 26:42 / John 5:30 / John 6:38 / John 8:28-29 / John 10:30 / John 12:49 / John 14:28 / John 14:31**.

So, what did Jesus mean when He said, ‘The Father is greater than I’? He’s saying that His Father was greater in the sense that His Father was in Heaven, while Jesus was made a little lower than the angels while He was in the flesh, **Hebrews 1:5 / Hebrews 2:9**.

His Father was greater in the sense that Jesus became man, **John 1:1-3 / John 1:14**, and humbled Himself when He became a man, **Philippians 2:8**. His Father was greater in the sense that His Father was responsible for making decisions, while Jesus submitted to His Father’s will, **Philippians 2:7-8 / Hebrews 2:9 / Hebrews 2:14**.

We must remember that when Jesus was a man, He still had authority. Jesus spoke as one with authority, **Matthew 7:29**, and had the authority to forgive sins, **Matthew 9:6**. A Roman centurion displayed his great faith by rightly believing in Jesus’ authority to command at a great distance for his servant to be healed, **Matthew 8:5-13**.

The wind and the waves obeyed Jesus’ commands, **Matthew 8:27**, which was actually a sign of His deity. The demons feared His authority as the Son of God, **Matthew 8:29**. Jesus even affirmed in several places that He was the one to whom all would answer as judge on the last day, **John 5:22 / Acts 10:42 / Acts 17:31**.

The Scriptures teach that Christ was given all authority in heaven and earth after His resurrection, **Matthew 28:19-20**. The Scripture also teach that one day, when Christ returns, He will surrender His authoritative role to the Father, **1 Corinthians 15:24-28**. We must note, however, that His surrendering of the kingdom authority doesn’t mean He forfeits His deity or His divine glory, **John 17:4-5**.

He will still be our brother, **Romans 8:17 / Hebrews 2:9-12**, and we will still reign with Him, **Revelation 3:21 / Revelation 22:5**. He will still be God our Lord and our Saviour, **John 20:28 / Titus 2:13**.

Maybe a couple of illustrations will help answer the question. The Bible teaches that a husband is greater in position and authority than his wife, **Genesis 3:16 / Ephesians 5:23 / 1 Peter 3:5-6**, but the husband is no different in nature and no better than his wife, **Genesis 1:27 / Genesis 2:24 / Ephesians 2:10 / Galatians 3:28**. They share the same nature, that is, they are both human beings, and they work together by love.

The Prime Minister has a greater position than I do and greater responsibility than I do and has greater authority than I do, **Matthew 22:21 / 1 Peter 2:13 / Romans 13:1-7**, but he is no different in nature than I am, he is no better than I am, **Isaiah 53:6 / Romans 3:23**. We share the same nature, that is, we're both human.

In the same manner, the Father had a greater position and greater authority than Jesus, while Jesus was a man, but the Father is no different in nature than Jesus; He was no better than Jesus.

They share the same nature, that is, they are both deity. God the Father was greater in authority, responsibility, and position, but not in nature. Jesus was still deity but a human too.

When Jesus said, 'The Father is greater than I', He was not denying that He was God; He was simply acknowledging the fact that He was also a man. Jesus is both God and man; He's the God-man. As a man, He was in a lesser position than the Father.

He was subject to the laws of God so that He might redeem those who were under law, **Galatians 4:4-5**. He had added to Himself humanity, **Colossians 2:9**, and He became a man to die for people, **John 3:16 / 1 Timothy 1:15**.

Some people will go to any length and grasp at any straw to try to prove that Christ wasn't God. The words 'The Father is greater than I' are used to support false doctrine, e.g. that Jesus wasn't deity.

This interpretation would flatly contradict the teaching of John's Gospel, **John 1:1-2 / John 1:14**. It also contradicts Jesus' own assertions, **John 8:59 / John 10:30**.

It likewise contradicts other New Testament teaching, **Colossians 2:9 / Colossians 1:19 / Titus 2:13**. In His humanity, Jesus accepted limitations and was subject to His Father, **John 14:29 / John 13:19 / John 16:4 / John 2:22**.

'I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe. I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me. "Come now; let us leave.'" **John 14:29-31**

Jesus tells them that He was going but would return beforehand, so that when it does happen, the disciples will believe, **John 14:29**. In **John 14:30-31**, we see the phrase, the 'ruler 'archon' of this world 'kosmos'', Satan.

Jesus knew that Judas, soldiers and members of the Sanhedrin were coming to arrest Him, **John 18:1-14 / Matthew 26:47-56 / Mark 14:43-52 / Luke 22:47-23:56**, but He says that 'the evil genius of this world is coming,' **John 14:30**. Judas and the mob were agents of Satan.

Jesus says, 'he has no power over Me' or 'nothing in common with Me' or 'no hold on Me', 'no claim on Me', **John 14:30**. Satan has a legitimate claim on every sinner, for 'the wages of sin is death', **Romans 6:23**. But Jesus was sinless, **1 Peter 2:22-24**, so His death couldn't be demanded by the evil one. Jesus died voluntarily, **John 10:17-18**. He says, Satan will come so that the world will learn that Jesus loves the Father and He does as the Father commanded Him, **John 14:31**. He went forth willingly to die.

Notice the words, 'come now, let us leave,' **John 14:31**. Some argue at length that this doesn't necessarily indicate that Jesus and the apostles did immediately leave.

They suggest that He remained in the Upper Room and spoke all that is recorded in **John 15-17**, then He left. **John 18:1** records their actual leaving. If the words, 'come now; let us leave,' were immediately followed by their departure, it is possible that they went first to the temple.

The words spoken in **John 15:1-11** were spoken as they went there, or on arrival, and the rest of **John 15**, also **John 16**, were spoken as they walked out of the city and toward Gethsemane.

The great prayer of **John 17** may have been offered on the slopes of the Mount of Olives immediately before they crossed the Kidron valley and entered the Garden of Gethsemane.

CHAPTER 15

INTRODUCTION

Jesus and His disciples had concluded the meeting in the upper room in Jerusalem, where they celebrated the Passover. Apparently, they had just left that event and were making their way eastward toward the garden of Gethsemane situated on the western slope of the Mount of Olives, **John 14:31** / **John 18:1**.

Undoubtedly, the disciples were exceedingly anxious, **John 14:1**, and perplexed as to what loomed ahead. Jesus now speaks to them about the vine.

THE GRAPEVINE

The grapevine is the symbol of Israel, as the rose is of England and the thistle of Scotland. It was very common in the early Christian days to have a vineyard on your property, and almost every village had a press. The use of the vine is very fitting because it was so common and well-known.

Vines grow very quickly under incorrect conditions. Planted deep, they give off one shoot, then lots of branches from that one shoot. If the plant isn't carefully tended, it will quickly run riot, producing lots of branches and useless wood, but no grapes.

It needs lots of cutting back; each branch needs tending, even each bunch of grapes needs individual care. It will only be productive if it is well-trained and strictly cut back; otherwise, it will return to a wild state, producing no fruit.

Jesus may have made this speech as He walked through a vineyard on the way to the garden of Gethsemane. Many grow in the area surrounding Jerusalem. He had just instituted the Lord's Supper, with wine a vital component in that feast. In **Jeremiah 2:21** and **Isaiah 5:1-7**, Israel is compared to a vine to demonstrate the vital teaching of Jesus.

As they left Jerusalem, they would have passed through the 'Beautiful Gate', **Acts 3:2** / **Acts 3:10**, on the east side of the city, which was decorated with a huge golden vine, with bunches of grapes made from Jewels and precious stones.

Then they would have walked by the vineyards on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, so either the vineyards or the gates could have sparked off this conversation.

Josephus, in describing Herod's Temple in Jesus' day, says the following.

'Under the crown—work was spread out a golden vine, with its branches hanging down from a great height, the largeness and the workmanship of which were an astonishing sight to the spectators'. Antiquities of the Jews, 5.5.4

WHY DID JESUS USE THIS METAPHOR?

There are a couple of ideas, some suggest because of the fruit of the vine used in the Last Supper. Others suggest that tendrils of the vine were an overhanging window in the Upper Room, some suggest that He could see vines on Mount of Olives, and He could see fires where dead branches were being burned, still others suggest that He was actually passing the temple and used the great golden vines on its gates as an example.

The truth is, we simply don't know because the Bible doesn't say. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action that it doesn't literally denote, in order to imply a resemblance, for example, 'he is a lion in battle'.

In Old Testament times, the vine was a symbol of God's nation, and often it shows Israel lacking in something, [Isaiah 5:1-7](#) / [Mark 12:1-10](#) / [Psalm 80:8-16](#) / [Isaiah 5:1-7](#) / [Jeremiah 2:21](#) / [Hosea 10:1](#). Under the Maccabees, 163-142 B.C. it was made a national symbol of Israel used on coins.

'I AM THE VINE'

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me, you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.'" John 15:1-8

'I AM'

There are sixteen signs recorded in John's gospel; eight are things which Jesus did, and eight are things which Jesus said. John is basically saying that the 'I AM' claims of Jesus are signs, selected from many other signs. And he says these signs are selected with a purpose in mind, and that purpose is that you believe that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, [John 20:30-31](#).

Here we find the last of Jesus' 'I AM' claims, [John 6:35](#) / [John 8:12](#) / [John 8:58](#) / [John 10:9](#) / [John 10:11](#) / [John 11:25](#) / [John 14:6](#) / [John 15:1](#). Each of His 'I AM' claims are claims that He is God, EGO EIMI, is the Greek equivalent of YHWH, [Exodus 3:13-14](#) / [John 5:18](#). He is Eternal, [Psalm 135:13](#), and self-existent, [Psalm 88:6-7](#). When we come to the 'I AM' claims of Jesus, we need to remember that Jesus was not giving Himself a Name or a title, but was asserting His Deity. In other words, every 'I AM' reveals some aspect of His nature and purpose.

THE CHARACTERS IN THE ILLUSTRATION

There are four characters in the Lord's illustration.

1. There is the 'vine,' [John 15:1](#)

The vine, [Ezekiel 15:1-6](#) / [Ezekiel 19:10-14](#), deals with the vine. The vine has only one purpose, and that's to bear fruit. Notice the gradual progression of the fruit in [John 15:1-6](#), it will bear fruit, more fruit, much fruit. The purpose of the vine was to produce fruit.

[Psalm 80:14-18](#) / [Jeremiah 2:12](#) / [Isaiah 5](#) / [Exodus 13](#) / [Hosea 10:1-15](#) all talk about the vine. Maybe the disciples remember what He said a couple of days before concerning the parable of the vineyard worker and owner, [Matthew 20:1-16](#).

I picture in my mind the Hebrew prophet Isaiah walking through the marketplace in Jerusalem. People are busy hawking their wares, vegetables and wool. As he walks along, he sees a vendor selling stringed instruments.

The prophet picks up an instrument and begins to chant a song for my 'well-beloved' concerning His vineyard. The LORD God Jehovah is the 'well-beloved', and His vineyard is the nation of Israel, [Isaiah 5:1-7](#).

Isaiah closes his song with a play on words. Israel is a degenerate vine. God looked for justice but found bloodshed. He looked for "righteousness", but He found 'a cry of distress.' The vineyard failed to produce righteousness. God chose the vine and planted it.

The Hebrew poet describes it this way, [Psalm 80:8-9](#). He concluded with a prayer, 'O God of hosts, turn again now, we beseech Thee, look down from heaven and see, and take care of this vine', [Psalm 80:14](#).

Moreover, the prophet Jeremiah picked up the same lament as Isaiah in [Jeremiah 2:21](#). The prophet Ezekiel reminds us that the vine is good for nothing except to bear fruit, [Ezekiel 15:1-6](#). The vine was a symbol of the spiritual relationship between God and Israel. The fruit of righteousness was to honour and glorify God.

The crooked, dwarf is worthless wood as fuel because it flames up like paper and is gone instantly. You could not use it to make furniture. It was too soft and not good for lumber. You cannot use it as a tent peg because it crumbles or flexes when you hit it.

It fulfils only one purpose by bearing rich, delicious fruit. Israel was a wild, rotten grape. Ezekiel tells us she was ripe for the great winepress of the wrath of God, [Ezekiel 15:1-6](#) / [Ezekiel 19:10-14](#).

THE TRUE VINE

Jesus and the eleven remaining disciples left Jerusalem and went down into the Kidron Valley and up the slope of the Mount of Olives to the Garden of Gethsemane.

As they walk along the trail, Jesus and the disciples pass through the vineyards that surround the city. Along the trail are gnarled grapevines that show the scars from recent pruning.

They can see in the distance 'the Temple at Jerusalem, above and around the gate, seventy cubits high, which led from the porch to the holy place, a richly carved vine was extended as a border and decoration.

The branches, tendrils, and leaves were of finest gold; the stalks of the bunches were of the length of the human form, and the bunches hanging upon them were of costly jewels.

This vine must have had an uncommon importance and a sacred meaning in the eyes of the Jews. With what majestic splendour must it likewise have appeared in the evening.'

Jesus picked up a cutting and turned to His disciples. 'You know how Israel is pictured as a vine which is to produce refreshing fruit? Well, she failed. I am the authentic Vine. I am the true and genuine Vine as opposed to a mere copy or symbol.

I am the fulfilment of all that this symbol suggests. I am the Vine, the true One.' Jesus is the giver of life, and the vine is the central component of the plant, giving food and water to the branches.

The true Vine is Jesus, who is the source of life for the branches. It provides the water and nutrients by which the grapes are produced. Without the vine, no fruit could ever result. Branches are utterly dependent upon the vine.

John 15 uses the word 'remain', which is 'meno' and means to remain, to live. It shouldn't be an effort to stay where we are. If we stay in Christ, we should naturally grow, **Galatians 5:22-23**. This is how we glorify God. Without Christ, of course, there is no spiritual life or hope of eternal reward, **John 14:6** / **Acts 4:11-12**.

Interestingly, Christ designates Himself as the 'true' vine. The Greek term denotes that which is genuine; the word stands in contrast to that which is fictitious, counterfeit, imaginary, simulated or pretentious.

Inasmuch as the Israelite nation was portrayed on occasion as a 'vine' by the Old Testament prophets, **Isaiah 5:1-7** / **Matthew 21:33-44**, one can scarcely avoid thinking that this is a rebuke aimed at a considerable segment of the Hebrew family; the nation largely had failed in its mission and was on the precipice of murdering its Messiah, **John 10:7-8**.

The word 'true' is also used for that which is the ultimate realisation. Jesus is the fullest realisation of the hope of Israel, of her expectations, of what God intended her to be.

Israel, as a vine, never achieved its goal. She was a failure. However, the Lord Jesus Christ Who came as the True Vine, accomplished all that God intended His Messiah to do.

The branches are totally dependent on the vine; God is the gardener. Just as branches depend wholly on the main stem for life, so vital union must be maintained between the disciples and the Lord. This is essential to spiritual life and growth.

Jesus drew a sharp contrast between the degenerate vine of Israel and Himself. He transferred the privileges and responsibilities from the Hebrew people to Himself.

2. There is also the 'gardener,' **John 15:1**.

This term is rather obscure in our modern culture. 'Husbandman' KJV does not signify a 'husband,' but rather a tiller of the ground, a vinedresser, or, in our vernacular, a farmer. He is the one in charge of the vines and to whom ultimate accountability is to be rendered.

He does everything within his power to see that the plant bears fruit. If it does not, the fault is not his. Jesus identifies the 'gardener' as 'my Father,' i.e., God, the Father.

We who name the name of Jesus Christ are God's great vineyard. God expects us to produce His fruit in His vineyard, **John 15:2**. Jesus describes two kinds of branches, one is fruitless, so it's taken away, another bears fruit, so it's pruned that it might produce more fruit. This is an exact parallel to the disciple's relationship with Jesus. If the vine is to produce good fruit, the branches need to be cared for by the gardener.

Just as the viticulturist must cleanse the vine, our heavenly Father must cleanse us so we will bear more fruit. He finds a branch that is producing fruit, and He begins to cut it back so it will bear more of the likeness of Christ.

His goal is to cleanse the branches that remain in order to produce fruitfulness. The whole emphasis is 'fruit,' 'more fruit,' 'much fruit' again 'much fruit.' He won't stop until He sees fruit!

The purpose of the vine is to bring forth fruit, [John 15:2](#). The whole emphasis of the allegory of the vine is fruit-bearing. God expected Israel to produce luscious, beautiful, rich, choice grapes of righteousness.

She produced sour, rotten, stinking, tasteless grapes. God was looking for justice and righteousness; instead, he found oppression, cruelty, and exploitation of men.

Jesus said the purpose of the vine was ‘that it may keep on bearing more and more fruit.’ The vine has only one purpose: to bear fruit, [Ezekiel 15:1-3](#), the vine bearing no fruit is useless.

We produce fruit naturally; it’s not forced. A healthy tree will produce fruit. Notice the spiritual growth and its progression in [John 15:2](#) / [John 15:5](#), ‘bear fruit’, ‘bear more fruit’, ‘bear much fruit’.

It’s wrong to think that by ‘bearing fruit’ Jesus is referring to disciples making other disciples. He’s talking about individual spiritual growth, [Galatians 5:22-23](#).

The fruit of the vine will be the natural outflow of the life of the vine. Jesus is the Vine. When we are united with Him, we are identified with Him. We produce His wine. We reproduce Christ. He works in us what He produces.

God expects the fruit of the Holy Spirit to be produced in our lives. Only Jesus living in us can produce the fruit of the Spirit. God expects to see a likeness to Jesus Christ. The fruit is Christ-likeness. The fruit is the righteousness of God in the heart. It is the likeness of Christ.

To produce fruit, we must stay in the vine; to stay in the vine, we must produce fruit. Thus, the other factor, the gardener, must be allowed to be active in our lives. He will ensure that we are in the best condition to produce the best fruit and receive the best care.

God cuts away the deadwood, diseased and rotten portion of our lives. Sometimes we feel that His methods seem cruel. He does it so we will produce the righteousness of Jesus.

I have often observed that from those who have endured intense suffering there comes forth the radiant beauty of the Lord Jesus. This pruning process is a cleansing process.

He will do whatever cleansing is necessary to produce His kind of fruit, [John 15:8](#). Our heavenly Father finds a branch that is beginning to bear fruit, beginning to produce the likeness of Christ, and He cuts it back, trims offshoots, so we will bear more fruit.

The Father employs the circumstances and situations in our lives to make us heed and hear His Word, [John 15:3](#). He uses the Scriptures to confront our carnality and selfishness.

The word ‘clean’, ‘prunes’ and ‘cleans’ is the same word in Greek. Slowly and surely, God’s Word is at work in our hearts, pruning and cleansing and causing us to bear fruit. The Father’s pruning knife cuts off the sucker shoots of our old life within us so that we become more Christ-like.

Those that produce fruit are carefully trimmed to produce even more. God always demands the very best, and He trains us until we are in a state that allows us to produce the best we can, and so, we receive pressure on us to do better all the time.

3. The ‘branches’ are identified explicitly as the Lord’s ‘disciples,’ [John 15:8](#).

How can anyone possibly contend that Christ is the vine, and various denominational churches are the branches?

4. Finally, there is that ambiguous ‘they,’ to which reference is made in [John 15:6](#).

These will be responsible for gathering the withered/pruned branches and committing them to fire for burning.

One might surmise that these individuals correspond to the ‘reapers’ mentioned in the parable of the tares, [Matthew 13:24-30](#), identified later as the Lord’s ‘angels’, [John 15:39](#). They will ‘gather out’ of God’s kingdom those who cause others to stumble, and who themselves practise iniquity, [John 15:41](#).

John 15:1-3 relates to our position in the Vine, and John 15:4-8 speaks of our practice as branches in the Vine. Jesus looks for His own life reproduced in us. He wants to reproduce the life of the Vine in the branches.

He tells us the secret in John 15:4-5. The single most important thing in your life is an intimate, abiding love relationship with Jesus Christ. This is our responsibility in our position in Christ.

Notice the words, ‘You in Me, and I in you,’ John 15:5. That was the kind of life Jesus had with the Father while He was here on the earth. It is an intimate love relationship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit who lives within us.

In John 15:4-7, we see the verb ‘remain’ which occurs seven times; the only difference between the branch broken off and the branch retained is that one bears fruit and the other doesn’t. Each begins as a branch in the vine, John 15:2, literally says, ‘every branch in me that bears no fruit’.

The Apostle Paul used the expression ‘in’ Christ to communicate this same vital connection that exists between Christ and the believer, Galatians 3:26-27 / Ephesians 1:5 / Ephesians 2:10 / 2 Corinthians 5:17. The basic relationship is already established by the coming of the Holy Spirit into the believer’s life.

Two things stand out in John 15:4-5. There is an activity that is to be done, and there is a passivity that is to be acknowledged. We are to remain in Christ. That is active, something we do. We are also to let Him remain in us, which is passive.

It is something we allow Him to do in us. Both of these relationships are absolutely essential if we are to live the Christian life. The ‘fruit’ God is looking for in the Christian is the likeness of Jesus. It is the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ in Galatians 5:22-23. This is the proof of discipleship.

Jesus said, ‘remain’ in Me,’ John 15:4-5. To ‘remain’ means ‘to remain in union, maintain a living communion, to maintain unbroken fellowship with another’. This is our responsibility in Christ. John uses the word ‘remain’ over fifty times in his writings and eleven times in John 15.

When I am abiding, I am believing, reckoning on and persevering. The ‘filling of the Spirit’ and the ‘abiding’ are one and the same. ‘Walking in the Spirit’ keeps us abiding in Christ, Galatians 5:16.

Noting the condition by which union with Christ is maintained, ‘remain in me’, John 15:4. ‘Remain in me’, ‘Remain united to me’, these all speak of the responsibility for maintaining the relationship as the disciples. The Lord will never randomly end it; He will only cut off the one who ‘doesn’t remain’ in Him.

In John 15:5-8, we see the idea of the vine is taken further, and the believers are confirmed as the branches. We are totally useless without Jesus. He is the creator of all life.

As Christians, we are totally dependent on Him for our spiritual well-being. If our relationship with Him is good, so is our spiritual state. To ever accomplish anything in Christ, we must remain as a part of the vine.

The vine feeds the branches, the branches are dependent on the vine, and the horror of being found lacking is revealed. If we fail each year to produce fruit, we are cut off and thrown into the fire. There we die a terrible death separated from the Father and the Son; the promise made in verse seven is made to the disciples only.

A vine branch is lifeless and useless unless it remains attached to the vine, John 15:6-7. It can produce grapes only as it remains attached. The moment it is severed, it begins to die and becomes fruitless. Believers in Christ can produce the fruit of the Spirit only as they remain attached to Jesus and draw their life in the Spirit from Him. The Apostle Paul expressed the same truth in Galatians 2:20.

John 15:6 gives us the consequences of not abiding in the vine. The branch finally burned was formerly ‘in him’ exactly as was the fruit-bearing branch. We have to remember that a person may be ‘in Christ’ but may be removed by the Lord, Romans 11:11 / Galatians 5:4 / 2 Peter 2:21-22.

In John 15:7-8, we have the promise of prayer. The condition of the promise is that we remain and that we will produce His fruit. The sap, nutrients, and energy must come from Him, Philippians 4:13.

We must bear fruit, not so the vine can benefit, but so the whole of man can. The branches merely bear the fruit for the benefit of others, so that they can give the glory to the Father. This fruit will be displayed, and those displaying fruit will be recognised as Christians, ‘they will know you are Christians by your love’, [John 13:35](#).

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father, I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.’ John 15:9-17

Jesus now introduces the topic of love, and we are assured of all love from the Son and encouraged to remain in the love of Jesus, not move out of it. Love is based on obedience to commands, man’s obedience to God’s commands. Loving fellow disciples in the Lord’s commandment isn’t an optional extra to discipleship.

Notice that we remain in His love by keeping his commandments, [John 15:10](#). Our relationship to Him is maintained by obedience, ‘remain in my ‘Jesus’, ‘love’, [John 15:9](#).

His love for the Father was shown by His total obedience to the Father’s will. If we remain in His love, we too will strive to obey the Father in all things, [John 14:15](#) / [1 John 5:3](#).

God loves the Son, the Son loves us, we ought to love back in return, that love is displayed by obedience. What is the one great command we need to obey? Love one another.

[John 15:15-16](#) refers only to the apostles. They had special guidance from the Holy Spirit, [John 14:26](#) / [John 15:26](#) / [John 16:13](#). They were called to the special ministry of apostleship, [John 15:16](#) / [Luke 6:13](#).

Previously He had likened their relationship to Him as ‘doulos’ which is plural for slaves, to a ‘kurios,’ [John 13:16](#). Now He calls them ‘friends’, ‘philous’, ‘loved or dear ones’, [John 15:15](#).

He ‘chose and appointed’ them that they should go, ‘keep on going’, and bear fruit, keep on bearing and that their fruit should ‘remain’, ‘keep on remaining’, [John 15:16](#).

The friends are friends of Jesus, those He lays His life down for, [John 15:13](#). The true relationship with Christ is as one’s who are friends rather than a master, slave type relationship.

The relationship clearly has a senior partner, Jesus, but that is played down as a more intimate relationship develops. Jesus specifically designates the twelve as the bearers of fruit; this must be for us as well, as we read in other places about the need for all believers to display the fruit of the Spirit, [Galatians 5:22-23](#).

It is easy to obey Him when our heart is moved by His love, [John 15:17](#). When we do not obey Him, it is evident we do not love Him. When we obey Him, our love grows deeper and deeper. We become something beautiful. The more you love Him, the more you want to remain in Him. The more you remain, the more you will obey.

When we give Christ the desires of our heart then we are touched and controlled by His love. We adjust our lives to His will when we come to Him in prayer. There is a clear demonstration of discipleship in [John 15:8](#). God will be glorified in Christ-likeness. There will be a deeper experience in Christ’s love.

Each time the promise, ‘then the Father will give you anything you ask in my name’, [John 15:16](#), is used, Jesus uses it while addressing only the twelve, which tells us that this is a promise made to them and for them.

If love isn’t present, we don’t have the Lord’s church, [John 15:17](#). No love, no church, no Christianity. If all Christians ask and receive, the entire world would be Christian, and we would all be very rich; heaven would be right here on earth.

THE WORLD HATES THE DISCIPLES

‘If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfil what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’ John 15:18-25

It’s here we see the relevance of the command to ‘love one another’, [John 15:17](#). That very night, in the Upper room, they had quarrelled about who was greatest, [Luke 22:24](#) / [John 13:12-15](#). Jesus tells them that persecution is inevitable to discipleship, [John 15:20](#), ‘if they persecute me, they will persecute you’.

‘If the world hates you,’ isn’t meant to suggest that it might or might not. [John 15:19](#) says that because they weren’t of the world, but belonged to Christ, the world did hate them.

They were ‘not of the world’, ‘kosmos’, Satan’s domain, which is human society organising itself without God, society in alienation from and in opposition to God, just as their Master wasn’t ‘of the world’.

The world had hated Him; it would also hate them, [1 John 2:15-17](#). The ‘kosmos’ will persecute the apostles because of their loyalty to their Master, ‘on my account’ the KJV says, ‘for my name’s sake’.

They do not know Him who sent Jesus; they were ignorant of God. Yet those who rejected and crucified Jesus were mostly religious people, the Jewish Sanhedrin, Pharisees, etc.

In [John 15:24](#), Jesus isn’t saying that the Jews would have been sinless if they hadn’t killed Jesus; He is referring to their rejection of Him. He had proved by words and works to be the son of God, yet they had rejected Him, so ‘they have no excuse for their sin’, [John 15:22](#) / [Romans 1:19-20](#).

When a sick man refuses the certain cure prescribed by a doctor and dies, he has only himself to blame. The Jews, wilfully rejecting the divine remedy for sin, were self-condemned; this fulfilled the prediction, ‘They hated me without a cause’, [Psalm 35:19](#) / [Psalm 69:5](#).

The same conversation continues, because the world has hated and persecuted Jesus, it will hate and persecute the followers of Him as well. We are in the world but not of it.

We have salvation now, but still look forward to it in eternity. We live in God’s world, created by Jesus and now dominated by sin. The result is that we are often in a state of confusion, but one great and eternal truth is ever-present: Christ died for our sins. We can always rely on that.

Those around Jesus, those who don’t believe and are now guilty of persecuting him, have no excuse. They have had the chance to believe, they have seen the miracles and heard the truth.

The fact that they chose to hate the Son means that they stand guilty for hating the Father as well. This explains why this sorry state of affairs came about; it was long since foretold.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

‘When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.’ John 15:26-27

In [John 15:26-16:15](#), we read about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and please remember Jesus is speaking to the eleven apostles; it's wrong to take all He says to them and to apply it to all disciples, e.g. [John 14:26](#).

In [John 15:26-27](#), we see the testimony of the Holy Spirit. The word 'Counsellor' is 'Parakletos' and it means, 'called to one's side,' this is used in law courts for defence counsel or one who pleaded another cause, some versions use the words, 'helper', 'comforter', 'advocate'.

Notice in [John 15:26](#) that Jesus would send the Holy Spirit, but in [John 14:26](#), it says that the Father would send, which indicates the unity of the Father and the Son.

He is 'the Spirit of truth,' so called because He would guide the apostles into all the truth, [John 16:13](#). Notice also the words, 'bear witness', 'witnesses,' [John 15:26-27](#) / [Acts 1:8](#) / [Acts 2:32](#).

The Counsellor is promised to the disciples, He came on the day of Pentecost as the men sat together, [Acts 2:1-4](#). He comes to each person today as they are immersed into the Christ, [Acts 2:38-39](#), and His church, the body of Christ, and they gain a young shoot needing to be cared for on that great vine, the counsellor gives comfort to those in need. The chapter closes with a command and exhortation from the Lord to all to be testifiers of the great truth they have experienced; those with the knowledge need to testify.

CHAPTER 16

INTRODUCTION

'All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when their time comes, you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.' [John 16:1-15](#)

From [John 15:26-16:15](#), we read about the ministry of the Holy Spirit and please remember Jesus is speaking to the eleven apostles, it's wrong to take all He says to them and to apply it to all disciples, e.g. [John 14:26](#).

The end is now drawing close for the Lord and He is very aware that He has little time before being separated from the apostles and so, Jesus takes some time to encourage and teach His disciples before the separation.

In [John 16:1-4](#), Jesus refers to the thing He said in the previous chapter, warning that the world will hate the ones who love the Lord, [John 15:18-25](#). As someone once said, 'forewarned is forearmed.'

He repeats frequent warnings of coming persecution. The word for 'fall away,' [John 16:1](#), is the same word from which we get the word 'scandal,' and the same word is used in [1 Corinthians 1:23](#), a stumbling block.

Jesus holds nothing from them. He seems concerned that the apostles are fully aware of the future and the horrors which will befall them, so that they aren't discouraged when all doesn't go their way.

He tells the disciples they will be ‘put you out of their synagogues,’ **John 16:2**, which means excommunication. ‘The time is coming when a man who kills you will think he is thereby serving God’, **John 16:2 / Acts 23:1 / Acts 26:9**. He prophecies about people trying even to kill them, **John 16:2**, the most well-known of whom was Saul, **Acts 9:1-2**, later to become the apostle Paul. The reason why the world at large rejected Jesus was never a secret; the people didn’t know God, and thus couldn’t recognise his Son, **John 16:3**. They could have recognised Him, but refused. As one rejects the Son, he also rejects the Father, so sadly, many people missed the truth, even though it was so very close. This statement seems in the light of Peter asking ‘Lord, where are you going’, just a few hours earlier in **John 13:36**, and Thomas making a similar mention in **John 14:5**.

He repeats the reason why men will persecute them because they were ignorant of both the Father and Jesus, **John 16:3**. Then He repeats His reason for warning them of coming trials, that ‘you may remember that I forewarned you’, **John 16:4**.

However, at the time these questions were asked, the men had a very superficial understanding of Jesus’ destination, they were of the impression that He was going somewhere else on earth, **John 16:5-6**. Or if they did understand, they may have been too distressed at the time to understand an answer.

Their grief had an element of selfishness; they were thinking more about themselves than about Him, ‘none of you asks me, where are you going?’ **John 16:5**. Previously, they had asked questions about His departure, **John 13:36 / John 14:5**.

He had then said that He was returning to the Father and would send another Helper, **John 14:16-18**. Now the truth has been explained, the question needs to be asked again.

The mention of Jesus’ imminent departure had brought sorrow to the apostles as they considered their loss, **John 16:6**, rather than the joy that comes from an understanding of the world’s gain.

The words, ‘these things’, **John 16:6**, refer to the predictions of His own departure and for them coming persecution, which had deeply affected them, ‘sorrow filled your hearts’, **John 16:6**.

In **John 16:7-15**, we read about the coming of the Spirit. Jesus says in **John 16:7**, that ‘it is to your advantage,’ or ‘good for you’, this is the word, ‘sumphero,’ also used in **John 11:50**. It’s an ‘expedient’, meaning profitable, good for you, His departure was necessary in order that the Holy Spirit might come.

Jesus’ physical presence imposed limitations, e.g. He could only be in one place at a time, but in the coming of the ‘Parakletos’, Christ will be able, as Spirit with Spirit, to hold with His people everywhere a communion as close as once He did with His immediate disciples, **John 14:18 / Romans 8:9-11 / Galatians 4:16**.

Jesus now goes on to explain the benefits they will enjoy on His departure, **John 16:7**. If He were to stay here, the Spirit would not be sent, but Jesus Himself sent the Spirit, which enabled them to do greater works, gave greater knowledge and drew them all closer together in their Spirit, **John 14:12-28**. It also allowed Jesus to prepare a place for them, **John 14:3**.

The Holy Spirit will convict the world of guilt in three ways. 1. Regarding sin. 2. Regarding righteousness. 3.

Regarding judgement. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to ‘convince the world’, **John 16:8**. This is the word, ‘elegcho,’ which is also used in **Luke 3:19**. It means to ‘reprove’, **John 3:20**, ‘expose’, **John 5:11**. He will be used to prove the world wrong.

1. Sin.

As the word spreads under the guidance of the apostles and later the believers. The Spirit assists people to realise the depth of sin in their lives, **1 John 1:8-10**. The result of the realisation is repentance and acceptance of the whole truth, as seen in **Acts 2**, when men called out, ‘brothers, what shall we do?’ **Acts 2:37**.

When the Holy Spirit convicts people of their sinfulness, **Romans 3:10 / Romans 3:23**, the sinner must do their part in displaying godly sorrow, **2 Corinthians 7:10**, where they don’t want to hurt God anymore by sinning against Him.

Notice the particular sin which Jesus is speaking about in **John 16:8**. It's the sin of not believing who He is, **John 3:16-19**. If Jesus is the Son of God, then the greatest sin in the world is to reject Him, **Mark 16:16**.

2. Righteousness.

If the Holy Spirit didn't convict people of sin, then people can't be convicted of righteousness. The world has its own standards about what is right and wrong, but the problem is that we have our own personal standards. We all have different standards of what is right or wrong, but God has one standard, and that standard is what we all should be striving for.

The word 'world', **John 16:8**, represents the Jews who were about to put Jesus to death. They believed He ought to die, that He was an evildoer and that killing Him and His followers was the right thing to do; we know the opposite was true.

The righteousness that was the Christ's, was thoroughly stamped on the world the day that Jesus was resurrected, **Romans 3:21-23**. This victory of the one the world labelled unrighteous would convict the world with respect to true righteousness.

The return of Jesus to the Father was the ultimate proof that He is the perfect pattern or standard of righteousness. When people look at Jesus, they see what God's standard of holiness is. And when we accept that no one has lived up to the standard that Jesus set, **Romans 3:21-23**, the Holy Spirit convicts us that we all have fallen short of His standard.

The Holy Spirit says that all the good things that we do, are just like filthy rags to God, **Isaiah 64:6**. In other words, the work of the Spirit convicts us that our righteousness is totally insufficient in God's eyes, **1 John 1:9**. The Holy Spirit helps us turn away from our sins and turn towards God so that we can learn to live right.

But we really need to stop measuring our own goodness against other people's goodness. The Holy Spirit can only convict us of our shortcomings when we start measuring our own goodness with God's goodness.

3. Judgement.

The world judged the Son guilty and condemned; by doing this, the world became guilty of condemning the Father, which is the same as condemning itself. Thus, by staying with the advice given by the devil, one stands convicted.

And so, the Holy Spirit is going to remind the world that because they condemned the only righteous man who has ever lived, they were going to be judged too.

He will convince the world of divine judgement by showing that the ruler of this world stands condemned. Who is the ruler of this world? It's the devil himself, **2 Corinthians 4:4**, and he is used here because he is the ultimate example of evil, the ultimate example of someone rejecting the Father.

He will convince them of divine judgement by showing that the Prince of this world stands condemned. In the preaching of the Word, the Holy Spirit is counsel for the prosecution! **Acts 2:37 / Acts 5:33 / Acts 7:54 / Ephesians 5:17**.

The Holy Spirit will convict the world that the devil has already been judged, but everyone else who rejects Jesus as their Saviour will be judged too, **Matthew 7:21-23**. The Holy Spirit, through His Word, is the One who judges our thoughts and attitude, not me, **Hebrews 4:12-13**.

He wants us to feel convicted because He knows that on judgment day, we too, like the rest of the world, will have to give an account of ourselves. He wants to convict us of our sinfulness and unrighteousness like He convicted Isaiah, **Isaiah 6:5**.

He wants to convict you of your sinfulness and unrighteousness like He convicted Peter, **Luke 5:8**. We've got to see ourselves as we really are; we've got to measure ourselves against God's standards, not our own.

We have no power to convict anyone of anything, and so we must learn to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to do the convicting, 1 Corinthians 2:4. Only the power of the Holy Spirit working in human hearts can bring about conviction of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness, and judgment.

In John 16:12-15, Jesus seems weighed down by the burden of all that He wants to tell them. The impression given is that this is a very emotional time for the Lord, and He may have been battling to keep back the tears at this point. He can't tell all He wants to, because the disciples would not be able to understand it or accept it all in one moment; the volume of information is just too big, John 16:12.

We see that Jesus had a teaching which they were then unable to 'bear', and in John 16:13 we see 'the Spirit of truth', bringing the divine revelation, 1 Corinthians 2:13.

The Spirit would be with the apostles; they didn't need all knowledge, but they needed all knowledge about Jesus and His mission on earth. And so, the truth in its fullness was made known to the apostles, John 16:13.

The Spirit would guide the apostles 'into all the truth,' John 16:13. This is a promise to the apostles, not disciples generally, John 14:26 / John 15:27 / Acts 2:4. We see the Spirit's ministry is 'Christocentric'. Through the preaching of the apostles, He will draw attention, not to Himself, but to the Lord Jesus: 'He will glorify me,' John 16:14.

The words, 'it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you', John 16:14, refer to the revealing to the apostles of all 'the truth', John 16:13. The words, 'all that the Father has is mine', or 'belongs to me', John 16:15, only makes sense if Jesus has Deity. If not, He was either out of His mind or the most arrogant deceiver ever known. Jesus and the Father, as well as the Spirit, make up God and as a result, all three have all and equal knowledge. This knowledge will now be shared with the apostles, John 16:15.

THE DISCIPLES' GRIEF WILL TURN TO JOY

'Jesus went on to say, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." At this, some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me," and "Because I am going to the Father?"' They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying." Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me"? Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born, she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So, with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again, and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day, you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now, you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask, and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. In that day, you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father." Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God." "Do you now believe?" Jesus replied. "A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.'" John 16:16-33

Jesus declares that He is due to leave, but that He would return, and they now display a partial understanding. They now realise that He is going to the Father but know He is going to return, John 16:16-17.

How this was to be achieved is still a mystery to them; they appear to be very reluctant to ask Jesus to once again give further clarification to this problem. As a result, they quietly ask the question among themselves, **John 16:18**. There are two views of the phrase, ‘after a little while you will see me’, **John 16:16-19**.

1. It refers to His appearance to them after His resurrection, **John 20:19-30 / Luke 24:36-49**.

2. It refers to His coming in the Person of the Spirit at Pentecost, **John 14:16-20**.

The apostles are perplexed, and some express their perplexity, ‘What is this that He says to us? What does He mean? We don’t know what He means, **John 16:18**. In other words, they are thinking, if Jesus wishes to establish the Messianic kingdom, why go away? If he doesn’t wish it, why return?

In **John 16:19-28**, we see the disciples desired to ask the question, but didn’t need to; Jesus was aware of the problem, and to save them from perceived embarrassment, He entered into a clear explanation of the situation.

Jesus firstly assures them that the pain that they are to feel as a result of seeing the Lord upon a cross and His suffering will only be temporary, even though the pain had already started.

Soon, He informs them, they will ‘weep and grieve’, whilst ‘the world’, His enemies, would ‘rejoice’, but their sorrow would ‘turn to joy’, **John 16:20**. In **John 16:21**, Jesus uses the illustration of childbirth, His departure, death, would mean agony for them, but that would be forgotten when, after His resurrection, they saw Him again, **John 20:20**.

He compares their pain to that of a woman in pain; she undergoes great distress, discomfort and pain, but once the child is born, the pain is quickly forgotten as she sees a new life, and it turns to joy, **John 16:21**. So, will their joy be complete once the Spirit is upon them?

Again, Jesus explains the power that will be available to them once this has occurred. He assures them that all will be made clear once the Spirit comes. The phrase, ‘in that day’, **John 16:23**, points to the new dispensation, made possible by His death and resurrection.

They would no longer have or need His physical presence. He will then be the ‘One Mediator’, **1 Timothy 2:5-6**, in heaven, and petitions will be addressed to the Father in His name.

When we conclude a prayer with ‘in the name of Jesus’, we aren’t reciting a magical formula that necessarily makes the prayer acceptable. We are stating the basis of our acceptable approach to the Father, the merits of Jesus, and the fact that through Him, we can speak to God, **Romans 5:2 / Ephesians 2:18 / Hebrews 4:14-16**.

In **John 16:25-30**, we read about the apostles’ faith in Jesus. He had been talking to them in the Old Testament in ‘figures’, figurative language, proverbs, but now He speaks plainly to them, **John 16:25**. This will be ‘in that day’, **John 16:26**, the new era which is soon to begin, the Spirit would guide them into all the truth, **John 16:13 / John 14:26**.

He seems to sympathise with the disciple’s lack of understanding at this point. In **John 16:26**, Jesus clearly states ‘in that day you will ask in my name.’ The balance of **John 16:26** and **John 16:27** seems to almost contradict this, ‘I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf’.

Up to the arrival of the Spirit, the disciples had done little praying as Jesus had done it on their behalf. Now the Son is to return to the Father, so He will not be available to do their praying on their behalf. They will have to pray to the Father themselves with the intercession of the Son. **Hebrews 7:24-25 / Hebrews 13:15**, and **John 14:6**, all clearly teach this.

John 16:27 may also cause difficulties for some, as it appears as if it teaches that God loves us as a result of our love of His Son and our acceptance of Him. Well, this is true, but it doesn’t deny that God also loved us before we had accepted His Son or loved Him, **Romans 5:6-8**, so we are loved by God before and after we develop a love for His Son, **John 16:27**.

Now Jesus gets right down to the nitty-gritty, He clearly spells out the truth regarding Himself, ‘I came from the Father and entered the world,’ **John 16:28**. We now can be totally assured of Jesus’ pre-existence, He came from the Father, and presents Himself to the world as a man, ‘Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father’, **John 16:28**.

Nothing could be clearer, He explains that He is to return from where He came, leaving the world and returning to the Father. He gives the idea of His own will be fulfilled and not in contradiction to the Father’s, ‘I came, I entered, I am leaving, I am going’.

Based on this voluntary obedience that Jesus is in the process of rendering, the Father exercises loving fellowship with those who are His own, fellowship within the Spirit.

We see in **John 16:29-33** that finally, the disciples understand. This clear description is at last understood by the disciples for what it was always meant to be. The enthusiasm for the truth now understood overwhelms the concern they had been feeling for the well-being of their mentor.

They believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and even more than believing, they understand, **John 16:29-30**. The fact that Jesus hadn’t even been asked to clarify the previously misunderstood statements, **John 16:17-18**, but had known the question they wanted to be answered, isn’t lost on them.

They state that Jesus is omniscient, thus He is, He must be God, **John 16:30**. The dawning of this great fact isn’t lost on Jesus; He too, is pleased and celebrates the new understanding but quickly returns to more pressing matters.

THEY KNOW TWO THINGS

1. ‘You know all things,’ **John 16:30**.

2. ‘You do not even need to have anyone ask you questions’, ‘you can read thoughts’, **John 16:30**.

As a result, they say, ‘we believe that you come from God’, **John 16:30 / John 6:68-69**. Jesus asks His disciples, ‘Do you now believe?’ **John 16:30**. This possibly means that He wants them to consider if their faith is as strong as they think it is.

He warns them that soon they will be scattered and He will be abandoned by them, but not by His Father, **John 16:30-32 / John 8:29 / Mark 14:27 / Zechariah 13:7**. In **John 16:33**, we find two locations, ‘in me, peace, ‘eirene’ and ‘in the world, tribulations, ‘thlipsis’.

Serving Him in a hostile world would bring them pressure, suffering, and trouble, but at the same time, they would enjoy spiritual peace through their union with Jesus.

Jesus ends this discourse with the most encouraging words, ‘but take heart, I have overcome the world,’ **John 16:33**.

We, too, can take heart, as He overcame the world for us just as much as He did for them. This He did when He conquered death by being raised on the third day, **1 Corinthians 15:3-4**.

The word ‘take heart’ is ‘tharseo’, and means courage and in its eight occurrences in the New Testament, it is used seven times by Jesus: **Matthew 9:2 / Matthew 9:22 / Matthew 14:27 / Mark 6:50 / Luke 8:48 / Acts 23:11**.

The words, ‘I have overcome the world,’ are the word, ‘nikao,’ and it means to conquer, **Revelation 2:7 / Revelation 2:11 / Revelation 2:17 / Revelation 2:26 / Revelation 3:5 / Revelation 3:12 / Revelation 3:21**.

Literally, Jesus is saying, ‘but keep up your courage, I have won the victory over the world.’ He hadn’t yet died, but He views the coming battle as already won. The words ‘have overcome’, **John 16:33**, are the past perfect tense denoting an abiding victory.

CHAPTER 17

INTRODUCTION

JESUS' HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER

Jesus' prayer in **John 17** has traditionally been called 'Jesus' high priestly prayer' because 'in it he solemnly consecrates himself to be priest and victim in the approaching sacrifice.' It's the longest recorded prayer of the Saviour; we don't know where it was spoken.

Did Jesus stay in the Upper Room after saying, 'let us go now'? **John 14:31**. Was it in the courtyard of the Upper Room before He set out for the Garden of Gethsemane? Was it in the temple court, just before leaving the city? Was it on the Mount of Olives, on the way to the garden? Nobody knows.

The prayer marks the end of Jesus' earthly ministry; in it, He looks forward to His work carried on by His apostles and to those who will subsequently believe in Him through their teaching.

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF TO BE GLORIFIED

'After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.' **John 17:1-5**

In **John 17:1-5**, we see that Jesus has accomplished all that he set out to do. He has passed God's message on, He has made God known, now there remains only death and beyond it the glory, He renounced to become a man.

The idea of looking towards heaven during prayer, **John 17:1**, was very common at the time, as it is even now. It can't be used as proof to indicate that Jesus was by this time in the open, as people would and still do look upward during prayer.

The great hour had now just about arrived, **John 17:1**. Jesus was about to be glorified; this didn't only refer to His imminent crucifixion, but all the events that were inevitably going to follow, His resurrection, ascension and coronation.

These had to follow; it was inevitable that the plan couldn't fail, as Jesus' overwhelming driving force was His love for man. If He had chosen to use His power to prevent His crucifixion, all this coming redemption couldn't occur, but His love ensured all went well.

He says, 'Father, the hour has come,' **John 17:1**. He said in Cana, **John 2:4**, 'My hour has not yet come'. To His brothers, He said, 'My time has not yet come, my time has not yet fully come', **John 7:6-8**. Enemies couldn't arrest Him 'because his hour had not yet come,' **John 7:30**. Now, His chosen death is imminent, **John 12:23** / **John 13:1** / **John 1:31**.

The words, 'glorify your Son', **John 17:1**, are repeated in **John 17:5**, and are the only personal petition in the prayer, and even this is 'that my Son may glorify you', which means to extol, honour, magnify you.

To enemies, the cross was the ultimate in humiliation, **Galatians 3:13**, but to Jesus, it was a means of glorification; it honoured and exalted Him, **Philippians 1:21**.

The word ‘glorify’ is used in a very broad sense; it’s an indication of all that is good, bright, blessed, godly, much more than the word generally conveys. The whole magnitude, radiance and heavenly splendour of God are described.

Jesus has been granted total authority over all people. He now seeks the opportunity to grant eternal life to those who accept it, **John 17:2**. It’s available to all, Jesus has the authority to give it to all, and He has the desire to give it to all. The words, ‘Eternal life’, **John 17:2**, consist in knowing God, the only true, and Jesus, sent by God.

Note the word ‘know’ in **John 17:3**; this has the sense of ‘keep on knowing’. All that is necessary is for them to accept it. Eternal life here is defined as they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent, **John 17:3**.

This doesn’t tell of superficial theoretical knowledge of God, but rather a deep understanding of His love brought about only by a personal relationship with Him, **John 17:3**, doesn’t endeavour to tell how one gained this eternal life but defines the finished product, true knowledge of the sender and the sent.

Jesus says in **John 17:4** that ‘I glorified, honoured, magnified, exalted you on the earth’, which means He had always been fully obedient to the Father, **John 5:30 / John 6:38**. The same principle is obvious in **Matthew 5:16**, the righteous life of disciples brings glory to the Father.

When He says, ‘having accomplished the work which you gave me to do’, **John 17:4**, this means Jesus has completed the task. That task included dying for a sinful world. He hadn’t yet died, but He speaks as if also this suffering has already been endured, so certain is it that He will endure it, **John 19:30**.

Jesus then prays for a full restoration of his pre-incarnate glory, **John 1:1 / Philippians 2:6-11**. Jesus looks forward to being with the Father and receiving the just reward for a job well done, **John 17:5**. He seems to seek restoration to the ‘good old days’ before He came to earth when He was the Word of God.

IF JESUS IS GOD, DOES THAT MEAN HE WAS PRAYING TO HIMSELF?

The question is a common question which some Christians struggle to understand or explain to others, and it’s a question that other religious groups, such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Oneness Pentecostals, use to try and ‘prove’ that Jesus couldn’t have been God in the flesh.

The simple fact is that God is a Spirit, **John 4:24**, and Jesus was and is a physical being. So, while the two are one, **John 10:30**, they are also separate entities. Think of Jesus as the physical form of God, **Colossians 1:15**.

When Jesus said that He and His Father are One, He was saying that though He has the form of a man, He also has the same divine nature as God the Father. This is exactly what Paul stated in **Philippians 2:5-8**. Jesus, therefore, has two natures; He is both God and man.

It’s clear from Paul’s words that while Jesus was on Earth, He put aside His Godly powers and made Himself only human, working through the power of the Holy Spirit, in submission to God’s will for Him, and praying to the Father for guidance.

He did this to give us an example of how we should live, working through the power of the Holy Spirit, in submission to God’s will for our lives, and praying to the Father for guidance.

According to the New Testament, there were several people who knew that Jesus was God in the flesh, the Gospel writer John knew that Jesus was God, **John 1:1**, the apostle Paul knew that Jesus was God, **Colossians 1:15**, the Hebrew writer knew that Jesus was God, **Hebrews 1:3**, and of course Jesus Himself knew that He was God, **John 10:30 / Hebrews 1:8**.

Remember, we're speaking about the humanity of Jesus, as a man. He, like the rest of us, got tired and hungry. He cried, He got angry, saddened, etc., etc. All these references speak of His humanity, that is Jesus being a real man. Passages of Scripture which describe Jesus' limitations refer to His humanity.

He lived His life as a true man, depending upon His heavenly Father day by day, just as we are expected to do. Even His miracles and supernatural knowledge were enabled by the Holy Spirit, not accomplished by switching back and forth between His divine and human natures. Jesus was completely human, but He also had a divine nature. Notice the following.

AS GOD

Jesus is worshipped. Matthew 2:2 / Matthew 2:11 Matthew 14:33 Matthew 28:9

Jesus is prayed to. Acts 7:59 / 1 Corinthians 1:2

Jesus was called God. John 20:28 / Hebrews 1:8

Jesus was called the Son of God. Mark 1:1

Jesus is sinless. 1 Peter 2:22 / Hebrews 4:15

Jesus knew all things. John 21:17

Jesus gives eternal life. John 10:28 / John 17:2

The fullness of deity dwells in Jesus. Colossians 2:9

AS A MAN

Jesus worshipped the Father. John 17

Jesus prayed to the Father. John 17:1

Jesus was called a man. Mark 15:39 / John 19:5

Jesus was called the Son of Man. John 9:35-37 Jesus was tempted. Matthew 4:1

Jesus grew in wisdom. Luke 2:52

Jesus died. Romans 5:8

Jesus has a body of flesh and bones. Luke 24:39

Why did Jesus pray to the Father despite being God Himself? Like so much of Jesus' life as a man He left us an example to follow, which includes praying. Remember the disciples didn't know how to pray, so Jesus had to teach them how to pray, **Matthew 6:10-14 / Luke 11:1**.

While on earth, He modelled dependence on God and that prayer is more important even than food or rest. God is our source of life, strength and hope, and we must remain connected to Him.

We must remain connected to God the Father through Christ. Jesus demonstrated this by remaining in visible fellowship with the Father, **Philippians 2:8 / Hebrews 2:17-18**.

Jesus was fully God and fully man, and He left us an example of what we must do when we hunger, thirst, get weary and sorrowful. Just like Jesus, we should cry out to our Father in Heaven. It's all about our relationship with the Father, and Jesus gave us the supreme example in prayer, **John 13:15**.

As a man, Jesus needed to pray and when He was praying, He wasn't praying to Himself but to God the Father. Jesus prayed to God the Father because it was an appropriate, natural, and essential part of His mission on earth. His prayers set an example for us to grow in intimacy with our Heavenly Father.

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

'I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me, and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me, and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.' John 17:6-19

In **John 17:6-12**, we see that Jesus sees that the disciples He has trained during the last few years are to be attacked by Satan in the last hours. He doesn't ask that they be relieved from this attack, but that they have the strength to cope with the troubles on the way.

Jesus specifically seeks assistance for those who are to be left behind, and He claims that they were God's and that God gave the disciples to Jesus to train for this position of high responsibility, **John 17:6**.

During his three-year ministry, they have depended on Him as little children depend on a loving parent. Now He is about to leave them, He has promised that another Counsellor will take His place, **John 14:15-18**. But they are still unprepared for His death. Now He commits them to His Father's care.

John 17:6 says that He had 'manifested', revealed God's 'name' to the apostles. God's 'name' stands for His Person or Being. The Father can only be adequately understood or fully appreciated through the words and works of Jesus, **John 14:9 / Colossians 2:9**. The meaning of the phrase, 'they were yours', **John 17:6**, is interesting.

Calvinists wrongly use this to support their theory of special election. Now the election is the immutable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, He had, according to the freest good pleasure of His own will, of mere grace, chosen out of the whole human race, fallen by its own fault from its primaeval integrity into sin and destruction.

The fact is, those who rejected Jesus' teaching and were therefore condemned, were people who wouldn't come to Him, they weren't those who couldn't believe, **John 5:39-40 / Acts 13:46**.

'They, 'apostles' have kept your word', **John 17:6**. This is the word, 'tereo' and it means to watch over, preserve, keep. It occurs twice in **Acts 12:5-6**, and it means 'kept...guarding'.

A frequent theme in Jesus' teaching is the 'keeping' of His and His Father's commandments, **John 8:51-52 / John 8:55 / John 14:15 / John 14:21 / John 14:23-24 / John 15:10 / John 15:20**. The apostles are far from perfect; their faith is weak, **John 16:31-32**, but they have held on to the message.

John 17:7-8, says the apostles 'know', understand, that the words and works of Jesus are those of God Himself, **John 14:10**. This understanding was the result of receiving the 'words', teaching, God had given Him, **John 17:14**.

They ‘know in truth’, means know truly, are sure, that He came from God and was sent by God. The apostles have accepted the word, as we saw back in **John 16:31**.

They accepted, unlike the Pharisees, they knew, with certainty the divine origin of Jesus, they believed, **John 1:7 / John 1:12 / John 20:31**. In **John 17:9-19**, Jesus makes specific requests for the apostles, ‘I am praying for them, I am not praying for the world’, **John 17:9**.

The important aspects are why He prays for them, and what He desires for them. He prays for them because they are God’s possession, ‘for they are yours’, **John 17:9-10**, ‘a people for His, ‘God’s’ possession. **1 Peter 2:9**

In them Jesus is honoured, exalted, ‘I am glorified in them’, **John 17:10 / 1 Peter 2:9**. They had to remain in a hostile world while He returned to the Father, ‘they are in the world’, **John 17:11**.

The apostles were ‘in the world’, **John 17:11**, and their Master ‘sent them into the world,’ **John 17:18**, but like Him, they were ‘not of the world’, which means they didn’t belong to the world, **Galatians 6:14 / James 1:27 / 1 John 2:15-17**.

During His ministry, He had personally protected them, **John 17:12**. He says, ‘I kept them’, ‘tereo’, as in **John 17:6**, this literally means, ‘I was keeping them’. Also, ‘I have guarded them’, this is a different word, ‘phulaxo’, from this word we get ‘sentinel’, ‘phulax’, **Acts 5:23**. For three years He had cared for them personally, now He must return to the Father, **John 17:13**.

Jesus affirms that all but one of the men has been kept safe, and He prays for this to continue, **John 17:12**. One doomed to destruction, son of destruction, Judas Iscariot. Notice the description of Judas in **John 17:12**.

‘The son of perdition’, KJV, is a term meaning one who is doomed to destruction, destined to be lost, the same phrase is used in **2 Thessalonians 2:3**. The word, ‘Apollumi’ gives us the idea, not extinction, but ruin, loss, **Luke 15:1-7 / Luke 15:8-10 / Luke 15:11-32**, not of being, but well-being.

Again, Jesus specifically asks for the protection of the apostles, praying that they would be united. The idea of unity is very clear throughout the New Testament, with man’s denominations never being given the all-clear.

In **John 17:13-18**, Jesus acknowledges that He is soon to come to the Father, and gives the assurance that all that was given to Him insofar as the world is concerned has now been passed on to the disciples.

The disciples, as with us, are no longer of the world, **John 17:13**, although they and we are still in it. We also now enjoy eternal life, and that is the life we now enjoy, not the short godless life of man.

Notice the spiritual character of the followers of Jesus. In **John 17:14** and **John 17:16**, ‘they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.’ The world ‘kosmos’ is a human society opposed to, and alienated from God, **John 7:7 / John 8:23 / John 14:30**.

In **John 17:15**, Jesus says, ‘keep them from the evil one’. The apostles had heard their Master refer often to Satan, **John 12:31 / John 14:30 / John 16:11 / Luke 22:31-32 / 1 John 2:13 / 1 John 5:18**.

He asks that God sanctify the disciples, **John 17:17 / John 17:19**. In the past, only priests could be so set apart from the people. They were all set apart for the use by God, no longer for human use. He says, ‘sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth’, **John 17:17**.

In the New Testament usage, the word ‘hagiazō’ means to set apart for God’s use. We can see this used and illustrated in **Exodus 28:41 / Exodus 29:1 / Exodus 29:36 / Exodus 40:13**.

God can only sanctify those who believe, obey, and live by the truth, His word, **John 17:17**. There are no instances, not even in the case of the apostles, of persons going on unto a more perfect state of sanctification without the constant necessity of their remaining under the tutelage of the revealed will of God.

The teaching of the apostles is authoritative, **John 17:18 / Matthew 10:40 / Matthew 28:19-20**. Jesus was set apart, and now He passes this on to the disciples, **John 17:18**.

Jesus draws many parallels between Himself and the disciples at this point. Jesus was ‘sent into the world,’ **John 17:18**. The disciples were ‘sent into the world,’ **John 17:18**. Jesus was ‘truly sanctified,’ **John 17:19**. The disciples were also ‘truly sanctified,’ **John 17:19**. Now the disciples are ready to go into the world and preach the good news, requiring only one thing to be completed, that which now lay before Jesus.

JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS

‘My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me, because you loved me before the creation of the world. “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.’ **John 17:20-26**

In **John 17:20-23**, Jesus prays for ‘those who believe in me through their ‘the apostle’s word.’ He is speaking prophetically, seeing future events as if they have already occurred. Jesus prays for us even while Judas Iscariot is walking towards him with the mob, **Matthew 26:47-56 / Mark 14:43-52 / Luke 22:47-53 / John 18:1-12**.

Finally, Jesus prays for all the believers who are to come, **John 17:20-21**. The word ‘believe’, **John 17:20-21**, is present tense, but the church isn’t yet in existence. Notice that others will come to ‘believe’ in Jesus through the apostle’s word, **John 17:20**. This is the only way faith in Jesus can come, **Romans 10:17**.

This prayer is for us as well as all Christians through the ages, before and still come again. The prayer follows the path of unity. This is truly a sign that the divided ‘Christian’ world of today is unacceptable to the Lord.

The results of unity are given in **John 17:21**. Much is lost due to the disunity within the Christian world; we have distorted the growth of the church and the members within.

Remember, Jesus prays for unity, not ‘union’, or ‘uniformity’. Some think we must agree on all things, but this isn’t the case. We should be unified in doctrine, not opinion; we must maintain the unity that already exists, **Ephesians 4:3-6**.

This is what He desires for all believers, ‘that they may all be one,’ **John 17:21**. He desires their unity, and indicates the nature and degree in view, ‘even as you, Father, are in me and I in you’, **John 17:21**.

The harmony existing between the Father and Son is precisely what He desires among His people. He had already expressed the same desire for the apostles, **John 17:11**.

He says, ‘that they may become perfectly one,’ **John 17:23**. This means, perfectly united, brought to perfect unity. The ‘glory’ given by the Father to the Son is given to all believers. This is the future glory of final salvation in heaven, **Romans 8:16-17 / Philippians 3:20-21 / 1 Corinthians 15:42-43 / 2 Timothy 2:11-12**.

The Saviour is looking toward Cavalry, but He speaks as if the battle is already won, and the glory already received, **John 17:5**. The unity of believers is ‘so that the world may know that you have loved them even as you have loved me’, **John 17:23**. The true, spiritual unity of Jesus’ followers can only be explained on the basis of God’s love.

In **John 17:24**, Jesus clearly states the desire He has for all Christians. He urgently and deeply wants all men to be with Him; He doesn’t want to see one go astray, but wants all to be with Him in the glory that comes from God the Father, **John 14:3**.

He wants them to dwell in His unquenchable love and glory for all time and never to escape into the darkness around. The fact that God loved the Son before the creation of the world resulted in this majestic glory.

The words, ‘to see my glory,’ [John 17:24](#), means seeing and sharing in His glory, [Matthew 25:31](#) / [Colossians 3:4](#) / [Hebrews 2:10](#). The word glory is ‘doxa,’ in Greek and Jesus is saying that the Father gave to the Son was because of His love for Him, ‘before the foundation of the world’, [John 17:24](#). In His pre-incarnate state, the ‘Logos’ existed before creation and shared the glory of Deity, [John 1:1-3](#) / [John 8:58](#) / [John 17:3](#).

The world doesn’t know God, [John 17:25](#), because if they did, they would have recognised the Father’s own Son. The statement made in [John 17:25-26](#) refers not to the people like the Pharisees and others, but to the disciples, who in the previous chapter had realised whom they were truly dealing with, [John 16:29-33](#).

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION

In John’s Gospel, he selectively omits Jesus’ agony in Gethsemane, [Matthew 26:36-46](#), reference to ‘twelve legions of angels’, [Matthew 26:53](#), etc. John isn’t giving a full account, but as much as is necessary for his purpose, [John 20:30-31](#) / [John 21:25](#). Also, the Gospels have been in circulation for a long time, and so, when John writes his account, the narrative is well-known.

A full narrative of all that happened in Gethsemane would require a careful study of [Matthew 26:36-56](#) / [Mark 14:32-51](#) / [Luke 22:39-53](#) / [John 18:1-12](#). John makes it clear that, despite the arrest, Jesus is completely in control of the situation. What His enemies do is by permission; His death is a voluntary sacrifice, [John 10:17-18](#).

JESUS ARRESTED

‘When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side, there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. ‘Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?” “Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground. Again, he asked them, “Who is it you want?” “Jesus of Nazareth,” they said. Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.” This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.” Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?” Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.’ [John 18:1-11](#)

THE KIDRON VALLEY

Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley and went into a garden, [John 18:1](#). The Kidron valley east of Jerusalem, separating the Mount of Olives from the Temple Mount, was the route taken by David when he fled from the city because of Absalom, [2 Samuel 15:23](#).

It has a significant place in the history of the nation, it's where Asa burned the 'abominable image', in [1 Kings 15:13](#) / [2 Chronicles 15:16](#), it's where Josiah burned the idolatrous vessels out of the temple, in [2 Kings 23:4](#), it's where it involved in the cleansing of the temple by Hezekiah, [2 Chronicles 29:15-17](#).

From the altar of sacrifice in the temple, there was a channel down to the brook Kidron, and through that channel, the blood of the lambs drained away. When Jesus crossed the brook Kidron, it would still be red with the blood of the lambs which had been sacrificed.

The 'valley', 'cheimorrhos', literally means 'winter-flowing', a stream that flowed only in winter or after heavy rain. A 'garden', 'Gethsemane', means 'oil press', [Luke 22:39](#).

It was a private garden, [Mark 14:32](#). 'Place', 'chorion', an enclosed piece of ground, so the owner must have given permission for Jesus and the disciples to use it. The owner was probably a friend of Jesus, as Jesus often went there.

THE GARDEN

Located on the slopes of Mount of Olives, precise location unknown, the present 'Garden of Gethsemane' is very old, and the original garden must have been close by, but nobody can say with certainty exactly where it was located. It seems as if the disciples and Jesus had stopped for Jesus' prayer somewhere in Jerusalem.

Now that the prayer was completed, they continued to the edge of the city, out one of the gates on the Western side of the city and towards the Kidron valley, which runs to the West of the city along the length of the temple.

They crossed the valley and entered the garden of Gethsemane, which was on the Mount of Olives; this Mount was so-called because of the olives grown on it. Some of these olive trees still exist today, and they are believed to be the same as those mentioned in Jesus' time. It seems that Jesus slept here on the Mount of Olives each night of the last week of His life.

We see that this was commonplace for Jesus and the disciples to go for prayer and meditation. As a result, Judas the traitor knew where to find Jesus, and it was common for them to go there after the evening meal, [John 18:2-3](#).

Judas brought an entire detachment of soldiers with him to capture Jesus. Judas brought with him 'a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees'.

The word 'detachment' of soldiers is 'speira', and was the term used for a Roman Cohort, a body of six-hundred men. However, it's also sometimes used to describe a group of two-hundred soldiers. It's impossible to say how many on this occasion, but it's certainly used for a large number, [Luke 27:47](#) / [Matthew 26:47](#) / [Mark 14:43](#).

Imagine two-six hundred Roman soldiers and all the religious leaders, armed with torches, lanterns, clubs and swords, [Luke 22:52](#) / [Matthew 26:47](#) / [Mark 14:48](#).

'Their officers', 'chiliarchos', the Roman commander of a cohort, [Luke 22:52-53](#), and the temple guard were carrying 'lanterns and torches', perhaps expecting that Jesus and disciples would hide, [Luke 22:52](#). The chief priests and elders were also present, [Luke 22:52](#).

The chief priests had no jurisdiction over Roman soldiers and would need Pilate's permission to use them; however, he later doesn't seem keen on the whole event, so it isn't likely that he would give his permission to use his men to capture Jesus.

The torches were sticks tied together, wrapped in cloth, dipped in pitch or oil; the lantern was an open dish or oil lamp. This seems likely because of their reaction when Jesus uses the term 'I AM', [John 18:5](#).

WHY DID THEY NEED JUDAS?

The religious leaders didn't need Judas to recognise Jesus. They didn't need Judas to find out where Jesus was. Three times in the Gospel of John, they sent guards to arrest Jesus, and all three times the guards couldn't do it. I think they were beginning to fear that Jesus was un-arrestable.

And they said, 'We need someone on the inside, someone that can catch Him when his guard is down, someone that won't surprise Him so that we can get Him before He knows what's going on.' And Judas said, 'I'm your man.'

THE KISS

Under normal circumstances, the kiss was a brotherly kiss of affection, [Romans 16:16](#) / [1 Corinthians 16:20](#) / [2 Corinthians 13:12](#) / [1 Thessalonians 5:26](#) / [1 Peter 5:14](#), but it seems like Judas had other plans; his kiss was more like a kiss of betrayal.

His kiss signalled to the mob who Jesus was; remember the religious leaders who were in attendance knew exactly who Jesus was, [Matthew 26:48-49](#) / [Mark 14:44-45](#), as they had many dealings with Him up to this point.

This shows us the extent Satan had been working on His heart, he even had the audacity to greet Jesus first, [Matthew 26:49](#) / [Mark 14:45](#). Jesus tells Judas to do what he came today and even calls him friend, [Matthew 26:50](#). This is similar to the last time they spoke when Jesus tells him what he is about to do, to it quickly, [John 13:27](#).

When Jesus asked him the question about betraying the Son of man with a kiss, [Luke 22:48](#), this tells us that Jesus knew Judas's motives. I'm sure Judas once again would have been taken aback by Jesus' question.

Remember these are the final days of Jesus, and He was well aware of everything which was about to happen, [Revelation 13:8](#), and Judas coming to Him was no surprise either, [Psalm 41:9](#) / [Luke 9:44](#) / [Matthew 20:18](#) / [Acts 1:16-17](#).

Jesus was well aware of His eventual destination. He knew that His time had now come, but still He asked, 'Who is it you want?' They specify Jesus, [John 18:5](#). He replies, 'I am he', [John 18:5](#); this is the old statement used as a reference to God. Jesus knew everything that was about to happen, [John 2:24](#) / [John 5:6](#) / [John 6:64](#) / [John 13:1](#) / [John 13:3](#).

Notice it was when Jesus said, 'I am he,' 'they drew back and fell to the ground,' [John 18:6](#), why? The word 'he' is merely supplied in the text, Jesus said 'Ego Eimi', 'I AM,' [John 8:58](#) / [Exodus 3:14](#), which is the Greek equivalent of YHWH, [Exodus 3:13-14](#) / [John 5:18](#).

He is Eternal, [Psalm 135:13](#), and self-existent, [Psalm 88:6-7](#). The expression 'Ego Eimi' also occurs in [John 6:35](#) / [John 8:12](#) / [John 8:58](#) / [John 10:9](#) / [John 10:11](#) / [John 11:25](#) / [John 14:6](#) / [John 15:1](#). The Jews understood perfectly well what was alluded to by the term 'I AM' used by Jesus, [Leviticus 24:16](#) / [John 5:18](#).

Just as a side note, I remember studying with the Jehovah's Witnesses and bringing this text to their attention. At first, they said, 'oh you guys are always making a big deal out of the 'I AM' statements', and then they went on to explain that everyone present 'drew back and fell to the ground', simply because Jesus openly admitted that He was Jesus, and everyone was surprised when He did!

REALLY!

Imagine two-six hundred Roman soldiers and all the religious leaders, armed with torches, lanterns, clubs and swords, [Luke 22:52](#) / [Matthew 26:47](#) / [Mark 14:48](#), and who knows what else, coming to Jesus, and Jesus asks, ‘Who are you looking for?’ [John 18:4](#) / [John 18:7](#), and they reply, ‘Jesus of Nazareth’, [John 18:5](#) / [John 18:7](#).

Imagine, Jesus replies, ‘Yep, I’m your man’, and because He said, He is the one they are looking for, two-six hundred soldiers and everyone else in their company, not only ‘drew back’ but they also ‘fell to the ground.’ That simply doesn’t make any sense unless there was something about the words Jesus used.

The ‘I AM’ statements are a big deal, but they fail to see the significance of them because if they did, they wouldn’t come out with such dribble to explain passages like this.

After declaring to the mob that He is the ‘I AM’, for the second time, Jesus pleads for His disciples to be released, [John 18:8](#). This was to fulfil a prophecy He previously made, which prevented any from being captured with Him, [John 18:9](#) / [John 6:39](#) / [John 18:8](#).

THE EAR

When the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him, [Matthew 26:50](#), Peter’s reaction isn’t surprising. He was always the impulsive one, who often said things without thinking first, [John 13:37](#) / [Matthew 26:33](#). He drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, who was the high priest’s servant, [John 18:10](#) / [Luke 22:50](#) / [Matthew 26:51](#) / [Mark 14:47](#).

The fact that Peter is carrying a sword, possibly for protection, tells me that maybe He still didn’t understand the nature of God’s kingdom; he was still thinking in terms of a physical kingdom. We know that Jesus never wanted or never intended physical force to establish His kingdom, [John 18:36](#) / [Revelation 13:10](#).

Before Jesus restores Malchus’ ear, Jesus rebukes Peter; this isn’t the first time he has rebuked him, [John 18:11](#) / [Mark 8:33](#), and it certainly won’t be the last time he’s rebuked, [Galatians 2:11-21](#).

The cup, [John 18:11](#), which Jesus refers to is the cup of agony, [Matthew 26:39](#). He reminds Peter if he’s going to fight with a sword, then he will certainly die by the sword, [Matthew 26:52](#) / [Romans 13:4](#).

We must wonder what those who were present were thinking when Jesus restored Malchus’ ear back to normal, [Luke 22:51](#). Surely after Jesus claimed to be the ‘I AM’, and then performed this ‘sign’, [John 20:30-31](#), those present would have noticed what He just did!

I often wonder if Malchus himself ever went on to believe that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of God. If no one else believed within the mob who Christ was on that day, I’m sure Malchus would have believed, and who knows, maybe later He went on to become a Christian. At the very least, it was certainly one of those moments in his life that he would never forget.

Peter, still thinking in human terms, thought Jesus needed help, but little did he know how much help Jesus had at His disposal. If it wasn’t for the love of Christ for mankind, He could have easily brought all this to an end, but He wasn’t about to play into the devil’s hands; He wasn’t about to blow His whole mission this close to the end, [John 18:11](#) / [John 10:17-18](#).

TWELVE LEGIONS OF ANGELS

Matthew tells us that Jesus could have called numerous angels to rescue Him, [Matthew 26:53](#), but He knew by doing that, He wouldn't fulfil Scripture, [Matthew 26:54](#) / [Isaiah 50:6](#) / [Isaiah 53:2-11](#).

Twelve legions of angels are estimated to be around seventy-two thousand angels, but notice Jesus says He has 'more than' that number at His disposal, [Matthew 26:53](#).

Remember the angel of the LORD, wiped out one-hundred and eighty-five thousand of God's enemies in one moment, [2 Kings 19:35](#), how much more would these many angels affect those who were present?

The mob were armed with swords and clubs, [Luke 22:52](#) / [Matthew 26:47](#) / [Matthew 26:55](#) / [Mark 14:48](#). This tells us that both Roman soldiers and the temple police were present to arrest Jesus.

Luke is the only account which tells us the chief priests were present too, [Luke 22:52](#). You have to wonder, how many people does it take to arrest one man? [John 18:12](#).

THE TIME HAS COME

Jesus tells them they've had ample opportunity over the past three and a half years to arrest Him, but they didn't, [Luke 22:52-53](#) / [Matthew 26:55](#) / [Mark 14:51](#). Now was the time because it was God's timetable they were working under, not theirs.

The commander was usually in charge of a thousand men, but on this occasion, he didn't have a thousand men with him. John simply tells us about him to help us understand that he was a man of high ranking, [John 18:12](#).

It was now time to carry out the death sentence on Jesus, [John 18:12](#) / [Luke 22:53](#). Satan has been working through these people because He wanted Jesus out of the picture but little did he know that the cross was a part of God's plan from the beginning, [Genesis 3:15](#) / [Romans 8:28](#). The devil had no idea what God's plan was, he had no idea that he was actually putting God's plan into effect, [1 Peter 1:10-12](#) / [Acts 2:23](#).

Christ knew the Scriptures. He knew moment by moment they were to be fulfilled, [Matthew 26:56](#) / [Mark 14:49](#).

Jesus is saying that He must die, but He is also saying all these things must happen to fulfil prophecy, [Matthew 18:7](#) / [John 10:35](#) / [1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#). He knew His sheep would be scattered, [Matthew 26:56](#) / [Mark 14:49](#) / [Zechariah 13:7](#).

Why the disciples deserted Jesus and fled, [Matthew 26:56](#) / [Mark 14:50-52](#), is uncertain. Probably because they were afraid, [John 20:19](#), and didn't want to be arrested along with Jesus.

Notice that Jesus didn't try to run away. He surrenders Himself to the authorities, and no attempt is made to capture the disciples. He voluntarily handed Himself over to them, [John 18:12](#).

I don't believe there was any need to bind Him, [John 18:12](#), but such is the nature of Satan and the people he was using to rid the world of Jesus. There was no escaping for Jesus, but Jesus had no intention of even trying to escape. He only had one thing on His mind, to lovingly fulfil the will of His Father, [Luke 22:42](#). Jesus was in full control of everything which was happening around Him, and He has always been in control of everything going on around Him and will continue to be in control of everything, even to His resurrection and beyond.

As Christians, it's so important to remember that as long as we remain under His control, He will protect us from harm, [John 10:28-29](#). We must also remember that it's so easy to abandon Him, especially when people criticise us for being Christians and abuse us for the faith we hold onto so dearly, [1 Timothy 6:12](#).

We know that Peter and John stayed kind of close to Jesus during His trial, [John 18:15](#), but we don't know why the others fled. One thing to notice is that Matthew includes himself as one of those deserting and fleeing from the scene, [Matthew 26:56](#).

The young man who was left naked could have possibly been John Mark, [Mark 14:51-52](#). Mark makes this brief statement here in order to identify himself as the writer of the document. I can imagine this event being both sad for the disciples later, but also humorous as they remember Mark running away naked.

From this time on, things begin to happen quickly in reference to the trials, crucifixion, burial and resurrection. Throughout the next three days, the disciples would experience the greatest trauma of their lives.

Expectations would be crushed, and their hopes in Jesus would be dashed. They would be in a state of disillusionment until Jesus redirected them through several appearances that would take place after the resurrection. After the trauma of all these events, they would be prepared to go forth for Jesus.

WHAT DATE WAS JESUS ARRESTED?

Coffman, in his commentary, says the following.

‘We should note that if Jesus was arrested on the night of Passover, as some suggest, then none of the chief priests or the temple guards would have been permitted to carry weapons after sundown of Nisan fourteenth. And so, this must have happened the night before, on Nisan thirteenth, technically the fourteenth, that Jesus was arrested. If it had been Nisan fourteenth after sundown, it would have been technically Nisan fifteenth, the night of the Passover meal, [Luke 22:2](#).’

THE TRIALS OF JESUS

Jesus went through six trials before His execution. There were six parts to Jesus' trial, three stages in a religious court and three stages before a Roman court. On the night of His arrest, Jesus was brought before Annas, [John 18:12-14](#) / [John 18:19-23](#), Caiaphas, [Matthew 26:57-75](#), and the Sanhedrin, [John 18:12-24](#) / [Mark 14:53-65](#) / [Matthew 26:57-68](#) / [Luke 22:66-71](#), a group of religious leaders. In these trials He was charged with blasphemy, claiming to be the Son of God.

He was imprisoned at Caiaphas' palace, and the Jewish High Priest and the Jewish High Court, the Sanhedrin, effectively asked Jesus two questions: ‘Are you the Messiah? And are you the Son of God?’

To both of these, Jesus answered, ‘I AM’, [John 14:61](#) / [Mark 14:60-64](#) / [Matthew 26:63](#). This was enough to condemn Jesus for blaspheming God by claiming to be God. The Jews understood perfectly well what was alluded to by the term ‘I AM’ used by Jesus, [Leviticus 24:16](#) / [John 5:18](#).

THE PRELIMINARY HEARING

Matthew, Mark and Luke don't mention the preliminary hearing, only John.

JESUS BEFORE ANNAS

‘They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.’ John 18:12-14

Jesus was first taken before the powerful Annas, the ex-high priest and the power behind the current one, [John 18:12-14](#) / [John 18:19-23](#). These verses remind us of the important prophecy made by the current high priest, [John 11:49-51](#), which he had said without realising the truth behind his statement. Perhaps he’s also underlining the fact that with two such scoundrels involved, Jesus had no hope of a fair trial.

PETER DENIES KNOWING JESUS

‘Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest’s courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in. ‘You aren’t one of this man’s disciples, too, are you?’ she asked Peter. He replied, ‘I am not.’ It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.’ John 18:15-18

PETER’S FIRST DENIAL

While Jesus is on trial, we find Peter is about to deny Jesus three times just as Jesus said he would, [John 13:37-38](#) / [Luke 22:34](#) / [Matthew 26:33-35](#) / [Mark 14:29-31](#). Here we read about Peter’s first denial, but who is the ‘other disciple’ mentioned in [John 18:15](#)?

Traditionally, this has been accepted as John himself; this would be consistent with John’s habit of not naming himself, [John 1:40](#) / [John 13:23-25](#) / [John 19:26](#) / [John 20:2-8](#) / [John 21:20-24](#). Also, Peter and John appear to have been constant companions, [Luke 22:8](#) / [Acts 3:1](#) / [Acts 4:13](#) / [Acts 8:14](#).

This unnamed disciple ‘was known to the high priest,’ [John 18:15](#), which means he was well enough known for the servant girl to admit him. Peter and it appears John follow the group, including the Lord, to the house of the high priest, [Matthew 26:58](#) / [John 8:15](#).

It’s most likely that Annas and Caiaphas lived at the same address. John is known at the gate and allowed into the courtyard, and seeks permission for Peter to come in also, [John 18:15-16](#).

Peter and John both enter and find a fire with people around and go to it to keep warm, [John 18:17-18](#) / [Luke 22:55](#) / [Mark 14:54](#). It appears as if the other disciples had fled back to ‘his own’, in accordance with Jesus prophecy of [John 16:32](#).

The girl at the gate sees Peter and recognises him as one of Jesus followers, [Matthew 26:69](#) / [Mark 14:66-67](#), she asks him about this and Peter makes that first terrible denial, [John 18:17](#) / [Luke 22:57](#) / [Matthew 26:30](#) / [Mark 14:68](#).

In [John 18:17](#), we see the question asked by the maid is phrased to anticipate a negative answer, ‘you aren’t one of this man’s disciples, too, are you? Remember that the ‘other disciple’ was known to be one of Jesus’ followers; he had openly entered along with Jesus, [John 18:15](#).

HOW EASILY PETER FELL!

Questioned by a maid, 'paidiske', girl, he said, 'I am not,' [John 18:17](#) / [Luke 26:69-70](#). The other disciple was apparently in no danger, but why didn't Peter own up? Perhaps he was taken by surprise when a mere girl challenged him; maybe he was afraid he would be recognised as the one who wounded Malchus.

We know that nearby are the 'officers,' [John 18:18](#), who had been involved in the arrest of Jesus, [John 18:13-14](#). A few hours ago, he had said he would die for Jesus, [John 13:37](#), but now, a frightened man, he denies his Master.

THE HIGH PRIEST QUESTIONS JESUS

'Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. 'I have spoken openly to the world,' Jesus replied. 'I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely, they know what I said. When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. 'Is this the way you answer the high priest?' he demanded.

'Testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?' [John 18:19-23](#)

When we compare this with [Matthew 26:57-58](#), and with [John 18:13](#) / [John 18:15](#) / [John 18:24](#), it suggests that the same court or courtyard is in view in each case. It's probable that Annas lived in a part of the official palace of his son in law. The sending of Jesus to Caiaphas would be merely sending him across the courtyard.

As Peter is denying the Lord, the Lord is making His first defence. He's being questioned by the high priest, either Annas or Caiaphas, about His teaching and His apostles, [John 18:19](#).

It may have been that the authorities wanted the apostles as well to make sure that this sect was completely crushed; this would further explain Peter's denials.

It wasn't a judicial trial but rather a preliminary investigation; it would be in character for Annas to try to pin something on Jesus. Jesus is questioned 'about His disciples and His teaching', [John 18:19](#), surely the questioner was well informed about both!

Jesus' answer shows that the high priest's questions were evilly motivated, [John 18:20](#). What Jesus means is that He didn't have two kinds of teaching, a harmless one for the general public and a very different one for the secret revolutionaries. The essence of His teaching was public property, [John 18:21](#).

Jesus defends Himself by explaining the openness of all His actions; He never hid behind someone or conspired in a closed room. His entire statement had been in the open, for all to hear, [John 18:21](#). Because of this answer, one of the officials struck Jesus, who then sought the reason why He was struck, [John 18:22](#).

Annas was acting illegally because Jewish law required that evidence be heard from witnesses and that their testimony be shown to be in agreement, then a prisoner might be cross-examined.

The official who slapped Jesus was a member of the temple guard. Jesus is saying, 'if I have said anything wrong, let it be revealed by proper legal procedures. If not, why hit me?' [John 18:23](#).

JESUS SENT TO CAIAPHAS

'Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.' [John 18:24](#)

Notice that Jesus was bound, [John 18:24](#). Jewish custom was for a prisoner's hands to be tied behind their back. After being bound, Jesus is sent by Annas to Caiaphas as the official high priest, [John 18:24](#). Evidently, the preliminary hearing before Annas has allowed the Sanhedrin time to assemble.

This was for the official 'trial' narrated by the Gospels, [Mark 14:53-65](#) / [Matthew 26:57-67](#). If Annas and Caiaphas lived in the same palace and the Sanhedrin met there for this 'trial', then [John 18:24](#) would merely involve Jesus being led across a courtyard. Jesus is sent to Caiaphas's quarters, where the entire council of the Sanhedrin had gathered to seek cause to have Jesus put to death, [Luke 22:66](#).

JESUS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

Matthew, Mark and Luke record the account of Jesus before the Sanhedrin, but John doesn't.

THE OFFICIAL TRIAL BEGINS

Though it was very late at night, Jesus was brought before the Jewish supreme court and tried [Mark 14:53](#) / [Matthew 26:57](#). Peter was following Jesus from a safe distance; he went into the courtyard and sat down beside some guards next to a fire, to see what was going to happen, [Matthew 26:58](#) / [Mark 14:54](#).

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for any excuse to put Jesus to death, [Matthew 26:59](#) / [Mark 14:55](#). They bribed false witnesses who told contradictory stories about Him, [Matthew 26:60](#) / [Mark 14:56](#).

For a time, it appeared that the court would be unable to find consistent testimony by which to convict Jesus. Another group stood and gave false testimony, [Mark 14:57](#). They accused Jesus of plotting to destroy the temple and in three days He would build another one, [Matthew 26:61](#) / [Mark 14:58](#).

Their testimony was untruthful because Jesus actually said, 'You' destroy this temple, referring to His body, and in three days I will raise it up, that is, rise from the dead, [John 2:19](#).

In context, Jesus' words were a prediction that the religious leaders would take His life and that He would rise from the dead three days later. There was no suggestion whatever of such a thing as the false witnesses alleged.

Even such a misrepresentative and malicious garbling of Jesus' words, however, was useless to the chief priests, because there was no coherent account of such an alleged statement. One said one thing, and another declared something else, [Mark 14:59](#).

All night long, the preliminary investigation had gone forward, and nothing had come of it. In desperation, Caiaphas, who was beginning to find the judge's bench a very uncomfortable place, forsook the judicial status, usurped the role of a prosecutor, placed Jesus under oath, and demanded an answer, [Mark 14:60](#), but he would ask a question first.

Jesus remained silent, [Matthew 26:63](#) / [Mark 14:61](#).

Finally, the high priest asked Him if He were the Christ, [Matthew 26:63](#) / [Mark 14:61](#). When Jesus said, 'I AM,' they used this statement as evidence of blasphemy and convicted Him, [Mark 14:61](#). Christ's, 'I AM' claim here speaks of His Deity, [John 6:35](#) / [John 8:12](#) / [John 8:58](#) / [John 10:9](#) / [John 10:11](#) / [John 11:25](#) / [John 14:6](#) / [John 15:1](#).

Each of His 'I AM' claims is a claim that He is God, EGO EIMI, which is the Greek equivalent of YHWH, [Exodus 3:13-14](#) / [John 5:18](#). He is Eternal, [Psalm 135:13](#), and self-existent, [Psalm 88:6-7](#). The Jews certainly understood that Jesus was claiming to be God, [John 8:57-59](#).

I used to think that sitting at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven refers to the final judgment when all men shall stand before the throne of God for sentencing, [Matthew 26:64](#) / [Mark 14:62](#). However, notice it says, ‘He’s sitting at the right hand.’ It doesn’t say He’s standing or He’s riding a horse; it says, He’s sitting. I think what Jesus is saying there is, ‘Caiaphas, this day you are my judge, you and your people are judging me, but the day is coming and you’re going to see it when I’m sitting at the right hand of God, and I’m sending my judgement to you.’ And Caiaphas’s generation saw that prophecy come true.

In this text, Jesus is bringing the news of the passing of one era and the establishment of another in which the glory of God isn’t going to be in the temple made by hands anymore.

The high priest had heard enough; he tore his clothes in anger and didn’t need any more witnesses and accused Him of blasphemy, [Matthew 26:65-66](#) / [Mark 14:63-64](#).

GUARDS MOCK JESUS

They spat on Jesus, they blindfolded him, punched him, and mocked him and beat Him up, [Matthew 26:67-68](#) / [Mark 14:65](#) / [Luke 22:63-65](#). There were six mockeries of Jesus in all, all of which were designed to totally humiliate Christ.

We would expect this kind of behaviour from the Romans, but since this took place in the court of the high priests of Israel, this tells us just how far from God they had come. The religious leaders allowed this to happen right in front of their very eyes.

This was the second of Jesus’ six trials, the first having been the arraignment before Annas, perhaps in the same palace where apartments for both Annas and Caiaphas were located around the courtyard.

The meeting of the Sanhedrin was probably not at full strength, its more noble members, such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, having already withdrawn. It may well be doubted that even a quorum was present, but, on the other hand, it may be assumed that every effort was made to attain one.

Jesus went through six trials before His execution. There were six parts to Jesus’ trial, three stages in a religious court and three stages before a Roman court. On the night of His arrest, Jesus was brought before Annas, Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrin, a group of religious leaders.

In these trials He was charged with blasphemy, claiming to be the Son of God. He was imprisoned at Caiaphas’ palace. The Jewish High Priest and the Jewish High Court, the Sanhedrin, effectively asked Jesus two questions, ‘Are you the Messiah? And are you the Son of God?’ To both of these, Jesus answered, ‘I AM.’ This was enough to condemn Jesus for blaspheming God by claiming to be God, [John 8:57-59](#).

THE WHOLE TRIAL OF JESUS WAS ILLEGAL

1. No formal charge had been made against Him.
2. The arrest was made by the men who would be His judges.

The High Priests and the Sanhedrin were also the ones who accused Him of violating the Law, which said that the Council was not permitted to lay charges.

3. The trial was held at night.

Forbidden by the Law, because it was believed that the darkness might bind the mind of the accused and cause him to testify against himself.

4. His questioning by the High Priest was alone forbidden by the Law.

The Judges were not allowed to question the accused, because he might be led into providing evidence against himself.

5. The law required the High Priest to ‘search, enquire and ask diligently’, if the charge against the accused was true, Deuteronomy 13:14.

6. A trial could not be held before sunrise.

So that potential witnesses for the defence could be present.

7. A guilty verdict could not be pronounced on the same day as the trial.

A night must intervene between trial and sentence so that the Judges could meditate on the verdict.

8. After the verdict, a period of nine hours must be allowed for potential objections to be made to the verdict.

9. The verdict must be pronounced in the Chamber of Stones, the room in the Temple, where the Sanhedrin held its Meetings, before being made public.

10. The death sentence was invalid because it was not the unanimous verdict of the full Council. Joseph of Arimathea was not present, Luke 23:50-51.

11. The testimony of the witnesses, procured by the Priests, on which the ‘Guilty’ verdict was based, was false.

They claimed that Jesus said, ‘I will destroy this Temple’.

12. The Law forbade the holding of a trial on a Friday.

The trial was illegal because it was held on a day that was followed by an Annual Sabbath, the Passover, John 18:28.

PETER’S SECOND AND THIRD DENIAL

‘Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So, they asked him, ‘You aren’t one of his disciples too, are you?’ He denied it, saying, ‘I am not.’ One of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, ‘Didn’t I see you with him in the garden?’ Again, Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.’ John 18:25-27

In John 18:25-27, we see Peter’s second, Luke 22:58, and third denials. It’s difficult to harmonise the accounts of the denials in the Gospels with that of John. This was during Jesus’ trial before Caiaphas, John 18:24-28.

Matthew and Mark relate that before this, Peter had gone out to the ‘porch’ or ‘gateway’, Matthew 26:71 / Mark 14:68. Perhaps, deeply ashamed by his first denial, he wanted to slip away unseen but was unable to escape unobserved.

Matthew and Mark both tell of his being approached in the porch by a ‘maid’. Accused of having been with Jesus, ‘he denied it with an oath’, Matthew 26:71-72 / Mark 14:69-70.

Peter ‘was standing and warming himself’ at a charcoal fire, [John 18:18](#). This charcoal, only mentioned by John, would provide much heat but little light.

And he is challenged by bystanders, ‘You aren’t one of his disciples too, are you?’ again he answers, ‘I am not’, [Luke 22:58](#). Then he is challenged by a slave of the high priest, who is also a kinsman of Malchus, ‘Didn’t I see you with him in the garden?’ [John 18:26](#).

The Gospels tell what was said both to and about Peter regarding his speech, [Matthew 26:73](#), the bystanders say, ‘certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you’.

[Mark 14:70](#), the bystanders say, ‘Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.’ In [Luke 22:59](#), another bystander, probably a maid, says, ‘Certainly this man was with him, for he is a Galilean.’

So, we see he was twice challenged about his presence with the Lord. First, by a slave girl, one of the most unimportant persons imaginable. Her question expected a negative answer, and Peter takes the easy way out.

Next, by a relative of the servant whose ear Peter had cut off. Peter again denied any link with Jesus, and as he concluded his statement, the crowing began. John’s account is more discreet than the other Gospels; he merely states, ‘Peter again denied it and at once the cock crowed’, [Matthew 26:34](#) / [John 13:38](#) / [Mark 14:30](#).

ALLEGED CONTRADICTION

Notice that Matthew, [Matthew 26:34](#), and John, [John 13:38](#), both say that, ‘before the rooster crows’, Peter will have denied the Lord three times. And now notice that Mark, [Mark 14:30](#), says that ‘before the rooster crows ‘twice,’ Peter will deny Christ three times. Although some see this as a contradiction, when we actually take a moment to slowly read the text itself, we will soon realise there’s no contradiction.

Notice how Matthew, [Matthew 26:34](#), and John, [John 13:38](#), don’t expressly state how many times the rooster will crow. They both simply say that Peter will deny Jesus three times, ‘before the rooster crows’, but they don’t tell us how many times it will crow.

I believe it’s reasonable to accept that Mark is being a little more specific in terms of how many times the rooster will actually crow. In fact, if you look at the word ‘twice’ in [Mark 14:10](#) and [Mark 14:72](#), you will notice that it has a footnote, which tells us that ‘some early manuscripts do not have ‘twice’.

In other words, it’s possible that different accounts are due to an early copyist error in Mark, which resulted in the insertion of the word, ‘twice’ in early manuscripts.

PETER WEPT BITTERLY

Luke records in his account that at this moment, Jesus was outside, probably on his way from Annas’ quarters to Caiaphas’s, and he looked straight at Peter, who broke down and cried, [Luke 22:61-62](#) / [Matthew 26:74-75](#) / [Mark 14:71-72](#).

We can’t help but sympathise with Peter at this point as he saw Jesus and then remembered what He prophesied about his denying Him three times, [Luke 22:33-34](#) / [Matthew 26:33-35](#) / [Mark 14:29-31](#) / [John 13:36-38](#). He literally was sobbing his heart out.

CONCLUSION

This was probably one of the lowest points in his life, and it was an event he wasn't going to forget for the rest of his life. It's interesting that things seem to happen in threes for Peter from this point on, [John 21:15-17](#) / [Acts 10:9-16](#) / [Acts 10:17-19](#).

What Peter was demonstrating here was genuine godly sorrow, which was the opposite of what Judas was demonstrating, as he went on to hang himself, [Matthew 27:5](#) / [Acts 1:18](#) / [2 Corinthians 7:10](#).

If we learn anything from Peter, we should learn that he didn't allow this occasion to affect the rest of his life. He went on to become a powerful apostle for the Lord and became bolder when he spoke more openly about the Christ, [Acts 2](#).

As Christians, we too will make many mistakes, some out of fear of being persecuted, but we must learn to draw a line under those occasions and move on. Think back upon the contributing factors in their failure.

1. They hadn't listened when Jesus had frequently warned them of His impending suffering.

They had been too eager to argue about who would be the greatest in the kingdom.

2. They were overconfident. Earlier that evening, Jesus warned them that they would flee, but they didn't believe it.

3. They didn't watch and pray in the garden as He instructed.

Thus, they were not mentally prepared to face the challenge. We could fail in the hour of temptation for these same reasons.

Peter denied Jesus, but he repented. Judas was remorseful and returned the pieces of silver, [Matthew 27:3](#). But he later hung himself, [Matthew 27:5](#) / [Acts 1:18](#).

There was a difference between the reaction of the two men to their discovery of what Jesus said each would do. Peter's reaction led him to return to faithfulness with a stronger conviction. Judas' reaction led him to further guilt and subsequently to his own suicide, [Matthew 27:5](#) / [Acts 1:18](#).

JESUS' FIRST APPEARANCE BEFORE PILATE

'Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness, they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So, Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. This took place to fulfil what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die. Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this, he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him.' John 18:28-38

Note the governor's movement in and out of the Praetorium.

1. Outside, [John 18:28-32](#).

2. Inside, [John 18:33-37](#).
3. Outside, [John 18:38-40](#).
4. Inside, [John 19:1-3](#).
5. Outside, [John 19:4-7](#).
6. Inside, [John 19:8-11](#).
7. Outside, [John 19:12-16](#).

‘The Praetorium’ was the Roman governor’s official residence when in Jerusalem, which could be one of two locations.

1. The palace of Herod on the western side of the city, or
2. The castle of Antonia, which housed the Roman garrison and overlooked the temple.

If the ‘luthostratos’ pavement, [John 19:13](#), in the church of the Flagellation is authentic, it would be the latter. Notice they wanted to be able to eat the Passover, [John 18:28](#). This appears to contradict the other Gospel writers because it suggests that Jesus is going to be crucified on the day before the Passover meal. In other words, how can Jesus have eaten the Passover meal if the time for eating the Passover meal hadn’t arrived yet?

The answer to this question is fairly straightforward when we remember that the entire Feast of Unleavened Bread is referred to as Passover. We see this in the Old Testament, where Ezekiel refers to the Passover as a feast of seven days, [Ezekiel 45:21](#), and we see this in the New Testament, [Luke 22:1](#).

When we keep this in mind, [John 18:28](#) becomes clearer. The priests didn’t want to defile themselves at any point during the feast of Passover because they would be eating sacrifices every night.

According to [Numbers 28:16-24](#), they offered sacrifices to God every day, for the entire seven days of the feast. Jesus is now on trial before Pilate. John doesn’t mention Jesus being sent to Herod Antipas, [Luke 23:6-12](#), or the message received by Pilate from his wife, [Matthew 27:19](#).

Pilate is abruptly introduced into the narrative, without any personal details, which suggests that he was well-known to John’s readers. Pilate was made procurator in 26 A.D.

He established himself in Caesarea, a Roman city on the Mediterranean coast. He was extremely harsh in his day-to-day dealings. On one occasion, he set up Roman standards in the temple, causing a riot.

Within six days, they were removed; perhaps this is why he seems now to be more tolerant of Jewish ways. He had the power of life and death over his subjects; he had about one-hundred and twenty cavalry and over five-thousand infantries, yet he himself was still subject to Caesar.

The whole assembly, [Mark 15:1](#) / [Luke 23:1](#), that is, all of the accusers who came to the garden, were men with evil on their hearts, men with false accusations with one thing on their mind, to get rid of Jesus once and for all, [Luke 23:2](#) / [Matthew 17:27](#) / [Mark 12:17](#).

Notice the reason the religious rulers didn’t enter the Praetorium, ‘to avoid ceremonial uncleanness’ etc., [John 18:28](#). A religious Jew wouldn’t enter the house of a Gentile, [Acts 10:38](#) / [Acts 11:3](#).

Pilate goes out to them and asks what accusation they bring against this Man? [John 18:29](#). They said if this Jesus wasn’t an evildoer, they wouldn’t have delivered Him to Pilate,’ [John 18:30](#). They also said, they found Jesus misleading their nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King, [Luke 23:2](#).

Notice also the hypocrisy which shows they were determined to have an innocent man killed, [John 18:29-30](#), they were prepared to lie to achieve their purpose, [Luke 23:2](#).

They charged Him with sedition, rebellion and treason, [Luke 23:2](#). Since Jesus was sinless, the only option they had was to make up a bunch of lies about Him to get Him charged.

Pilate tells them to take Jesus and judge Him according to their law, but the Jews reply that they aren't permitted to put anyone to death, [John 18:31](#). The word 'yourselves' is emphatic; if the prisoner couldn't be charged with crimes against Roman law, then it wasn't for Pilate to decide.

Their reply reveals their desire, not that Jesus shall be fairly tried, merely that he be killed, 'it's not lawful for us to put any man to death', [John 18:32](#). The Jews didn't have the authority to carry out sentences of capital punishment that were determined by their own courts, capital crimes had to be tried by Roman officials.

They wanted to put Jesus to death in accordance with [Leviticus 24:16](#), which demands death for the blasphemer, but as they were under Roman Law, they couldn't do it without Pilate's permission. Jesus had predicted that He would die by crucifixion, [John 3:14](#) / [John 12:32](#) / [Matthew 20:19](#).

If the Jews had executed Him, it would have been by stoning, the Law's penalty for blasphemy, but He was to be executed by being crucified, a method never used by the Jews.

Most likely, the chief priests wanted Jesus to be put to death by the Romans because of the implications for Jesus' claims to be the Son of God, [Galatians 3:13](#), 'Curse. Curse. Cursed.' [Deuteronomy 21:23](#).

Notice the words, 'You, 'emphasis' you are the King of the Jews?' [John 18:33](#) / [Matthew 27:11](#) / [Mark 15:2](#) / [Luke 23:3](#). All four Gospels record that this was the charge on which the Sanhedrin asked for Jesus to be condemned.

Pilate asked Jesus if He was the king of the Jews, and Jesus replied, you have said so, [Matthew 27:11](#) / [Mark 15:2](#) / [Luke 23:3](#). Jesus admits that He is a king. Pilate must have expected a political revolutionary, a self-styled 'king' who posed a threat to the rule of Rome. Jesus was the King of Israel, [John 1:49](#) / [John 12:13](#), but His kingdom was spiritual, [John 18:36](#).

The word 'My Kingdom', 'basileia', means sovereignty, royal power, dominion. Jesus asserts the spiritual nature of His reign, 'My basileia' is not of this world, not from the world,' [John 18:36](#).

If it were physical, then His disciples would fight, [John 18:36](#). It's not worldly in worldly means, 'My kingdom doesn't belong to this world. If it did, my followers would be fighting to save me from arrest by the Jews,' [John 18:36-37](#).

In the garden, He had forbidden His followers to fight, even to save Him, [John 18:10-11](#) / [Matthew 26:51-52](#) / [Matthew 5:43-48](#) / [Romans 12:17-21](#) / [Ephesians 6:10-17](#).

In [John 18:37](#), we find an ironic question, 'You are a king then. You!' Obviously, Jesus wasn't a leader of the sedition, just as obviously, He claimed to be King of the Jews. What did he mean? Jesus' answer is 'you say it correctly, you speak correctly, for I am a King, certainly I am the King!'

Jesus says, 'This is why He was born and for this reason He has come into the world, to bear witness to the truth, [John 18:37](#). Everyone who is of the truth, is a friend of the truth, who belongs to the truth, hears and listens to my voice,' [John 18:37](#).

If the governor's sole consideration had been justice, that would have been the end of the matter, but he was influenced by considerations of political expediency and personal safety.

One who is 'of the truth,' [John 18:37](#), will put it before every other consideration, [Proverbs 23:23](#). The word, 'truth', 'alethea,' means reality, that which is genuine as opposed to that which is false, [John 14:6](#). Pilate wasn't 'of the truth', [Luke 8:15](#).

Pilate tells Jesus that He is a king, and Jesus tells him that He is a king, and this was the reason He was born, He was born to testify concerning the truth, [John 18:37](#). Everyone who is of truth hears Jesus' voice, [John 18:37](#). Pilate then asks him what is truth? [John 18:38](#).

We don't know what Pilate's attitude was; John merely records the fact. Pilate's question couldn't be answered by a simple yes or no. In the political sense, as Pilate would use the term, he wasn't king, and in the spiritual sense, as Jesus used the term, He was king.

Jesus replies to Pilate and asks if he is saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell him about Me? [Matthew 27:34](#). In [John 18:35](#), Pilate is basically saying, 'I am not a Jew, am I?' As if to say, 'I am not interested in your theocratic subtleties.'

The governor is impatient and says, 'Your own nation and the chief priests, the Sanhedrin, have handed you over to me. What have you done?' What had caused the Jews, who might have been expected to support their 'king', to demand his death? He must be guilty of some serious crime. What is it? [John 18:35](#).

Despite the chief priests and elders accusing Jesus harshly of many things, [Mark 15:3](#), Jesus didn't answer, [Matthew 27:12](#). Pilate asks Jesus if He hears all the things being testified against Him, [Matthew 27:13](#), but Jesus didn't answer, [Matthew 27:14](#) / [Mark 15:4](#). Despite Pilate asking Jesus about the allegations, Jesus remained silent, which amazed Pilate, [Matthew 27:14](#) / [Mark 15:5](#).

The Jews accused Him of many things but Pilate was honest enough to declare that he found no basis to charge Jesus, [John 18:38](#) / [Luke 23:4](#). He was to say this, three times, [John 19:4](#) / [John 19:6](#). This was in accordance with Roman law, [Matthew 27:11](#) / [1 Timothy 8:13](#).

Pilate questions Jesus about His claims but under Roman Law, there were no grounds to have Him executed, [John 18:31](#). Jesus' teaching did stir up the people, [Luke 23:5](#), but the people who were stirred up weren't the common people; it was the religious leaders, [Mark 7:1-9](#). It was no longer the Israel of God, but their nation. Because Jesus was Galilean and Galilee wasn't Pilate's jurisdiction, he sent Jesus off to Herod, [Luke 23:6-7](#).

JESUS BEFORE HEROD

Luke is the only writer who records Jesus before Herod, [Luke 23:6-12](#). Herod Antipas was the ruler of Galilee and Perea, which was where most of Jesus' ministry took place.

This is where we know that earlier the Pharisees lied about Herod wanting to kill Jesus, [Luke 13:31](#), because we see that Herod had an opportunity to do so, but didn't because he would send Jesus back to Pilate, [Luke 23:11](#).

Herod only wanted to see Jesus because he had heard of the many miracles that Jesus had performed, [Luke 23:8](#). It's clear he thought of Jesus as some kind of showman or magician who was here to entertain the masses, [Acts 4:26-27](#). Jesus didn't answer Herod because He didn't accept his authority; Herod had no place of authority, [Luke 23:9](#).

Probably because the chief priests were vehemently accusing him, [Luke 23:11](#), Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked Jesus, then even dressed Him in an elegant robe,' [Luke 23:11](#).

We also see the tremendous self-control of Jesus; He knew exactly what was happening and what would eventually happen, [John 10:17-18](#). Notice that Pilate and Herod became friends, [Luke 23:12](#).

The hatred may have started between Pilate and Herod when Pilate had previously put down a probable insurrection in Galilee that was under Herod's jurisdiction, [Luke 13:1-2](#). Whatever the reason was for their hatred of each other seems to be laid to rest at this point.

JESUS' SECOND APPEARANCE BEFORE PILATE

‘But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews?’” They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.’ John 18:39-40

Pilate now summons the chief priests and the rulers and the people and says to them, they have brought Jesus to him as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Jesus before them, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him, Luke 23:13-24.

He tells them that even Herod didn’t find anything in Jesus which describes death, Luke 23:15. Then Pilate declares that he will punish Jesus and then set Him free, Luke 23:16.

Pilate appears before what was now a mob and offers Jesus as the one to be set free, as was the tradition at that time of the year, John 18:39 / Matthew 27:15 / Mark 15:6 / Luke 23:17.

Pilate knew that releasing Jesus would not please the crowd. So, he tried to please the mob with a series of four cowardly compromises. Giving them what they wanted, without this whole fiasco turning into a gross miscarriage of justice.

It was a custom of the Roman governor to release someone during the Passover feast, John 18:39 / Matthew 27:15 / Mark 15:6 / Luke 23:17. This was done in order to appease the most radical Jews of the Roman Empire who were in Jerusalem at this time. Pilate asks the mob, do they wish then that he release for them the King of the Jews? John 18:39.

We are told that Barabbas was a notorious prisoner, Matthew 27:16, who had had been imprisoned with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the insurrection, Mark 15:7, a robber, John 18:40 and a murderer, Luke 23:19.

From this Mark’s account, we learn that Barabbas was a terrorist against the Roman government, Mark 15:7. He was possibly a member of the Zealot group of Jews whose ambition was to free Palestine from Roman occupation.

On this occasion and others, it seems that Pilate was trying to find some reason to release Jesus. Pilate once more asks, whom do they want to be released? Barabbas, or Jesus, who is called Christ? Matthew 27:17. Mark records that Pilate asks them if they want him to release for them the King of the Jews? Mark 15:8-9.

Again, we see their hypocrisy; that was the kind of Messiah they wanted, one who would throw off the Roman yoke. They lied about Jesus because they were determined to kill Him, John 11:53. Pilate knew they were motivated by ‘envy’, Matthew 27:18 / Mark 15:10.

Pilate sat on the judgment seat’, Matthew 27:19 / Acts 18:12 / Acts 18:16-17, was a raised platform on which roman judge sat to pronounce sentence and Matthew 27:19, tells us of the message from Pilate’s wife, ‘have nothing to do with that righteous man.’

Notice it was the chief priests and the elders who persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to put Jesus to death, Matthew 27:20. It is the religious leaders who are stirring up the crowd to release Barabbas, Mark 15:11. Pilate again asked the mob, which of the two do they want him to release? And they said, Barabbas.’ Matthew 27:21 / John 18:40.

Pilate then asked what he should do with Jesus, who is called Christ? And they all said, Crucify Him! Matthew 27:22. Mark tells us that Pilate asked them, what shall he do with Him whom they call the King of the Jews?, Mark 15:12, and they shouted back, Crucify Him! Mark 15:13.

Pilate again asked, why, what evil has He done? But they kept shouting all the more, saying, ‘Crucify Him!’ Matthew 27:23 / Mark 15:14. Pilate appears to be determined to release Jesus, and so once again he addressed the mob, but they kept on calling out, saying, ‘Crucify, crucify Him!’ Luke 23:20-21.

The word ‘him’ isn’t in the text. This has been called ‘an ominous chant, a monotonous refrain, ‘Crucify! Crucify! Crucify! Crucify!’ manipulated by their rulers, the mob shouted the same demand.

For a third time, he asks them what evil Jesus man done? He has found in Jesus no guilt demanding death; therefore, he will punish Jesus and release Him, [Luke 23:22](#). But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified, and their voices began to prevail, [Luke 23:23](#).

Believing that the mob wouldn't want a violent thug released to them, it didn't work. The mob chose Barabbas, [John 18:40](#) / [Matthew 27:20](#) / [Mark 15:11](#) / [Luke 23:19](#).

Pilate wasn't a Jew and had little understanding or sympathy for Jewish Law. He had the power of life and death over the people, but he would be reluctant to do anything that would disturb the peace; he didn't want a riot on his hands, [Matthew 27:24](#).

The nationalistic emotions of the multitudes, therefore, were running high. As governor of the region, Pilate had to make compromises with the intense Jewish multitudes in order to prevent riots in the city.

With great pomp and ceremony, Pilate had a bowl of water brought to him and washed his hands, [Matthew 27:24](#) / [Deuteronomy 21:6-9](#). He tells the mob 'I am innocent of the blood of this good man, [Matthew 27:24](#).

Notice that John doesn't record Pilate's 'hand washing'. The responsibility is yours!' And they said, that fine with us, 'His blood is on us and on our children!' [Matthew 27:25](#) / [Acts 20:26](#) / [Matthew 27:24-26](#).

Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas for them, [Matthew 27:26](#) / [Mark 15:15](#), and Pilate pronounced a sentence that their demand be granted, [Luke 23:24](#). He then released Barabbas but delivered Jesus to the mob, [Luke 23:25](#).

CHAPTER 19

INTRODUCTION

'Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face. Once more, Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realise I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. Finally, Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So, the soldiers took charge of Jesus.' John 19:1-16

THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS

As Barnabas is released, Roman soldiers flogged Jesus, mocked Him, and led Him out to be crucified, **Matthew 27:26 / Mark 15:15 / John 19:1**. Flogging was the governor's attempt to convince the Jews that Jesus had suffered enough and should be released, **Luke 23:16**.

The soldiers then led Jesus out to be crucified outside of the city, **Matthew 27:31 / Mark 15:20 / Luke 23:26 / Numbers 15:35 / 1 Kings 21:13 / Acts 7:58 / Hebrews 13:11-12**, while a mournful multitude of faithful disciples followed, **Luke 23:27-31**.

The mob rejected Jesus in favour of Barabbas, a criminal, and so, Pilate decides he'll have Jesus flogged within an inch of His life, and that'll come close to the real thing and satisfy the mob, **Mark 15:15**.

FLOGGING

Pilate had Jesus flogged, **John 19:1**. Jesus suffered intensely in His last few hours. After being up all night, subjected to the stress of six different trials, if we compare the accounts in Matthew, Luke, and John, He was scourged, **Mark 15:15**.

Flogging was usually administered to one who was about to be crucified. Antiochus Epiphanies used it to force Jews to eat swine's flesh, **2 Maccabees 6:30 / 2 Maccabees 7:1**. The flagellum was similar to the 'cat o' nine tails', a handle with leather thongs, tipped with bone or metal.

The prisoner was stripped to the waist and then bound in a stooping position to the post. The blows were applied to the back and loins, sometimes even to the face and the bowels. So hideous was the punishment that the victim usually fainted and, not rarely, died under it.

Eusebius describes the death of Christian martyrs at Smyrna about 155 A.D., 'so torn with scourges that their veins were laid bare, and the inner muscles and sinews, and even the bowels, were exposed'. Josephus tells of a man who was 'flogged to the bone' before a Roman governor.

Flogging was accomplished by tying bits of bone, metal and glass to a whip and then striking the victim's back. This procedure produced excruciating pain, much loss of blood and sometimes even death. The victim's back became a bloody mass.

Remember the Jews practised flogging, which consisted of thirty-nine lashes, but here The Romans had no restrictions on how many lashes they delivered on the victim; they would carry on until the one doing the lashing would tire.

Once again, all four Gospels mention the flogging but say absolutely nothing about it; there is no attempt to play upon the reader's emotions. Also, at that age, people were perfectly familiar with it and needed no explanations.

After flogging Him, they took thorns, wove them into a crown, put it on Jesus' head, and began to beat on it, causing intense pain. They put a scarlet robe on Him, **Matthew 27:28**.

Mark's account calls it purple, only to later rip it off, undoubtedly tearing open the blood-dried wounds on His back in the process. Then came the crucifixion.

Imagine striking the very One who created the universe! Imagine striking the very One who created them! **Colossians 1:16**. 'The whole battalion' was involved in everything which is about to happen, **Matthew 27:27 / Mark 15:16**.

THE PURPLE ROBE

John records 'a purple robe', **John 19:2**, whilst Matthew records a 'scarlet' robe, **Matthew 27:28**. Purple, with the ancients, was a vague term for bright, rich colour, and would be used of crimson as well as violet.

It was probably the cloak of a Roman soldier, i.e., an officer. The 'robe', 'himatismos', is used generally of costly or stately raiment, the apparel of kings, of officials, etc., **Luke 7:25**.

CROWN OF THORNS

It was often a prelude to crucifixion, but in this case, it wasn't, as Pilate later tried to have Jesus released, and this flogging was an attempt to satisfy the Jews without killing Jesus. The soldiers went further than just flogging and placed a crown of thorns upon His head, **Matthew 27:29**.

This was a mock coronation for the one claiming to be the king of the Jews, and it was followed by mock worship of Him. There are two thoughts concerning 'a crown of thorns.'

1. That it was an instrument of torture, long, sharp spikes turned inward, or
2. That it was a radiant crown, with the spikes turned outward, similar in appearance to a crown worn by an emperor.

There is a shrub in Palestine called 'spina Christi' or 'palimus shrub' which has long, sharp spikes, and leaves similar to the ivy used for emperors' or generals' crowns; this is the traditional source of the crown of thorns.

Matthew says that they 'put a staff in his hand', **Matthew 27:29**. Notice they spit on Jesus, **Matthew 27:30**, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again, **Matthew 27:30 / Mark 15:19**.

Note the tense, 'they kept coming up to Him, kept striking Him,' **John 19:3**, it was repeated action. The picture is of a soldier after soldier coming up to Jesus, kneeling before Him, slapping Him, spitting on Him and shouting.

The soldiers then bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' **John 19:3 / Matthew 27:29 / Mark 15:18**. They worshipped Him, **Mark 15:19**. In **John 19:4**, we see Pilate for the second time telling the people that he can find no charge with which to charge Jesus.

He ought to have released Jesus at this point; if the prisoner's guilt or innocence had been the sole consideration, Jesus would have been set free before this, but he is afraid of possible political repercussions.

When Jesus comes out, Pilate shows Him to the crowd, 'here is your man!', **John 19:5**. This was an attempt to gain sympathy for Jesus as if to say, 'look at this poor fellow!'

How could they accuse such a pitiable object of treason? It's a weak attempt to free Jesus. The governor is almost begging the Jews to show pity for the prisoner.

When the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out, 'Crucify, crucify!' and once more Pilate tells them to take Jesus themselves and crucify Him, for he find no guilt in Jesus, **John 19:6**.

They have tried to have Jesus condemned for sedition, **Luke 23:2**, now in **John 19:7**, they are forced to reveal the real charge against him, 'He ought to die because he made himself the Son of God'.

The charge was blasphemy, and their 'Law' of Moses called for the death penalty, **Leviticus 24:16**. It was on this charge that the Sanhedrin had condemned Jesus to death, **Mark 14:61-64 / Matthew 27:23-66**, but they don't reveal this until they are forced to do so. If Jesus' claim to be the Son of God was false, then the Sanhedrin was right in condemning Him to death for blasphemy.

Pilate knows that the Jews aren't allowed to crucify someone, and the offer to them here isn't genuine but an attempt to get the crowd to move away. He is afraid of them, **John 19:8**, and wants this problem to go away as soon as possible. The governor was already a frightened man, **John 19:8**; two things would have made him afraid.

1. His wife's message, **Matthew 27:19**.
2. The words and demeanour of Jesus.

Pilate knows that it's the policy of Rome to allow the natives religious freedom, as long as they worship the Caesar claiming deity as well. The Jews are aware of this policy and hope to use it to persuade the reluctant Pilate.

And so, Pilate takes Jesus into the Praetorium and asks, 'Where are you from?' 'To what world do you belong?' **John 19:9**. Notice that Jesus didn't answer, **John 19:9**, perhaps because worldly Pilate had already been told, and could not grasp the answer, **John 18:37-38**.

Perhaps also because a man who would scourge a prisoner, he had declared innocent, did not deserve a reply. To the governor, a kingdom based entirely on 'truth' was incomprehensible, for Jesus to have said that He was the Son of God who had come from heaven would have been more so.

He seems to get into a rage, and he can't fathom what Jesus is all about. He arrogantly brags about his power, trying to get a response out of Jesus, even offering his freedom for the correct answers.

Refusing to answer could be regarded as 'contempt of court'. Pilate, as Tiberius' representative, had the power of life and death over a prisoner, **John 19:10**. He says, 'Do you not know that I have power 'exousia' to release you, and power 'exousia' to crucify you?' The governor's 'exousia' was delegated authority, derived from Caesar.

Calmly, Jesus tells Pilate of the origin of His power, His authority is 'given from above', from God, **John 19:11 / Romans 13:1**. God had entrusted Him with the power He has, and He is answerable to God for the way He uses that power. Jesus reassures Pilate that he is not totally to blame for putting the Son of God to death, as he does so out of ignorance of the truth.

Caiaphas, acting officially for the Sanhedrin, had delivered Jesus to Pilate; he had 'the greater sin,' **John 19:11**. The deeper guilt lies with the man who 'handed me over to you'.

This is Jesus' final statement to Pilate, and in it, He affirms God's supremacy, He is in control of human affairs, and also man's accountability; the Jewish rulers and the Roman governors are answerable to God.

John tells us that Pilate knew that Jesus was no leader of the sedition against Rome, he was also frightened, so he 'sought', notice again the tense, 'kept on seeking', to free Him, **John 19:12**.

John doesn't say how he did so, but he records that the governor finally gave up the efforts because of fear, **John 19:12**. The chief priests however had the Law, they ought to have recognised the Messiah but instead, they are about to force His execution.

This short speech of Jesus impresses Pilate, who recognises some characteristics that he doesn't quite understand, and he tries again to persuade the Jews to allow him to allow Jesus to go free.

The Jews shouted, 'If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friends,' **John 19:12**. This was political blackmail, and it ended the efforts to release Jesus. The Jews were saying, 'Free this man and we will accuse you to the Emperor. The charge against you will be high treason, that you released a man who claimed to be King of the Jews. Tiberius was a very suspicious ruler; even a hint of disloyalty would be disastrous for a Roman official. Pilate knew that a charge of high treason could cost him position, liberty, and life, and so, this frightened him, and then he decided to put personal safety before justice, to condemn an innocent man to death.

The Jew's new weapon against Jesus is all-powerful against Pilate. Jesus claims to be the king; thus, He opposes Caesar, who is the king of all the vast Roman domains.

This was the ultimate hypocrisy, as all present knew that the Jews didn't consider Caesar their king and held no allegiance to him. This very good argument must have again caused a troubled Pilate to slip into a rage, but they now had him in a corner.

Pilate makes one last attempt to change the mob's mind, but they will not hear of it; they want Jesus dead, **John 19:12**. **John 19:13** could imply that Pilate had Jesus sit on the judgement seat; the Greek could have either meaning. The Jew's threat has decided Pilate and at once he prepares to pass sentence, he 'brought Jesus out', that is out of the Praetorium and 'sat down on the judgment seat', **Acts 18:12 / Acts 18:16-17**, this was a raised platform on which roman judge sat to pronounce sentence.

'The pavement', **John 19:13**, 'luthostratos', was stone-paved; Josephus states that Temple Mount was covered with a mosaic pavement. Hebrew 'Gabbatha' means raised place, elevation.

John 19:14 seems to make this quite possible, Pilate showing the Jews a weak, blood-covered man not able even to stand and needing the seat more than Pilate.

THE DAY OF PREPARATION

The Day of Preparation was the day before Passover, **John 19:14**, which began at the next sunset. John mentions it was 'about the sixth hour'; scholars and commentators are divided about whether John uses Jewish or Roman time. Jewish time is twelve noon, but Roman time is six a.m.

John is in Asia Minor, writing toward the end of the first century, when Jerusalem had been destroyed, and the Jewish state ceased to exist. It would be natural for him to give the time according to Roman reckoning. In **Mark 15:25**, Mark would use Jewish reckoning; at 6 a.m., the trial was in progress, and at nine a.m. Jesus was crucified. When Pilate says, 'Behold your King!', **John 19:14**, this was a joke in bad taste at the expense of the Jews. 'They yelled, 'off with him! Off with him! Crucify Him!' **John 19:15**. Pilate replied, 'The King of you shall I crucify?' **John 19:15**.

The chief priests, who were the religious leaders and teachers of the nation, replied, 'We have no king but Caesar,' **John 19:15**. In fact, they claimed that as Israel was God's special nation, God was their only King, and they hated Caesar and bitterly resented the Roman occupation.

With the use of the argument by the mob, in favour of Caesar, Pilate knows that he has lost to satisfy them, and so, he hands Jesus over to be crucified, **John 19:16**. This declaration was 'the crowning apostasy of Judaism' and 'the utterance of a nation turned traitor to its noblest traditions'.

After they had mocked Jesus, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him, **Matthew 27:31 / Mark 15:20**. Then they led Jesus away to crucify Him, **John 19:16 / Matthew 27:31 / Mark 15:20**.

No doubt he shows them the wounds that have been inflicted in the hope that they would now be satisfied, but alas the appearance of Jesus only makes the mob rowdier and bloodthirsty. You never get rid of a pack of wolves by showing them blood!

CONCLUSION

The trials before the Roman authorities started with Pilate, **John 18:23**, after Jesus was beaten. The charges brought against Him were very different from the charges in His religious trials. He was charged with inciting people to riot, forbidding the people to pay their taxes, and claiming to be King.

Pilate found no reason to kill Jesus, so he sent Him to Herod, **Luke 23:7**. Herod had Jesus ridiculed, but wanting to avoid the political liability, he sent Jesus back to Pilate, **Luke 23:11-12**.

This was the last trial as Pilate tried to appease the animosity of the Jews by having Jesus scourged. The Roman scourge is a terrible whipping of thirty-nine lashes.

In a final effort to have Jesus released, Pilate offered the prisoner Barabbas to be crucified, and Jesus released, but to no avail. The crowds called for Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified.

Pilate granted their demand and surrendered Jesus to their will, **Luke 23:25**. The trials of Jesus represent the ultimate mockery of justice. Jesus, the most innocent man in the history of the world, was found guilty of crimes and sentenced to death by crucifixion.

HISTORY OF CRUCIFIXION

Crucifixion is an ancient method of execution, in which the victim was tied or nailed to a large wooden cross and left to hang there until death. It was never performed for ritual or symbolic reasons; usually, its purpose was only to provide a particularly painful, gruesome, and public death, using whatever means were most expedient for that goal.

The history of crucifixion can be traced back to the ancient Persians, and there's evidence to support the Greeks practising this form of torture. As always, the Romans adopted the custom from Carthage and used it for slaves, rebels, and anyone who was their enemy, along with criminals.

While most Roman citizens were exempt from crucifixion, if you were a Roman and found guilty of treason, then you could face crucifixion. Crucifixion was considered a humiliating way to die. The prisoner usually had to carry the horizontal beam, patibulum, to the place of execution, not necessarily the whole cross.

Crucifixion was an art form for the Romans, who had specially trained men to carry out the sentence. There would usually be a commanding centurion and four soldiers. When it was done in an established place of execution, the vertical beam, stipes, was sometimes permanently embedded in the ground.

THE CROSS

The horizontal beam of the cross, the transom, could be fixed at the very top of the vertical piece, the upright, to form a 'T' called a tau cross. The horizontal beam could also be affixed at some distance below the top, often in a mortise, to form a 'T-shape' called a Latin cross.

Alternatively, the cross could consist of two diagonal beams to form an 'X'. A single, vertical wooden stake with no transom at all has also been cited by some.

THE NAILS

The 'nails' were tapered iron spikes approximately five to seven inches long with a square shaft 3/8 inch across. The victim was probably affixed to the cross by ropes, nails, or some combination of the two.

In popular depictions of the crucifixion, possibly derived from a literal reading of the description in the Gospel of John, of Jesus' wounds being 'in the hands', the victim is shown supported only by nails driven straight through the feet and the palms of the hands.

However, the flesh of the hands can't support a person's body weight, so some other means must have been used to support most of the weight, such as tying the wrists to the cross beam.

Another possibility, that doesn't require tying, is that the nails were inserted just above the wrist, between the two bones of the forearm. the radius and the ulna.

The nails could also be driven through the wrist, in a space between four carpal bones, which is the location shown in the Shroud of Turin. As some historians have suggested, the Gospel words that are translated as 'hands' may have in fact included everything below the mid-forearm.

Another possibility is that the nails may have been driven in on an angle, entering in the palm in the crease that delineates the bulky region at the base of the thumb, and exiting in the wrist, passing through the carpal tunnel.

The Romans would often display the victims, still on the cross, in rows. There would be row after row of condemned criminals lining the streets of the main entrance to the city, so that everyone entering a new city would know what would happen to them if they didn't adhere to Roman laws and regulations. It also sent a powerful message to any oncoming enemies of the fate which awaits them.

PUBLICLY NAKED

Crucifixion was a very public affair; criminals, rebels, etc., needed to be reminded of the terrible consequences of breaking Roman law. Fear ruled the day. Unlike what we see in many artists' impressions of the crucifixion, the victim was usually stripped naked and hung naked.

Historian art has most people who were crucified covered in a loincloth, but this simply isn't true. Nakedness was often a symbol of spiritual shame and ignominy.

CAUSE OF DEATH

Death could come in hours or days, depending on the exact methods, the health of those crucified, and environmental circumstances. It's widely accepted that the typical cause of death was asphyxiation.

When the whole-body weight was supported by the stretched arms, the victim would have severe difficulty exhaling due to hyper-expansion of the lungs. The victim would therefore have to draw himself up by his arms or have his feet supported by tying or by a woodblock.

Indeed, Roman executioners were said to break the victim's legs after he had hung for some time, in order to hasten his death. Once deprived of support and unable to lift himself, the victim would die within a few minutes.

The Romans often broke the prisoners' legs to hasten the death process. Please note that the Roman soldiers responsible for carrying out the sentence were responsible for the victim until they died.

In other words, the Romans weren't being kind by breaking the victim's legs; they broke the victim's legs so that they could get on with their other duties. Burial afterwards wasn't usually permitted. According to history, Emperor Constantine abolished crucifixion in the Roman Empire when Christianity became the state religion.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

'Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, "They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment." So, this is what the soldiers did.' John 19:17-24

Notice that the mere fact of the crucifixion is recorded, in **John 19:18**, as with flogging, **John 19:1**, it isn't described. First-century readers knew well what was involved in these acts.

Roman law didn't permit a Roman citizen to be crucified; it was regarded as the death of a slave. The punishment was handed out for such crimes as treason, desertion in the face of the enemy, robbery, piracy, assassination, sedition, etc. Cicero said, 'Let every name of the cross be far away not only from the body of a Roman citizen but even from his thought, his eyes, his ears.'

After Jesus was flogged, we know that He carried His own crossbar, weighing in at seventy-five to one hundred and twenty-five pounds, and He carried it outside the main city walls. The upright part of the cross was probably permanently mounted in the crucifixion area.

The crossbar would be balanced on the shoulders, and His arms were tied to the crossbar. We can only imagine what this would have been like if he had tripped or fallen. He couldn't use His arms to break their fall; he would likely fall face-first into the ground.

Jesus went out, bearing His own cross, **John 19:17**. As they went out of the city gates, Simon from Cyrene, **Matthew 27:32 / Mark 15:21 / Luke 23:26**, which is in north Africa, **Acts 2:10 / Acts 6:9 / Acts 11:20 / Acts 13:1**, was forced to carry the cross of Jesus, **Matthew 27:32 / Mark 15:21 / Luke 23:26**. This must mean that Jesus was unable to carry it, an execution party would show no mercy to a condemned man.

Once Jesus reached the place for crucifixion, Golgotha, or Calvary, **Matthew 27:33 / Mark 15:22**, in English, it means 'skull,' **John 19:17**. He was offered a drink of wine mixed with myrrh to act as a mild painkiller.

Although this was a kind gesture, usually done by the women, Jesus refused to drink, **Psalms 69:21 / Matthew 27:34 / Mark 15:23**. We need to read **Luke 23:37-41** for details of the procession to Golgotha. It's called 'the place of a skull,' **John 19:17**, but what and where was this? Here are three proposals.

1. It was a hill resembling a skull, but the Bible nowhere describes it as a hill.

2. It was a place of execution, littered with skulls.

However, the Jews wouldn't allow bones of dead men to litter the ground close to the city. Joseph of Arimathea wouldn't have a tomb near such a place, **John 19:41**.

3. That according to legend, it was the place where Adam's skull had been buried.

The truth of the matter is that we simply don't know why this place was simply named 'Skull', **Luke 23:33**. Whatever the speculation, the fact remains. Jesus is taken by Roman soldiers to the place of execution, called Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, which was probably the hill on the Northern side of Jerusalem. Golgotha was close to the city, and the inscription was read by many, **John 19:20**.

The Gospels suggest it was close to the road as Jesus was insulted by 'those who passed by', **Matthew 27:39 / Mark 15:29**. It's outside the city walls, a wall was present at the time, and the hill has a strange appearance, almost like the face of a skull.

This may well be why it is called the place of the skull and why it was designated the place of execution. Some even say that the crucifixion occurred at the present-day site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but this place is now generally accepted to be inside the city walls during Jesus' time.

There was a large number of women who mourned and wailed for Jesus. Jesus turns to speak to them and tells them that they should mourn for themselves, **Luke 23:27**. Jesus knows the calamities that were about to come upon them in the desolation of their city by the Romans, **Luke 23:28-31**.

It was at this point that Jesus says, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do, **Luke 23:34**. Note the numerous prophecies that were being fulfilled at this time.

They divided His garments, **Psalms 22:18 / John 19:24 / Matthew 27:35 / Mark 15:24 / Luke 23:34**. With Him, they crucified two thieves, **Isaiah 53:9 / Isaiah 53:12 / Matthew 27:38 / Mark 15:27 / Luke 22:32-33**.

He was numbered with the transgressors, **Isaiah 53:12**. They blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, **Psalm 22:6-7 / Psalm 69:7 / Matthew 17:39-40 / Matthew 27:39 / Mark 15:28**.

Jesus' clothes were then divided up, which was also a fulfilment of prophecy, **Psalm 22:17-18 / John 19:23-24 / Matthew 27:35 / Mark 15:24 / Luke 23:34**, and the soldiers kept watch at the foot of the cross, **Psalm 22:17 / Matthew 27:36**.

The 'four parts' would consist of a head-dress, turban, sandals, outer robe and girdle, the soldiers cast lots for these. Because His tunic was seamless, they then dived for this as a separate item, **John 19:23-24**.

Josephus, in his writings, says the following.

'The linen tunic of the Jewish high priest was a seamless garment; this fulfilled **Psalm 22:18**.'

John's statement in this verse sums up his abhorrence of the whole incident, 'so this is what the soldiers did.' **John 19:24**. We are reminded again that this was to fulfil prophecy, **John 19:23-24 / Psalm 22:18**.

The clothes Jesus had been wearing were split up among the Romans present, and His only possession, His cloth, was gambled for. Jesus was thus left with nothing to give to those He had left behind. He had given His all, even Himself.

The actual physical pain endured by Jesus is too horrific to contemplate, **John 19:19-22**. Over His head on the cross was the inscription, 'THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS'.

It was the custom of those days that the accusation under which men were condemned should, in every case, be posted above their heads and under the circumstances, the inscription posted by Pilate amounted to a sadistic jest. The people passing along the road North all saw Jesus on the cross and read the sign as it was in all three main languages of the time, **John 19:20**.

Aramaic, used by the common people, Latin, used by the elite and legal rulers of the empire, and Greek, used by the forces in the region, **John 19:20 / Luke 23:38**, it was the language that was universal at the time. Hebrew was being used only by the Jews in their religious dealings.

Regarding the ‘notice’, ‘title’, ‘titlon,’ **John 19:19**, this was a board stating the victim’s name and crime for which they were condemned. He was adamant, and he refused to change what he had written, **John 19:21-22**. Notice the four different accounts of what was written above Jesus’ head.

‘THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS’. **Matthew 27:37**

‘THE KING OF THE JEWS’. **Mark 15:26**

‘THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS’. **Luke 23:38**

‘JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS’. **John 19:19**

When we put the words together, we see that it would read as follows.

‘THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.’

Pilate wouldn’t remove it, **John 19:20**, probably because he wanted to do something to impose his will on the people in response to them imposing their will on him by having Jesus put there. This was, of course, an entirely honest and true statement to make. Jesus was indeed the King of the Jews and the King of all nations.

Pilate had been willing to yield to the ruler’s demand for the death of an innocent man because His own safety was threatened, **John 19:12-13**, and the Jews protested to Pilate about the sign.

The chief priests of the Jews come to Pilate and ask him not to write the words The King of the Jews but that he said, I am King of the Jews, **John 19:21**. Pilate tells them what he has written, I have written, **John 19:22**.

‘Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.’ **John 19:25-**

27

In **John 19:25-27**, we see Jesus commit His mother to John’s care. **Matthew 27:55** says, ‘many women there, looking on from afar’. John names four, ‘His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene’, the first time she is named in the Gospel. They were ‘standing by the cross’; they at first stood afar off with others, then later drew near to the cross.

It is interesting to see the love these women had for Jesus. His own disciples had all, except John, deserted Him, but the women, those courageous and loving women, were there, **John 19:25**.

Jesus cares to the last moment, and He sees both His mother and the disciple He loved together and commends her to his care. He ignores His own suffering. Jesus is concerned for her and commits her to John’s care, **John 19:26-27**.

THE SEVEN SAYINGS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS

‘Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.’ **Luke 23:34**

‘Today you will be with Me in Paradise.’ **Luke 23:43**

‘Woman, behold your son.’ **John 19:26**

‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ **Matthew 27:46**

‘I thirst!’ **John 19:28**

‘It is finished!’ John 19:30

‘Into Your hands, I commit My spirit.’ Luke 23:46

Matthew only records one of the seven sayings of Jesus on the cross, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

‘WOMAN, BEHOLD YOUR SON.’

Why did Jesus commit his mother to John, not to His brothers? **John 19:26**. They didn’t believe in Him, **John 7:5**, but Mary did, **Mark 3:31-35**. His brothers became believers after the resurrection, **Acts 1:14**.

If His ‘Jesus’ mother’s sister’ is the mother of James and John, then John was her nephew. He doesn’t call His mother ‘mother’ as she must now stop looking at Jesus as her son and consider Him as her Lord.

If His ‘Jesus’ mother’s sister’ is the mother of James and John, then John was her nephew. He doesn’t call His mother, ‘mother’, as she must now stop looking at Jesus as her son and consider Him as her Lord.

When we think about life today, there are many reasons to buy a life insurance policy. The most common reason is to provide for the family if the husband or wife dies.

This signifies that their human relationship has ended. He is to be her son no more; he is now her Lord and her God. She will be honoured in heaven for her godly life and remembered as the mother of Jesus. We have a duty to provide for our families, **1 Timothy 5:8**.

The words, ‘He took her to his own home’ **John 19:25**, mean either he took her home immediately, then returned, **John 19:35**. This seems probable, as Matthew and Mark don’t mention that Mary was present when Jesus died; alternatively, he took her home after the crucifixion.

THE DEATH OF JESUS

‘Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.’ John 19:28-30

‘I THIRST’

It’s near the end of Jesus’ human life. He senses it. He has hung on the cross for six hours now. It has become hard for Jesus to even get a breath. Hung from His arms, He must pull Himself up each time He wants to breathe.

His shoulders ache, His mouth is parched, and He is exhausted. And yet He doesn’t want to die without a final word, He asks for something to drink to wet His lips for this final effort, **John 19:28**.

What Scripture was fulfilled here? **John 19:28**. A Psalm of lamentation, written by David, seems to have been fulfilled literally in Jesus, **Psalm 69:21 / Psalm 42:2**. Apparently, Jesus asked for something to quench His thirst in order to fulfil **Psalm 69:21**.

A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips,' **John 19:29 / Psalm 42:2 / Psalm 22:15**. A bowl full of vinegar was a jar of cheap wine, a very bitter wine called posca or sour wine commonly drunk by the Roman soldiers.

This wasn't the first time Jesus had been offered wine; both Mark and Matthew observe that He was offered bitter wine just prior to being crucified, **Matthew 27:34 / Mark 15:23**. Perhaps this was intended as an intoxicant for those about to suffer pain.

A group of Jerusalem women, as an act of devotion, provided for a condemned man a vessel of wine containing a grain of frankincense to numb Him, **Matthew 27:34**. Jesus refused to drink this.

Victims often lived for many hours on the cross, and so, giving Jesus a drink was an act of kindness. However, as one man showed compassion toward Jesus, the others told him to leave Jesus alone, to see if Elijah would come and save Him, **Matthew 27:49**.

He has committed Himself to the Father to offer Himself as a sacrifice. To attempt to lessen the pain of this sacrifice would have somehow been going back on this commitment.

The offering of something to quench His thirst after hanging on the cross for some time is a separate incident. Wine vinegar, 'oxos' **John 19:29**, didn't have any alcohol left in it, but was a sour wine that had turned to vinegar.

Wine is made from grape juice. Yeast fermentation causes sugar to be transformed into alcohol, which continues until the alcohol content reaches about 11% to 12%.

Wine vinegar, on the other hand, is made by the action of acetic acid bacteria on alcohol to produce acetic acid. Since the bacteria that cause this reaction are 'aerobic', they require that the wine be exposed to oxygen in order to form vinegar.

What is a container of wine vinegar doing on Golgotha that day? It's 'posca', a drink popular with soldiers of the Roman army, made by diluting sour wine vinegar with water.

It was inexpensive, considered more thirst-quenching than water alone, it prevented scurvy, killed harmful bacteria in the water, and the vinegary taste made bad-smelling water more palatable.

All over the empire, 'posca' was the soldier's drink of choice; the soldiers had brought 'posca' to sustain them during their crucifixion duty. They weren't getting drunk on it, just using it to quench their own thirst.

THE SPONGE

While a condemned criminal might be able to drink wine prior to being crucified, drinking from a cup while hanging on the cross wasn't practical. So, when Jesus indicated His thirst, the soldiers used a sponge to give Him 'posca' to slake His thirst.

What was a sponge, 'Greek sponges', doing on Golgotha that day? It seems scarcely the thing you'd expect to find. Again, sponges were part of a Roman soldier's kit.

Sponges were found along the Mediterranean coast and were widely used in ancient times to line and pad a soldier's helmet, and soldiers also used sponges as drinking vessels.

No doubt one of the soldiers offered Jesus a drink of 'posca' from his own supply, using his own sponge. A soldier wasn't required to share his drink with the criminals under his care, but he had seen that Jesus was dying, unlike any other criminal he had ever seen. No cursing, no blaming, no anger.

A MAN LIKE NO OTHER

What was it like to watch Jesus' slow death? Perhaps it had impressed the soldier with something like Peter's words, **1 Peter 2:22-23**. Peter concludes this passage with something, however, that the soldier didn't yet know, echoing the words of the 'Suffering Servant' passage of **Isaiah 53 / 1 Peter 2:24**. The 'posca' offered by a soldier on his sponge that day was an act of mercy to the One who was bringing God's mercy to all humankind.

THE HYSSOP

John makes a point of specifying the 'hyssop plant', **John 19:29**, a small bush with blue flowers and highly aromatic leaves, whereas the other Gospels refer to it as 'stick' or 'reed'.

What is the significance of hyssop? Hyssop was used to sprinkle blood on the doorposts and lintels on the first Passover, **Exodus 12:22**. It was associated with purification and sacrifices in the tabernacle, **Leviticus 14:4 / Leviticus 14:6 / Numbers 19:6 / Numbers 19:18**. No doubt John had this in mind when he wrote his Gospel.

RECEIVING THE POSCA

John tells us that Jesus actually drank some of the vinegary 'posca' from the sponge. For a few seconds, at least, Jesus sucked the 'posca' from the sponge. He didn't drink long enough to satisfy what must have been moderate to severe dehydration from loss of blood, exposure to the elements, and the necessity of gasping for breath through his mouth.

The end was near, so He drank only enough to moisten His parched throat so that His last words of triumph might be heard across the hilltop of Golgotha, **John 19:30**. What can we learn from Jesus' words, 'I thirst'?

1. Jesus' physical humanity.

First and probably of greatest importance, Jesus' word 'I thirst,' reminds us of Jesus' physical nature, His humanity. This was no play-acting on the cross, a divine being pretending to undergo a physical act of torture that couldn't touch Him. This was tangible physical suffering, of which extreme thirst is the one element most of us can readily identify with from our own personal experience.

There was a heresy afoot in the Hellenistic world that Jesus didn't really come in flesh and blood, much less die a gruesome physical death on the cross. The flesh was of the evil realm, they believed, and could never be holy. Only the spirit was capable of the divine.

So, Jesus didn't really die; He only appeared to, He was only pretending, this is what Docetism and Gnosticism believe. The apostle John was combating an early form of this heresy in his letters, **1 John 4:2-3 / 2 John 7**. Jesus' fifth word, 'I thirst,' reminds us that Jesus died in the flesh for us and our sins.

2. Jesus' awareness of Scripture.

'I thirst' reminds us of Jesus' extensive knowledge of the prophetic scriptures concerning His suffering and death and His willingness to fulfil each of them to the letter. The best-known passage, of course, is the 'Servant Song' from **Isaiah 53:12**.

He knew it well and referred to it again and again. Jesus' action to ask for a drink is deliberately prompted by His knowledge of Scripture and determination to fulfil it, **John 19:28**.

3. Jesus' determination to complete His task, **Matthew 27:50**.

He was summoning Himself to bring it all to completion.

CONCLUSION

We can only be in awe of Jesus and His awareness of not only those around Him, but His Father in heaven and His desire to please His Father even moments before His death. We're reminded of His humanity whilst suffering for each of us today.

May we never take the events of the cross too lightly, and may we always learn from Him who hung upon it. Even upon the cross, just moments before He dies, Jesus considers His task here during His visit to earth. Jesus knew 'that all was now finished', 'telso'.

This frequently signifies, not merely to terminate a thing, but to carry out a thing to the full; the same word is used in **John 19:30**. The single Greek word has been found in the papyri being placed on receipts for taxes, meaning 'paid in full.' This may have been a moment of great joy to the heart of our Saviour.

'IT IS FINISHED'

The single Greek word has been found in the papyri, being placed on receipts for taxes, meaning 'paid in full,' **John 19:30**. This may have been a moment of great joy to the heart of our Saviour.

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His death isn't that of a defeated or beaten man; it's the death of a victor who triumphs. The 'loud cry' of **Matthew 27:50** and **Mark 15:37** tells us that Jesus died as a victor; He had completed what He came to do.

WHAT DID JESUS FINISH?

Every sin has been paid for, every evil deed judged, and the full and total price of our redemption purchased at the cross. That is the power of the blood of Jesus. That is the glory of the Son of God. It is finished means it is accomplished, the task is done, it's all over. The Gospels state that Jesus uttered a loud cry immediately before He died.

'It is finished!' was shouted, a cry of triumph. His commission is fulfilled, **John 17:4**. It is a cry of accomplishment, but it is also an announcement of obedience fulfilled. This shout began in the painful will of the Father, the cup, the baptism, the suffering, the cross.

‘It is finished’ announces the full obedience of the One who, though equal with God, **Philippians 2:7-11**. Make no mistake. The ability to say, ‘It is finished’ to the Father’s commission was not the beginning of some kind of ‘glory road,’ but the end. It was the final culmination of a life of obedience, humility, and suffering that now ushers in a new era.

Can you imagine the expression on the Jews’ faces as they remembered the whole of the messianic prophecy as we find in **Psalm 22** being fulfilled in front of their eyes? And the climax would be Jesus’ final words, ‘It is finished,’ **John 19:30**.

Look at the last line of **Psalms 22**. ‘He has done it!’ **Psalm 22:31**. Jesus isn’t saying that His father ‘has forsaken Him’ or His Father has ‘turned away from Him’, He’s saying that He is the Messiah.

PSALM 22

Now I don’t know about you, but a lot of people I know can recite the whole of **Psalm 23**, but they couldn’t tell you one verse from **Psalm 68**, **Psalm 52** or **Psalm 117**.

WHY IS THAT?

Well, simply because we don’t know our Scriptures as the Jews did, we know **Psalm 23** very well because we’ve heard it over and over again, but we don’t hear the other Psalms as often.

The Jews would have known all of the Psalms and memorised them because they had been taught them over and over again from a very young age. The more you hear them, the more you’ll remember them.

Old Testament prophecy often had both a current and future application, and here we’re concerned with the future application of what is written in **Psalm 22**. As we read it, we will see why Jesus said, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’

Later, in **John 19:30**, He said, ‘It is finished.’ What we see is that Jesus quoted the very first verse in **Psalm 22** and the very last verse, which, properly translated, should read, ‘it is finished.’

Jesus quoted the beginning and the ending of one of the most famous, most well-known, and most memorised sections of all of the Old Testament, one that vividly set forth what was taking place right in front of their eyes. No doubt for many of them who had ears to hear, the verses we are about to read flashed through their minds.

Psalms 22-24 are Messianic Psalms. **Psalm 22** focuses on the coming Saviour. **Psalm 23** pictures the Saviour as a shepherd of the people. **Psalm 24** proclaims the sovereignty of the Saviour.

The Psalm can be divided into two sections, the first dealing with trials, **Psalm 22:1-21** and the second with triumph over trials, **Psalm 22:22-31**. As we read on, we’ll see that these are basically rhetorical questions, because after **Psalm 22:18**, the theme of the Psalm changes radically from death to life.

But to many standing around at the scene, especially those who weren’t familiar with this Psalm, and their attention captivated by the horror of it all, it would certainly ‘appear’ as if God had forsaken this man who had claimed to be His Son, **Psalm 22:1**.

TO WHOM DID JESUS COME?

To whom was this Psalm written? Israel. Look how he's reminding them of their spiritual heritage, which included the Messiah, **Psalm 22:2-5**. The word 'worm' used in **Psalm 22:6** is very interesting; it is the Hebrew word 'tola', which isn't the ordinary word for worm.

Rather, this was a worm from which crimson or scarlet dye was obtained. Why is this word used? Because Jesus was covered with blood and was the colour of scarlet dye.

Psalm 22:7-8 sounds familiar, don't they? **Matthew 27:41-43**. This very prophecy was unfolding right in front of their eyes, and Jesus was trying to call their attention to it, **Psalm 22:9-11**.

The agony of death itself was approaching, the disciples 'deserted him and fled,' **Mark 14:10**, with the exception of John, and in the excruciating agony of that situation, Jesus again cried out for help.

The torture described here is clearly that of a crucifixion, a form of execution, which, as far as we can determine, had never at that time been used by any government.

Although it resembles the impaling of enemies upon stakes, as practised by the Assyrians, the practise of crucifixion was never developed until a later time by the Romans.

WHO WAS BASHAN?

And what does that mean? **Psalm 22:12**. Bashan was the chief cattle-raising area of Israel, where the biggest, best, and strongest bulls came from. Figuratively, this is referring to the religious 'top notches' of Israel.

It was the Pharisees who had inspired, persuaded, and manipulated the Romans to pound the nails. As such, they were the ones responsible for Jesus' death, **John 19:12-16**.

Using metaphorical language, **Psalm 22:13-15** clearly describe a person dying. 'All my bones', we say things like that today, don't we? 'Every bone in my body is tired.' That doesn't mean all two hundred and sixteen or however many there are; it's a figure of speech.

In regard to Jesus, crucifixion dislocated a number of his bones, and no doubt it felt like all of them. His heart, the most critical organ in his body, 'turned to wax.' A 'potsherd' was an old piece of pottery dried by the sun; Jesus' strength had ebbed away. His tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. From the cross, he said, 'I thirst,' **John 19:28**

When the Romans crucified someone, they formed a cordon of soldiers around the cross to keep the people away. And the Jews referred to uncircumcised people like the Romans as 'dogs,' **Psalm 22:16-18**.

'I can count all my bones', that's another figure of speech meaning that in His many beatings and floggings, Jesus' skin had been thrashed to the bone. People spat on Him, taunted Him, and gloated over Him.

Psalm 22:18 couldn't more clearly describe what later happened at Golgotha in fulfilment of this prophecy, **Matthew 37:35**. And it's at this point that the thrust of **Psalm 22** begins to shift from death to life. The Messiah calls upon His God, Yahweh, to save him, **Psalm 22:19-21**.

HOW?

Not by taking Him off the cross, but by raising Him from the dead in accordance with other Old Testament prophecies, **Psalm 16:10**. On the Day of Pentecost, when Peter preached the first Gospel sermon, he boldly asserted that God had raised Jesus from the dead, **Acts 2:24**.

He then explained that God had performed this miraculous deed in fulfilment of David's prophecy in **Psalm 16**. In fact, he quoted the words of David in detail as contained in **Psalm 16:8-11**.

Years later, Paul did the same thing when he spoke to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia. **Acts 13:33-35**. Like Peter, he declared that God had raised Jesus from the dead in fulfilment of **Psalm 16:10**.

How is the Messiah going to praise God in the future when it's clear that He was to die? **Psalm 22:22-23**. Only if God keeps His Word and raises him from the dead. And the next verse indicates that God hadn't forsaken him and would do just that! **Psalm 22:24**.

In this magnificent psalm, we see a vivid portrait of the death and resurrection of the man we now know as Jesus, the Messiah. This Psalm ends in triumph, and God will bless the world through Him. Again, if God turned His back on His Son, why does the Psalm say otherwise?

Does 'the Father turn His face away' according to this verse? Not at all. The proclamation of the prayer was to all the people. The proclamation was an exhortation to fear, praise and glorify God, **Psalm 22:25-31**.

In times of trouble, vows were made to God, and when the day of deliverance came, the one delivered remembered what he had promised the Lord, and thus gave his thank offerings to the Lord.

After the victory over an enemy, Israel ate of the sacrifices that were made to the Lord, **Leviticus 3:17 / Leviticus 7:16 / Numbers 15:3**. Not only would Israel worship the Lord, but this Psalm speaks of all the nations giving praise to God. This is certainly a Messianic prophecy of what would eventually come and did come in reference to Jesus, **Revelation 11:15**.

The last verse of **Psalm 22:31** should be translated a bit differently. In the KJV, you can see that the word 'it' is in italics, indicating that the translators added it. The pronoun 'he' should be 'it,' so that the Psalm closes with the words, 'for it is finished.'

WHAT SHOULD WE LEARN FROM 'IT IS FINISHED'?

When we meditate on this sixth word from the cross, what should we learn for our lives?

1. We Are to Live Lives of Purpose.

First, we are to live lives of purpose. Unless Jesus had a purpose, a mission to complete, the words, 'It is finished,' would have had little meaning. He wasn't speaking of his earthly life that was finished; in fact, his life has no beginning and has no end. Rather, he is speaking of that which the Father had instructed him to do. Our lives may not be so clear, so purpose-driven as Jesus' life.

However, I believe that one of the signs of maturity in our lives is to discern our abilities, and then order our lives so as to maximise what God has given us. Jesus told the Parables of the Talents, **Matthew 25:14-30** and the Pounds, **Luke 19:11-27**.

In each case, success for the servant was to 'trade with' what the master had given him in order to produce the largest possible outcome for the master, given each servant's unique talents, time, and circumstances. The reward was to hear the master say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your master'. **Matthew 25:21**.

2. We Are to Live Lives of Focus.

Second, living lives of purpose requires us to focus on our priorities. Instead of living scatter-shot lives, we are to be marksmen who aim carefully at the target and make our shots count. This requires focus and discipline. It means saying 'No' to some choices so that we can say 'Yes' to opportunities that are even better.

3. We Are to Live Lives of Obedience.

Third, to be able to say, 'It is finished,' as Jesus did, our lives must be marked by obedience. Jesus is God, but in His earthly life, He willingly obeyed, **Philippians 2:8**.

Paul put it this way, 'I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,' **Galatians 2:20**. Obedience is the opposite of independent action. It means living in obedience to God, not to ourselves.

4. We Must Be Willing to Suffer to Achieve God's Purpose

Finally, to say 'It is finished,' we must be willing to suffer to achieve God's purpose for our lives. We continue in the sunny summer days as well as the stormy winters of our lives.

We don't give up just because things are difficult. We are willing to suffer whatever is necessary to complete the Father's plan for our lives. When our lives are over, we want to be able to say with Paul, 'The time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.'

From now on, there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing,' **2 Timothy 4:6-8**.

These words teach us to be faithful unto death. This is an example of endurance to the end. We should not forget to ask for the grace of perseverance, that we too may be faithful to death, that we may finish the work which He has given us to do. And with Jesus to say, 'It is finished!'

Jesus 'gave up his spirit' is an unusual way of describing death, **John 19:30 / Matthew 27:50 / Mark 15:39 / Luke 23:46**. He 'gave up', **John 19:30**. His spirit was a voluntary act, **John 10:17-18 / Matthew 20:28**.

At death our spirit goes back to God who gave it, **Ecclesiastes 12:7**, but Jesus chose to give up His spirit and submit to death. We need to fix our eyes on Jesus, **Hebrews 12:2**.

ONE SOLITARY LIFE

Here is a young man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter's shop until he was 30, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office.

He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never travelled 200 miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

While he was still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.

While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth, which was his coat.

When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as has that One Solitary Life.

Author Unknown

A centurion and those with him were responsible for guarding Jesus; they had witnessed everything which just happened and became terrified. They said, surely, he was the Son of God! **Matthew 27:54 / Luke 23:47**. Here are more Gentiles confessing who Christ is, something which the religious leaders refused to accept.

We see the faith of the women who faithfully followed Jesus and took care of His needs. Some of these women were relatives of the disciples who lingered at the cross with John, **Matthew 37:55-56 / Luke 8:2-3 / Luke 23:49 / John 19:25**.

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons, were all present. Mark records the name of the mother of Zebedee's sons as Salome, **Mark 15:41**. The women were the last to wait upon Jesus at the cross and the first to whom He revealed Himself after the resurrection.

It was these people who stood at a distance watching the events happen, **Psalm 38:11**. These were Mary of Magdala, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, **Luke 24:10**. To these three, Mark, in **Mark 16:1**, adds Salome, but some think that this was only a surname of one of these Marys.

'Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers, therefore, came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." **John 19:31-37**

In **John 19:31-37**, after Jesus was dead, we see the other men with Him had not suffered as Jesus before being put on the cross, so they languished longer than the Lord. The Jews wanted the bodies removed before the Sabbath, which was due to start at 6 a.m. that day, **John 19:31**.

This wasn't the normal Sabbath, but a special one, the Passover. There was an urgency to get the bodies taken care of quickly so that those who dealt with the bodies would not be unclean for too long.

It was now Thursday afternoon, and in order to ensure the two of them on the cross would die soon, their legs were broken, preventing them from picking themselves up to breathe and causing them to suffocate.

Roman practice was to leave corpses on the cross to putrefy, a warning to others. Among the Jews, to leave a body on the cross all night was the worst kind of religious defilement, **Deuteronomy 21:23**.

Additionally, the coming day was the Sabbath, also 'a high day', the first day of the Feast of Unleavened bread, **Exodus 12:16 / Leviticus 23:7**. It was a double holy day, and the Jews, religious leaders, were anxious to avoid defilement and so, they asked Pilate to have the legs of the three broken, **John 19:31**. This was called the 'crurifragium,' legs broken by blows from the heavy mallet, resulting in constriction of the chest hastened death.

WAS JESUS' BODY BROKEN?

I'm sure we've all sat around the table to partake of the Lord's Supper, and we've heard someone make some kind of comment or reference to Jesus' 'broken body' on the cross, either in their talk or in their prayer.

Maybe you are reading this and wondering what the big deal is, concerning the bread representing Jesus' 'broken body'! Maybe you're thinking, well, that's what the Scripture actually says, isn't it!

CONFUSION OVER THE BREAD AND JESUS' BODY

Let's go ahead and carefully read the four accounts concerning the bread and Jesus' body.

'While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he **BROKE IT** and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Matthew 26:26

'While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he **BROKE IT** and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take it; this is my body.' Mark 14:22

'And he took bread, gave thanks and **BROKE IT**, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' Luke 22:19

'And when he had given thanks, he **BROKE IT** and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' 1 Corinthians 11:24

Now, notice that in each of these four accounts, the word 'broke' is used; however, you will also notice that it is used in reference to the bread which was 'broken', not Jesus' body.

When we carefully read these four accounts again, we find that Matthew and Mark record Jesus saying, 'This is my body', in Luke's account, he writes that Jesus says, His body 'is given' for you and finally, Paul writes and quotes Jesus as saying, His body is 'for you'. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we read that Jesus' body is 'broken for you'. So, where do people get the idea that Jesus' body was broken?

'And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat: this is my body, **WHICH IS BROKEN** for you: this do in remembrance of me.' 1 Corinthians 11:24 KJV

Notice that the KJV says, 'this is my body, which is **BROKEN** for you'. This is where people get the idea that Jesus' body was indeed broken. It's not surprising that many people quote this passage of Scripture during the Lord's Supper because it's a popular version of the Bible, and people have heard this being quoted time and time again over the years. Part of the problem is that the word 'broken' isn't in the original text, and it isn't in a vast majority of manuscripts. My Greek Lexicon has it written as follows:

'and having given thanks he broke (it), and said, this of me is the body, which (is) for you; this do in of me remembrance.' 1 Corinthians 11:24

The word 'broken' isn't in the actual text; in fact, when we read through the three Gospel accounts again, we find that none of them actually say, 'this is my body which is **BROKEN** for you'. When we read **1 Corinthians 11:24** in most translations, we find it's very similar to what Luke records, except Luke adds the word 'given'.

'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' Luke 22:19

'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' 1 Corinthians 11:24

BROKEN BONES!

We also know from Scripture that they clearly teach that Jesus' body wasn't broken, even after His death, in order to fulfil Scripture.

‘But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they DID NOT BREAK HIS LEGS. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: ‘NOT ONE OF HIS BONES WILL BE BROKEN,’ and, as another scripture says, ‘They will look on the one they have pierced.’ John 19:33-36

Notice John says that Jesus’ bones were not broken. What John does here in his account is quote from **Psalm 34** to let us understand that this prophecy concerning the Christ was fulfilled in Christ at the cross of Christ, **John 19:36**.

‘He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken.’ Psalm 34:20

Psalm 34 is a psalm of the deliverance of David when he changed his behaviour before Abimelek in order to spare his own life, **1 Samuel 21:10-15**. We know that bones are the structural framework of the body, and so, God metaphorically provides structure to the life of the righteous. Though the wicked will reap the reward of their evil, God will preserve those who are His.

Psalm 34:20 points us to the Christ, who is the only truly righteous One, and saw the complete fulfilment of this on the cross, **John 19:36**. Jesus is ‘our Passover lamb’ who was sacrificed for our sins, **John 1:29 / 1 Corinthians 5:7 / Hebrews 4:15 / 1 Peter 1:19** and the Passover lamb wasn’t to have any of its bones broken.

‘It must be eaten inside the house; take none of the meat outside the house. DO NOT BREAK ANY OF THE BONES.’ Exodus 12:46

‘They must not leave any of it till morning or BREAK ANY OF ITS BONES. When they celebrate the Passover, they must follow all the regulations.’ Numbers 9:12

BROKEN BODY!

Over the years, I’ve heard countless arguments suggesting that the body can be broken without the bones being broken. I’ve heard people say, ‘Ah, well, His bones weren’t actually broken, but His body was!’

I hear people say that ‘when they flogged Jesus’ back when they placed a crown of thorns on His head, when they nailed Him to the cross, when they did all these things, they actually broke His skin, which is a part of the body.’

As thought-provoking as that sounds, it appears to me they’re just trying to make sense of the word ‘broken’ in the KJV of **1 Corinthians 11:24**. Yes, the Scriptures teach that His body was ‘wounded’ and ‘pierced’, **Isaiah 53:5 / John 19:34**, but it doesn’t say His body was ‘broken’ for us.

BROKEN SPIRIT!

Another popular idea is that it was Jesus’ spirit, His human spirit, which was broken. I guess when we look at what Christ went through, we could easily conclude that this was true from a human perspective, but we must remember Jesus didn’t crawl to the cross like some defeated victim, He marched to the cross as a man who totally embraced the will of the Father, **Hebrews 10:5-10**, and said triumphantly: ‘it is finished.’ **John 19:30**.

CONCLUSION

It appears that some Christians are a little confused about the word 'broken', and so they end up being confused over the 'breaking' of the bread with Jesus' body. I think we've seen that the Scripture clearly teaches us that it was the bread which was 'broken' and not Jesus' body.

The next time someone asks you to thank God for the bread at the Lord's Supper, or the next time you hear someone saying or praying about Jesus' 'broken body', remember the Scriptures teach that Jesus wasn't broken in any shape or form, His bones weren't broken, His human spirit wasn't broken. It was the bread which was broken, but our Lord's body was given for us.

JESUS PIERCED

The breaking of legs was done to the two robbers, but not to Jesus; He was already dead, **John 19:32-33**. A Roman soldier made absolutely sure, **John 19:34**. The piercing of Jesus' side, **John 19:34**, is seen as a fulfilment of prophecy, **John 19:36-37**, the fulfilment of **Zechariah 12:10** / **Revelation 1:7**.

Jesus was dead so there was no need to break His legs, but to ensure that Jesus was dead, the soldier thrust his spear into the side of Jesus, **John 19:34**, also perhaps just a simple act of brutality.

John goes to great lengths to assure us that this did occur and that a mixture of blood and water flooded forth. John was the man who saw it occur, **John 19:35**. There is much debate about the source of this blood; some say Jesus was bleeding and thus He wasn't yet dead, He bled to death. However, **John 19:30** puts that to rest immediately.

Some have proposed that the pericardium, which would separate into congealed blood and serum, water. This is very difficult to prove, and many say that it isn't possible, so no conclusion shall be drawn.

Let it be sufficient to say that Jesus was dead before the spear ruptured His body and that the whole series of events fulfilled prophecy after prophecy as it unravelled.

THE BURIAL OF JESUS

'Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.' **John 19:38-42**

Since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, **Mark 15:42**, Joseph of Arimathea had to act quickly, **John 19:38**. He had to act quickly since according to Jewish law He couldn't bury the body on the Sabbath day, which officially began at sundown, **Mark 15:42**. He wished to give the body a proper burial.

It's also worth noting that the Romans didn't take the criminals down from the cross, they left them there to rot, to act as a warning to anyone who walked by if they broke the Roman laws and the soldiers at the cross couldn't leave to go

home until the criminals were officially dead, hence why they drove a spear in Jesus' side and didn't need to break any of His bones, **John 19:31-37**.

He was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin, **Matthew 27:57 / Mark 15:43**, and also didn't consent to the execution, **Luke 23:50-54**. He was 'rich', **Matthew 27:57**, 'a respected member of the council', **Mark 15:43**, 'a good and righteous man,' **John 19:38 / Luke 23:50**, who had 'not consented to their purpose and deed', **Luke 23:51**.

He was 'a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews', **John 19:38 / John 12:42-43**. Evidently, he had kept his belief secret until now. He was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, **Mark 15:43**.

He 'took courage and went to Pilate', **John 19:38 / Matthew 27:58 / Mark 15:43**, asked Pilate for permission to bury Jesus' body, **John 19:38 / Matthew 27:58 / Mark 15:43 / Luke 23:52**.

He must have been a very important person because not just anyone could go and speak to Pilate. Pilate was surprised that Jesus died so quickly, **Mark 15:44**. Not one bone in His body was broken, **Exodus 12:46 / Numbers 9:12 / Deuteronomy 21:22-23 / Psalm 34:20 / Zechariah 12:10**.

Being able to remove Jesus from the cross was a huge privilege for Joseph, **John 19:38 / Mark 15:45**. He gathered the corpse up in a sheet, **Matthew 27:59 / Mark 15:46 / Luke 23:53**, and put it in a hole chiselled into the wall of a cave, **Matthew 27:60 / Mark 15:46 / Luke 23:53** / which served as a typical grave in that era.

He closed off the cave by rolling a large rock over the entrance, and went away, **Matthew 27:60 / Mark 15:46**. The tomb was Joseph's own and was new, unused, **John 19:41 / Luke 23:54**. It wasn't a natural cave, but one dug out of the rock.

This was Joseph's own tomb, in his own garden, which tells us he must have been wealthy, too. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away, and Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb, **Matthew 27:60-61**. This was Joseph's own tomb, in his own garden, which tells us he must have been wealthy, too.

Significantly, Matthew and Mark include the statement that the two Marys saw where Jesus was laid, **Matthew 27:56 / Matthew 27:61 / Mark 15:47**. These two women knew where the tomb was located, the women knew the exact location of the tomb, **Luke 23:55**, and so, because of that we can be sure that they were valid witnesses that when they returned three days later, the tomb was empty.

Nicodemus, **John 3:1**, joined Joseph in preparing the customary burial of the body of Jesus, **John 19:39**. Nicodemus joined him for His burial, **John 19:38-42**. He, too, was a member of the Sanhedrin and a believer, **John 3:1-2 / John 7:50**. **John 12:3-5** indicates that Nicodemus was a rich man also. The amount brought suggests that they intended to completely cover the corpse with spices, **John 19:39**.

'Myrrh', **John 19:39**, was a gum resin used as a perfume and embalming fluid, 'alces', pounded wood of the aloe tree, also used for embalming, **Psalm 45:8 / Proverbs 7:17 / Matthew 2:11**. A hundred pounds weight, **John 19:39**, 100 litras, one letra being equal to twelve ounces.

The 'lined cloths', **John 19:40 / Luke 23:53**, were linen strips that were bandages. The wrapping of the body in linen and the use of spices were the custom of the Jews, **John 19:40**. The woman also brought spices, **Luke 23:56**.

One layer of bandages would have been applied, followed by another layer of the spices Nicodemus brought along, and His body would have been finally wrapped in a sheet-like piece of linen. Both men would have been unclean as a result of this action and wouldn't have been able to participate in the Passover.

Joseph's 'new tomb' had not been used and was in a garden close to Golgotha, **John 19:41 / Matthew 27:60 / Luke 23:52**. Joseph, the owner of the tomb, was a believer, so Jesus' body was always in the hands of believers. It was now close to the Passover, and they hurried to arrange Jesus' body in a nearby tomb, **John 19:42**.

In keeping with the law of Moses, they had rested on the Sabbath, **Luke 23:56**, but will return to complete the burial rites of the Saviour which they had begun on the day of His death, **Matthew 28:5-6 / Luke 23:54**.

Because this tomb was ‘close to hand’, and the Sabbath was imminent, **John 19:42**, it appears to be a temporary arrangement. This suggests that Jesus was to be buried elsewhere after the Sabbath. It was very convenient as it was so near the place of the skull and the Sabbath was fast approaching, **John 19:42 / Luke 23:54**.

Constable, in his commentary, says the following concerning **Luke 23:55-56**.

‘This reference to the women prepares for the account of Jesus’ resurrection. When they went to the tomb on Sunday morning, they did not go to the wrong one. They had previously been there and had seen Jesus’ corpse in it. They prepared spices for their return visit on Sunday to honour Jesus further. Luke’s reference to the passing of the Sabbath with no disciple activity confirms Jesus’ prediction that He would be in the grave three days, **Luke 18:33 / Luke 24:7**. It also shows that Jesus’ followers observed the Sabbath as obedient Israelites, **Exodus 20:10**.’

THE GUARD AT THE TOMB

Matthew is the only writer who mentions Pilate giving permission for a guard to be sent to guard the tomb of Christ. The Preparation Day, **Matthew 27:62**, was the Friday before the Sabbath of the Passover, **John 19:31 / Exodus 16:22 / Matthew 26:17**, and it appears that the chief priests and Pharisees were becoming a little nervous. They go to Pilate and tell Him that Jesus said, ‘after three days, He will rise again’, **Matthew 27:63 / Matthew 16:21 / Matthew 17:23 / Matthew 20:19 / Matthew 26:61 / Mark 8:31 / Mark 10:34**.

Barnes, in his commentary, says the following concerning the deception.

‘That is, the last ‘deception’, or the taking him from the tomb, pretending that he rose, will have a wider influence among the people than the first, or his pretending to be the Messiah.’

They are determined to stop any rumours that Jesus would rise and so they ask that His tomb be guarded, just in case one of Jesus’ disciples stole His body, **Matthew 27:64**.

And so, to stop anyone from stealing the body of Christ, a security guard was granted, along with a Roman seal, **Matthew 27:64 / Daniel 6:17**. And that is what they did, **Matthew 27:65-66**.

WHERE DID JESUS’ SPIRIT GO WHEN HE DIED?

Before we answer this question, I think it would be useful to look at what the Bible says about heaven first. The Bible tells us there are three heavens. Note the plurality in **Genesis 1:1**. Speaking about himself, the apostle Paul says in **2 Corinthians 12:2** that he was caught up to the third heaven. So, we have here three ‘heavens’.

1. The heaven which is God’s spiritual, eternal home.

This isn’t physical and isn’t created.

2. The heaven where the stars and planets are.

This is physical and is created.

3. The heaven surrounding the earth where the atmosphere is, and the birds fly.

This is physical and is created. The word ‘heavens’ is used in different ways in the Bible.

1. It refers to the two heavens that God created.

2. It's also used of the third heaven.

This is the uncreated heaven where God has always been from eternity.

God is everywhere, **Acts 17:27-28**. He is present in all 'three heavens', **Psalm 115:2-3**. We cannot get away from God, **Psalm 139:1-16**.

THE TWO HEAVENS GOD CREATED

So He existed before the heavens and the earth, **Genesis 1:1**. These aren't the heavens He has always lived in; these are the heaven where the atmosphere is, and the birds fly and the heaven where the stars are.

THE THIRD HEAVEN

The heaven where God has always lived isn't physical; it hasn't been created. Because God is Spirit, He doesn't need a physical place to live in, **John 4:24**. He doesn't need pictures or images or temples or mosques or churches or shrines to live in, **Acts 17:24-25**.

Where did Jesus' spirit go when He died? Some suggest He went to preach to the souls in hell based on **1 Peter 3:19-20**. A proper understanding of what Peter means will help clarify what Peter means, and that's simply that Christ in His spirit didn't go anywhere to save those who were righteous before the flood because there were none, just Noah and His family, **Genesis 6:5-13**.

Does Peter mean that the Gospel was preached to those who were already dead? No, what he means is that they were dead whilst Peter wrote this letter, but they were very much alive whilst the Gospel was being preached to them.

What he's saying is that the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, spoke through Noah to the people when they were alive. He's not talking about what happened when Jesus was in the grave, and we shouldn't make a text mean something it doesn't say.

PARADISE

Paradise is a Persian word meaning 'an area enclosed by a wall' or 'garden.' **Nehemiah 2:8 / Ecclesiastes 2:5 / Song of Solomon 4:13**. The Greek word 'paradeisos' is used for the garden in Eden in Genesis, **Genesis 2:8-16 / Isaiah 51:3 / Ezekiel 28:13**.

The New Testament understands paradise in terms of its Jewish heritage. In **Luke 23:43**, Jesus promises the penitent thief, 'today you will be with me in paradise.' The intermediate state was transformed by Jesus' emphasis on being with him 'today.' There's no denying where Jesus was going; He was going to 'paradise'.

Wait a minute, didn't Jesus say to Mary, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father,' **John 20:17**? Yes, He did, so if we're saying He went to heaven when He died, how do we understand what He said to Mary?

Jesus is telling Mary not to cling to Him because there is work to be done; she needs to tell others what has happened, and so there's a sense of urgency. She wanted to hold on and not let go, but Jesus wouldn't allow her. Remember, later Thomas was invited to touch Jesus, **John 20:27**.

Could it be possible that when He's speaking to Mary, He's speaking in terms of His new glorified body? He hasn't ascended to the Father in His new everlasting body. Isn't that what the resurrection is about? **1 Corinthians 15:35-44 / 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 / Romans 8:23 / Philippians 3:20-21**.

We know from these verses that we will be reconciled with our bodies at the resurrection, but they will be new, in terms of glorious. If we know this, then surely, it's possible that this is what Jesus meant when He spoke to Mary.

If we read **1 Peter 4:6** and come to the conclusion that Jesus went to hell to preach the Gospel to those who have already died, we would soon run into trouble with other Scriptures, especially **Hebrews 9:27**.

In other words, Peter is saying that the Gospel was preached to them, the dead, when they were very much still alive, but by the time Peter writes this letter, they are now well and truly dead, **1 Peter 4:5**. There is no 'second chance Gospel'; everyone is destined to die once and then face judgment, **Hebrews 9:27**, no second chance to repent and become faithful.

Notice in **Ephesians 4:7-10**, when Paul quotes from **Psalms 68:18**, that he doesn't even mention the word hell.

In **Psalms 68:18**, David is looking forward into the future, it's prophetic, David says, 'received gifts', but Paul says, 'gave gifts'. This is David looking forward, and Paul looking at the fulfilment of this passage.

The words, 'descended to the lower, earthly regions,' aren't a reference to hell, but to Jesus' birth. Paul is referring to Christ's coming to earth as a baby; he's speaking about Christ coming into Mary's womb.

Paul is saying that Jesus, who went up to heaven, that is, in His ascension, is the same Jesus who earlier came down from heaven. Paul isn't speaking about Christ going to 'hell', he's speaking about Christ's birth as a human.

Notice in **Romans 10:6-7** that Paul quotes from the Old Testament, **Deuteronomy 30:12**. Again, there is no mention of the word 'hell' in these verses. In this context, Paul is simply asking these Christians not to ask these questions, why? Because Christ isn't far away, in fact, He is very near, and faith in him is as near as confessing with our mouth and believing in our heart, **Romans 10:9**.

When we read **Acts 2:26-27 / Acts 2:31**, we find the phrase, 'realm of the dead,' which is the grave, the place where the 'body' ends up. Notice it was Jesus' 'body' which went to the grave, not His soul.

It's obvious that Peter is using David's psalm, **Psalms 16:9-10**, to show that Christ's 'body' did not decay. In other words, Jesus wasn't like David, 'who died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day along with his remains,' **Acts 2:29**.

No longer is paradise just an anticipatory condition awaiting the messianic presence at the end of the age. Those who die in faith will 'be with Christ,' **Philippians 1:23**. The dead in Christ will not experience life diminished, but life enhanced, as Jesus' words to Martha in **John 11** imply, **John 11:23-26**.

Note the term, 'Abraham's side', this is a Hebraism which the Jews understood to mean, 'the paradise of God,' **Luke 16:19-22**. So, clearly, once again, the Bible teaches us that Lazarus was in 'paradise'.

It's a figurative phrase that appears to have been drawn from a popular belief that the righteous would rest by Abraham's side in the world to come, an opinion described in Jewish literature at the time of Christ.

The word 'bosom' or 'side' is 'kolpos' and literally refers to the side or lap of a person. Figuratively, as in this case, it refers to a place of honour reserved for a special guest, similar to its usage in **John 13:23**: 'One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him.'

In the case of Lazarus, the reserved place is special because it's beside Abraham, the father of all the righteous. The phrase may be synonymous with the paradise promised to the thief on the cross, **Luke 23:43**. Together, these passages support the conviction that a believer enjoys immediate bliss at the moment of physical death.

When writing to the church in Ephesus, note what Jesus says, 'I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God,' **Revelation 2:7**. According to **Revelation 2:7**, the overcoming church will eat from the tree of life in the eschatological garden.

Sin and death through redemption are now cast out of the human experience. The way is open for the faithful to return to the garden of God. Paradise is the Christian's final home.

Notice that Paul says he was caught up to the 'third heaven', whilst in the same setting says, caught up to 'paradise,' **2 Corinthians 12:1-4**. Surely, the phrases 'caught up to the third heaven' and 'caught up to paradise' mean the same thing! Surely, the 'third heaven' and 'paradise' are one and the same place!

So where did Jesus' spirit go when He died? The 'third heaven', or 'paradise', is God's spiritual, eternal home, which isn't physical and isn't created. This is the place where not only Paul found himself, but the place where Lazarus found himself when he died, the place where Jesus and the thief on the cross went to that day, **Luke 23:43**. There is no Scriptural evidence which says Jesus went to or descended into hell in any shape or form, and there would be no purpose in doing so.

CHAPTER 20

INTRODUCTION

'Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So, she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" So, Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there, but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally, the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)' **John 20:1-9**

THE EMPTY TOMB

When we put all the resurrection accounts together chronologically, a good, clear picture can be constructed.

1. It was very early on the Sunday morning, as the sun was coming up, **John 20:1 / Matthew 28:1 / Mark 16:2 / Luke 24:1**.
2. Mary Magdala and the other Mary were going to anoint Jesus with spices, **John 20:1 / Matthew 28:1 / Mark 16:1 / Luke 24:1**.
3. John records only the experience of Mary of Magdala.

She saw that the stone had been ‘taken away’ from the entrance of the tomb; the stone had been moved from the entrance during the night. The other Gospels say that the stone was ‘rolled back’, ‘rolled away’, clearly it was out of the groove in which it had to be to cover the entrance, **John 20:1 / Matthew 28:2 / Mark 16:4 / Luke 24:2.**

4. The guards had seen this occur and were much afraid; it was done by an angel and accompanied by an earthquake, **Matthew 28:2-4.**

5. The same angel spoke to the women, telling them the Christ had risen, **Matthew 28:5-6 / Mark 16:6 / Luke 24:4-6.**

6. Jesus had gone to Galilee, and they will meet him there, **Matthew 28:7 / Mark 16:7.**

7. This was in accordance with Jesus earlier statements, **Luke 24:7-8.**

8. The women went to tell the disciples as the angel had told them, **John 20:2 / Matthew 28:8 / Mark 16:7 / Luke 24:9.**

9. As they were afraid, they told no one else, **Mark 16:8.**

10. On meeting the disciples, Mary was distressed and didn’t seem to believe what she had heard from the angel, as she says, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him’, **John 20:2.** As we know, they hadn’t removed Jesus; Jesus had removed Himself.

11. Only Peter and John believed initially; both ran to the tomb, and found only the cloth Jesus had been wrapped in, **John 20:3 / John 20:7 / Luke 24:11-12.**

In keeping with the law of Moses, they had rested on the Sabbath and had returned to complete the burial rites of the Saviour, which they had begun on the day of His death.

Because it was after the Sabbath was over when the women proceeded to the tomb, **Matthew 28:1.** This tells us that the resurrection of Jesus happened on the first day of the week, that is, Sunday morning, **John 20:1 / Mark 16:2 / Mark 16:9 / Luke 24:1.**

Only Matthew records this earthquake, **Matthew 28:2.** There was a violent earthquake, when an angel rolled away the stone from Jesus’ grave, symbolising Christ’s power over death, which was obviously supernatural.

Note that **Matthew 28:2** says there was only one angel at the tomb of Jesus, while **Mark 16:5** says there was one young man clothed in a long white garment. **Luke 24:4** and **John 20:12** tell us there were two angels at the tomb.

Mark and Luke referred to their human appearance, **Mark 16:5 / Luke 24:4**, while Matthew and John referred to their angelic nature, **John 20:12 / Matthew 28:2.**

It’s obvious there were two angels present, but only one of them spoke. The angel’s appearance was so bright that the guards became like dead men, **Matthew 28:3-4.**

Spurgeon, in his commentary, says the following concerning the angel.

‘He does not appear to have drawn a flaming sword, nor even to have spoken to the keepers; but the presence of perfect purity overawed these rough legionaries.’

He tells Mary Magdalene, the woman who Jesus drove out seven spirits from her, **Luke 8:2 / Mark 16:9**, and the other Mary, not to be afraid, **Matthew 28:5.** This is because he knows why they are there, they are looking for the Jesus who as crucified, **Matthew 28:5.** The angel then proceeds to tell that Jesus is risen, and the angel invites them to look for themselves, **Matthew 28:6.**

Clarke, in his commentary, says the following concerning the invitation.

‘Come and see the niche in which he was laid-it is now empty; nor was there any other body in the place, for the tomb was a new one, in which no man had ever been laid, **John 19:41**, so there could be no deception in the case.’ He asked them to tell the disciples and Peter what had happened, and that Jesus would meet them in Galilee as promised, **Matthew 28:7 / Mark 14:27-28 / Mark 16:7.** Since Peter was himself a disciple, it seems unusual that he would be singled out and receive a special invitation.

Perhaps it was because the Lord knew that Peter would no longer feel himself worthy to be counted as a disciple after having denied Him, and therefore, Jesus gave him a special invitation to the meeting. What tenderness the Lord showed!

The women fled away very frightened, yet filled with joy, **Matthew 28:8**. The women went to tell the apostles what they had learned, **Matthew 28:8 / Luke 24:10**.

However, on the way Jesus suddenly appears to them, and after He said, ‘greetings’, **Matthew 28:9**. The King James Version says, ‘all hail’ which represents the normal Greek greeting.

It wasn’t that long ago they were mourning Jesus, but now they grasped Him and worshipped Him, **Matthew 28:9**.

Jesus tells them not to be afraid but go and tell his brothers He will meet them in Galilee, **Matthew 28:10**, just as the angel did earlier, **Matthew 28:7 / Mark 14:27-28 / Mark 16:7**.

Spurgeon, in his commentary, says the following.

‘Not first to them who were the heads of the Church, as it were, but first of all to lowly women, did the Lord appear; and the apostles themselves had to go to school to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to learn that great truth, ‘The Lord is risen indeed.’

JESUS APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE

‘Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus. He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.’ **John 20:10-18**

John’s account gives us the full story, **John 20:10-18**. Joyfully, the disciples returned home, no doubt to tell the other disciples of the good news, **John 20:10**. ‘The beloved disciple’ was the first one to believe that Jesus had risen, this without seeing Him, **John 20:8**.

Mary of Magdala was the first to see Him after His resurrection. She is the woman who Jesus drove out seven spirits from her, **Luke 8:2 / Mark 16:9**. Mary, however, stayed at the tomb, even though she had seen the angel earlier on, **Matthew 28:5-6**; she still didn’t understand or believe. Mary stood outside the tomb ‘crying’, sobbing, weeping aloud, **John 20:11**.

As she sobbed, she glanced inside the tomb, she saw two angels sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the corpse had laid, the angels looked like young men, **John 20:11-12 / Mark 16:5 / Luke 24:4**.

They asked why she was in such obvious distress, **John 20:13**. It’s important to note that she makes reference to Jesus as ‘My Lord’, **John 20:13**, indicating continued faith in Him, even though He is no longer about.

With these words, she turned around and noticed Jesus standing, although she didn’t know it was Jesus, **John 20:14**.

Jesus asked her, ‘Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?’ **John 20:15**. Two things should be kept in mind here.

1. She was crying bitterly, blinded by grief.

2. It was only when He spoke her name that ‘she turned’ towards him, **John 20:16**.

Until this moment, she wasn't looking at the speaker. These two facts alone would account for her not knowing it was Jesus. Perhaps Christ's body is so changed as not to be recognised at once even by those who had known Him well. It has new powers and a new majesty, **John 21:4 / Luke 24:16 / Luke 24:37 / Matthew 28:17**.

Notice here the words, 'Sir, tell me, and I will take Him away,' **John 20:15**. How was she to carry a corpse, and where would she take it? Her loving devotion does not measure her strength. This is a beautiful example of the self-forgetfulness of love.

Why she even turned around at that point is open to speculation, but she is now facing an unknown man. He asks why she is crying, the same question the angels had just asked, **John 20:15 / John 20:13**.

In her upset state, thinking Jesus was a gardener, Mary gives Him a brief answer, asking if He had anything to do with Jesus' disappearance, **John 20:15**. The whole conversation with this man is running along very similar lines to the one held moments before with the two angels, **John 20:13-14**.

Jesus now reveals Himself with one word, 'Mary', **John 20:16**. It must have been in the tenderness of His tone, or the gentleness of His voice, that sparks a memory in the mind of Mary, and she realises who she is addressing, **John 20:16**.

The word, 'Rabboni!' is the Aramaic form of 'Rabbi', and it means 'my great Master', **John 20:16**. Jesus tells her, 'do not hold me,' 'do not touch me,' **John 20:17**, but we must remember He allowed women to touch Him after His resurrection, **Matthew 28:9**. He even told Thomas to touch Him, **John 20:27**.

He isn't talking here about mere touching, but holding, in other words, He is saying, 'cease clinging to me'. Her instinctive desire would be to hold on to Jesus, to keep Him and not to let Him go; that wasn't possible.

She couldn't keep Him physically with His disciples; a completely new period was to begin, involving His 'going to his Father and her God', **John 20:17**. After that, His ascension, a new kind of spiritual fellowship, would be available to all His followers. This couldn't be interrupted by any event.

Conditions had changed, and the relationship between the disciples and their 'Didaskalos' and 'Kurios' must also change. She must have run to Him and embraced Him, as He gently tells her not to hold to Him, not to cling to Him, **John 20:17**, referring also to the fact that His current reappearance was just a short and temporary stay.

What did Jesus mean when He said, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God?' **John 20:17**. The Father became Jesus' God when Jesus became a human, **Psalm 22:9-10 / Jeremiah 32:27**. Remember on the cross, Jesus promises the penitent thief, 'today you will be with me in paradise,' **Luke 23:43**.

The intermediate state was transformed by Jesus' emphasis on being with him 'today.' There's no denying where Jesus was going; He was going to 'paradise', **Luke 16:22 / Luke 23:43 / 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 / Revelation 2:7**.

If we say He went to heaven when He died, how do we understand what He said to Mary? Jesus is telling Mary not to cling to Him because there is work to be done. She needs to tell others what has happened, and so there's a sense of urgency. She wanted to hold on and not let go, but Jesus wouldn't allow her.

Remember, He allowed women to touch Him after His resurrection, **Matthew 28:9**. Later, Thomas was invited to touch Jesus, **John 20:27**. Could it be possible that when Jesus speaks to Mary, He is speaking in terms of now clinging onto His new glorified body?

He hasn't ascended to the Father in His new everlasting body. Isn't that what the resurrection is about? **1 Corinthians 15:35-44 / 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 / Romans 8:23 / Philippians 3:20-21**.

We know from these verses that we will be reconciled with our bodies at the resurrection, but they will be new, in terms of glorious. If we know this, then surely, it's possible that this is what Jesus meant when He spoke to Mary in terms of Him going to the Father.

No longer is paradise just an anticipatory condition awaiting the messianic presence at the end of the age. Those who die in faith will 'be with Christ,' **Philippians 1:23-24**. The dead in Christ will not experience life diminished, but life enhanced, as Jesus' words to Martha in **John 11** imply, **John 11:23-26**.

Jesus now charges Mary with the responsibility of telling the disciples this vital news, He is returning to God the Father, and her God, a reference to His victory, **John 20:17**.

Gladly Mary must have run the road to the disciples to tell them the news and the message, **John 20:18**. Jesus first appeared to the women, and He treated them as always beautifully, notice the first person to tell about the risen Christ was a woman.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EMPTY TOMB

The importance of the resurrection of Jesus is summed up by Paul, **1 Corinthians 15:14-15 / 1 Corinthians 15:17**. Jesus died to atone for our sins. But we could not know that He did so unless we also knew that He arose from the grave, for one who did not have the power to conquer death would not have the power to forgive sins. Only in the light of the empty tomb does the cross have significance.

Furthermore, the resurrection of Jesus demonstrates the possibility of our resurrection. If He could conquer death for Himself, He can overcome it for His disciples. The Christian's hope of eternal life is inseparably connected with the resurrection of Jesus.

The resurrection of Christ also shows that Jesus brought an end to the old covenant and its law when He died on the cross. The Mosaic Age, in which Israel had been living for fifteen-hundred years, ended at Calvary.

There Jesus blotted out 'our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross,' **Colossians 2:14**. From that time forth, all men, Jews and Gentiles, have lived in the Christian Age and are subject to the laws of Christ as recorded in the New Testament.

As the women left the site, the chief priests were told by the guards what had happened, **Matthew 28:11**, and as we can imagine, they weren't very happy. The chief priests and the elders decide to come up with some devious plan, that is, they would bribe the guards with a large amount of money, **Matthew 28:12**. They were to tell the governor that someone had come along during the night and stolen Jesus' body, **Matthew 28:13**.

There's no way the guards could deny what happened at the tomb, and under Roman law, the soldiers would have been executed for letting a sealed and guarded tomb be entered. This is why the chief priests and elders told them they would keep them out of trouble, **Matthew 28:14**.

The religious leaders basically promise that they will lie on behalf of the soldiers in order to discourage belief in the resurrection. This lying rumour succeeded, as it was spread among the Jews, **Matthew 28:15**.

The good news is the disciples believed, and they went on to preach about the resurrection of Christ, **Acts 2:36**, and later a Jew named Saul would have a personal encounter with the risen Lord, **Acts 9:1-16**.

KEEPING HIS APPOINTMENT

It's a sad truth that within many of our congregations, we always have those who are late, they're late for worship, late for Bible study, and late for any event that the church has planned. They're never late for work or family events, which does beg the question of priorities.

As Coffman in his commentary rightly suggests, Christ made an appointment to meet His disciples in Galilee, and that appointment He kept. He kept it in spite of: 1. His sleeping disciples. 2. His betrayal. 3. Their forsaking Him. 4. His death. 5. His burial. 6. Peter's denial. 7. The big lie. 8. The unbelief of many. The only people who didn't meet Christ on that mount in Galilee are those who didn't go there to keep their appointment.

Coffman goes on to say, in like manner, now Christ keeps His appointments with His disciples, in spite of similar lapses on their part, and what are those appointments? They are: 1. To meet him in baptism. 2. At the Lord's table. 3. In the trials of life. 4. In death. 5. In the judgment to come.

Only those who will not obey Him shall miss the joy of meeting the Lord in those appointments, but in the case of the judgment, all shall keep that appointment, whether they desire to do so or not.

The time for excuses is over. If Christ can keep His appointment after enduring everything He went through, then surely, we can keep our appointments and come together at the appointed time to worship Him and study His Word!

JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES

'On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again, Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'" John 20:19-23

John tells us that Jesus appeared to His disciples on 'the first day of the week,' **John 20:19 / Matthew 28:1 / Mark 16:2 / Luke 24:1 // John 20:26 / Acts 20:7 / 1 Corinthians 16:2**. The disciples were 'gathered behind closed doors, with the doors locked,' **John 20:19**.

This was 'for fear of the Jews' because the Sanhedrin had killed the Master and they might decide to kill His disciples too. As rumours of His resurrection began to spread, the apostles, close companions of Jesus, would be special targets.

Jesus says, 'peace be with you', **John 20:19**, which was a common Jewish salutation. The apostles must have heard Jesus say this many times, but surely it now took on new meaning. Peace had been His last message to them in their sorrow, **John 16:33**. It was His first word to them on His reappearance.

They were in a secured room, but Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst, **John 20:19**. He had been crucified, His corpse had been buried, yet here He was, before their eyes, speaking words they had heard Him utter many times. They were 'startled and frightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit,' **Luke 24:36**. He shows His wounds and emphasises that He isn't a ghost. At first, they simply couldn't believe their own eyes. 'He showed them His hands and His side, **John 20:20 / Luke 24:39**.

John wrote his Gospel at a time when the church faced the Docetic heresy, the claim that Jesus had no real, human body, **John 4:1-3 / Luke 24:39**. Some 'modernists' today say that Jesus 'spirit' arose, not His body.

John presents conclusive evidence that the body that was crucified was the body that was raised. Then, after being convinced of Jesus identity, the disciples were glad, they were overjoyed, **John 20:20 / John 16:22**.

The greeting, 'peace be with you', is repeated in connection with word of commission, 'As the Father has sent, 'apostello' me, even so I send 'pempo' you,' **John 20:21 / John 17:18**. In **John 20:22**, we see that Jesus 'breathed' on them, **Genesis 2:7 / Exodus 37:9**. There are three views of 'receive the Holy Spirit'.

1. It was a symbolic act, indicating what would happen at Pentecost.

2. That He actually imparted the Spirit to them then.

3. That He gave them a specific ‘gift’ of the Spirit, with the fullness coming at Pentecost.

Jesus words concerning the forgiving and retaining of sins, **John 20:23**, are wrongly used to support the claim that a human ‘priest’ has divine power to absolve man from sin.

In fact, absolution is the prerogative of Deity, **Mark 2:5-10**. No human being can make terms or conditions on which another human being may be forgiven or not forgiven by God. God has already made those conditions, and they are unalterable, **Matthew 28:18-20 / Mark 16:15-16 / John 3:3-5 / Acts 2:37-38 / Acts 22:16 / 1 John 1:7-9**.

The apostles, as the inspired representatives of the Lord Jesus, had the responsibility to make known those terms and conditions, **Matthew 16:18-19 / Matthew 18:18 / John 14:26 / John 15:26-27 / John 16:7-11**.

This doesn’t mean that the power to forgive sins was even entrusted to any man or to any men. It means that the power to proclaim the forgiveness was so entrusted, and it means that the power to warn that forgiveness isn’t open to the impenitent heart was also entrusted to them.

Others were present with the ten apostles, **Luke 24:33-36**, but note that in **Acts 1:2-8**, Luke includes only ‘the apostles whom he had chosen’ as the ones to whom the Holy Spirit baptism was promised.

They, the apostles, would ‘receive power’ and be Jesus’ witnesses. Also, the ‘they’ of **Acts 2:1** most naturally connects with **Acts 1:26**, indicating that on the Day of Pentecost only the apostles were so baptised with the Holy Spirit, **Acts 2:7 / Acts 2:14 / Acts 2:37**, see also the use of power in **Acts 4:33** and **Acts 5:12**. So, we see that it is through the Gospel that the apostles had the ability to forgive people’s sins, by their acceptance of the Christ.

JESUS APPEARS TO THOMAS

‘Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So, the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” A week later, his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

John 20:24-29

Thomas was ‘one of the twelve’, **John 20:24**. This term was still used, even though Judas had gone to his own place, **Acts 1:18**. The name Didymus means twin, but he ‘wasn’t with them when Jesus came in the locked room’, and no reason is given.

He is now nervous and restless, unsure of what is happening. The others ‘told him’, kept saying to him, all his dear friends and the women tell him of the returned Jesus, ‘we have seen the Lord’, **John 20:25**.

He isn’t convinced, but demands the same evidence that they have had, he will not believe until he receives physical proof, **John 20:25**. The similarities between this verse and that which now occur are very similar to the arrival of Jesus on the first day of the week.

‘A week later’ or ‘eight days later,’ **John 20:26**, was the inclusive method of counting, as with ‘after three days’ and ‘on the third day’. On the following first day, in the evening, the same condition obtained, ‘the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you’, **John 20:26**.

It all is as before for the sake of Thomas; the room is locked, the Lord appears, and the same greeting is offered. This again was probably because of the joyful commotion His reappearance caused, ‘peace be with you’.

We see in **John 20:27** that Jesus knew exactly what Thomas's difficulty in accepting His resurrection was. He immediately turned His attention to the doubter and gave him the physical proof required, 'put your finger here' etc. Notice the demands of Thomas and the commands of Christ.

The demand of Thomas	The command of Jesus
1. 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands,'	1. 'Put your finger here, see my hands.'
2. 'And put my hands into his side.'	2. 'Reach your hand and put it into my side.'
3. 'I will not believe it.'	3. 'Stop doubting and believe.'

Though He hadn't been present when Thomas said what he did, He knew exactly what the twin had said, and offered His wounds for examination, precisely what Thomas had requested.

Notice the play on words, 'do not be apistos but pistos', **John 20:27**. John doesn't say he actually touches Jesus, but does record that he believed because he had 'seen' Jesus, **John 20:29**. Compare this with **Luke 24:39**, and **1 John 1:1**. Thomas is now entirely convinced, **John 20:28**. The word Thomas uses for Lord is the Greek 'Kurios', which can be used for a variety of titles, starting at the bottom with the equivalent of 'Sir,' right up to the term for God, or anything in between.

Thomas' declaration is exactly what John states in his prologue, 'the Logos was Theos', **John 1:1-2** / **John 1:14** / **Colossians 1:19** / **Colossians 2:9** / **Hebrews 1:8**. The normal word for God is 'Theos', and this is used for the second descriptive word. Thomas basically says, 'Without doubt you are my risen Lord, and I acknowledge you as Deity!'

Jesus leaves with a great blessing on all modern Christians who have seen no miracles, no resurrected Jesus or even an apostle. We are blessed as we haven't seen and yet believe, **John 20:29**.

'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe' refers to some disciples then, **Luke 24:33-34**. It includes all who subsequently believed through the apostles' word, **John 20:30-31** / **John 17:20** / **1 Peter 1:8**. This, however, was a terrible rebuke of the one who needed to see.

THE PURPOSE OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

'Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.' **John 20:30-31**

In **John 20:30-31**, we see the purpose of the Gospel. John's purpose in writing this book is that readers might believe, be convinced by adequate evidence, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that as a result they might have 'eternal' life in His Name.

John says that Jesus did 'many other signs,' **John 2:23** / **John 4:45** / **John 12:37** / **John 21:25**. John shows us the claim that Jesus Himself made, that the Father made and that others made about Jesus.

He shares with us eight of Christ's 'I am' statements, **John 6:35** / **John 8:12** / **John 8:58** / **John 10:9** / **John 10:11** / **John 11:25** / **John 14:6** / **John 15:1**. John is basically saying that the 'I AM' claims of Jesus are signs, selected from many other signs.

'In the presence of His disciples,' **John 20:30**, tells us that all the signs, 'semeia,' of Jesus were authenticated by honest witnesses. The words, 'that you may believe,' **John 20:31**, are present tense. The words imply that we may keep on believing.

John's inspired record has produced continuous and successive confirmation of faith in Jesus Christ through the ages, **John 20:31**. He is the Messiah, **Isaiah 7:14** / **Isaiah 53:1-12** / **Psalm 22:1-31** / **Mark 14:61**.

He is the Son of God, [Matthew 16:13-20](#) / [John 3:16](#) / [John 10:22-42](#), and He offers eternal life to all who would believe in His Name, [John 1:12](#) / [John 3:16-17](#) / [John 6:51-54](#) / [Acts 4:12](#) / [1 John 5:13](#).

It's encouraging to see that so much more occurred that hasn't been mentioned in this book. John's writings have given us sufficient knowledge about Jesus to accept Him and put our trust in Him.

CHAPTER 21

INTRODUCTION

This last chapter causes some concern as far as the authorship is concerned. Some have suspected that it was written by a different author, but no evidence, such as manuscripts missing the last chapter, can be found.

[John 20:30-31](#) could well constitute the end of the book. John may then, at a later date, have found it necessary to return and write more. He may have wanted to throw light on the misunderstanding that had developed in [John 21:20-23](#), but this seems a long way to go about it.

The style of writing is the same here as before, except for some problems with the use of the name of John's father, Zebedee, in [John 21:2](#), which constitutes the first use of the name of such a close relation to the author in the account. Also, [John 21:20](#), causes some difficulty as it goes to great lengths to describe the disciple whom Jesus loved in contrast to the veiled manner he was previously identified.

[John 21:24-25](#), are the most difficult to reconcile with the balance of the book. The word 'we' in [John 21:4](#) seems to suggest that an outside influence was called to witness the fact that John wrote the book.

As no textual difficulties are found, the last chapter, or certainly the last two verses, may have been added with the full knowledge and assistance of the writer of the balance of the account, which we shall know in eternity.

JESUS AND THE MIRACULOUS CATCH OF FISH

'Afterward, Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So, they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So, Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third-time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.' [John 21:1-14](#)

In [John 21:1-14](#), we see the miraculous draught of fishes. The ‘Sea of Galilee’, [John 21:1](#), was probably better known by this name to readers outside Palestine, [John 6:1](#), ‘Lake of Gennesaret,’ [Luke 5:1](#).

Jesus ‘revealed’ Himself, or appeared, [John 21:1](#), means He manifested, disclosed, showed Himself. Obviously, those weren’t subjective visions that John is reporting, but actual appearances of the One who had been crucified, [1 John 1:1](#).

There are seven ‘disciples’ present, and five are identified. The mentioned disciples are Peter, John, Thomas, Nathanael, James and two others who were out fishing; not all of the eleven were fishermen, [John 21:2](#).

Peter is literally saying, ‘I am going to fish,’ [John 21:2](#), gives no indication of a motive. Was it to be just one fishing expedition, or did he intend to resume his former profession?

One suggestion says, while they were waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit, [Luke 24:49](#) / [Acts 1:4](#), they still found it proper to be usefully employed. Another suggestion is that they were probably waiting in Galilee for the appointed meeting with Christ on the mountain, [Matthew 26:32](#). The truth is, the reason isn’t revealed.

The action has now moved to Galilee, where Jesus had told the women to tell the men to go, [Matthew 28:10](#), and it seems as if the fishing trip was a spur-of-the-moment decision, probably to help relax them after the difficulties they had lately experienced.

Although they were experienced fishermen and they tried all night, they caught nothing, [John 21:3](#). ‘Just as day was breaking’, [John 21:4](#), that is, when dawn ended, the customary time for fishing, ‘Jesus stood on the beach. Yet the disciples didn’t know that it was Jesus,’ [John 21:4](#).

Were their eyes kept from recognising Him as we find in [Luke 24:16](#)? John says nothing to suggest that. The disciples were about one hundred yards from the shore, [John 21:8](#), but they didn’t recognise the man standing on the shore.

It wasn’t fully light; there could have been a morning mist, perhaps they were preoccupied with their fishing. There need be no miraculous explanation for their lack of recognition. This seems to be a common thing after Jesus’ resurrection: people didn’t recognise Him.

Mary at the tomb, [John 20:11-18](#), the disciples on the road to Emmaus, [Luke 24:13-35](#). The term ‘children’ in [John 21:5](#) is ‘paidia’. It’s the same word used in [1 John 2:13](#) / [1 John 2:18](#).

Jesus ask the question, ‘have you any fish?’ and their answer, ‘No’, and His advice, ‘cast your net on the right side, and you will find some’, all were shouted across the one hundred yards of water separating them, [John 21:5](#). When they cast as He directed, they were unable to haul in the net ‘because it was so full of fish’, [John 21:6](#).

The Bible doesn’t give a reason why He was not recognised here. Only when the great catch of fish was netted did John realise who it was, [John 21:7](#). Sometimes people standing on the shore can see better than those in the boat!

John was the first to recognise this ‘stranger’ as Jesus, ‘it is the Lord’, [John 21:7](#). Peter was the first to act, ‘jumped into the water’, [John 21:7](#). His impulsive nature was evident; he was anxious to get to Jesus immediately. He ‘put on his clothes’, ‘ependutes’, upper garment, a fisherman’s Jacket, outer garment, coat, [John 21:7](#).

He was stripped for work, probably wearing only a loincloth. The Jews regarded giving a greeting as a religious act, which couldn’t be performed unless one was properly clothed.

Peter belted his fishermen jacket around him, [John 21:7](#), with instinctive reverence for the presence of His Master. Such details are a good indication that the writer was an eyewitness to the event.

They had a great catch, the weight of which would normally split the net but here divine intervention prevented the net from splitting, [John 21:8](#) / [John 21:11](#). They note that the ‘fish,’ ‘a little fish’, ‘opsarian,’ but there is really nothing in the text which suggests that this was a miracle, and it would be uncharacteristic of Jesus to work one when no urgent need existed.

The disciples joined the Lord on the shore, and it appears they still didn't recognise Him as they dared not ask if it was Jesus. Some people regard the fire, fish and bread to have been provided supernaturally, [John 21:9](#).

Jesus says, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught,' [John 21:10](#), would most naturally suggest some of that being added to what was already cooking on the fire.

Again, some people see here 'a miracle of multiplication' as in [John 6:11](#), whilst others seem to be arguing for an unnecessary miracle. The one-hundred and fifty-three 'large fish', [John 21:11](#), have been the subject of incredible explanations.

1. They were only counted when brought to shore, meaning that the full member will only be known when we get to Heaven.
2. There were only one hundred and fifty-three different kinds of fish, so the people then believed, and this great catch meant that the Lord's 'net', [Matthew 13:47-50](#), the church, would take in all.
3. The number one-hundred and fifty-three stands for all 'who, either by Law or grace, have been moved to come to Jesus Christ.'

Augustine originated this explanation, and so, ten stands for the Law, it had 10 commandments, 7 is the number of grace, the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit, $10+7=17$, and 153 is the sum total of all the figures, $1+2+3+4+5$, etc., up to 17.

This is the same kind of totally unjustified spiritualism that sees some special significance in the six water pots of cans, [John 2:6-7](#); it would be just as logical to see the special significance in the one-hundred yards, two-hundred cubits of [John 21:8](#).

It was the common practice to count the fish for the purpose of sharing out the catch. This, the count, along with the other details, 'large fish', 'net not torn', and distance from land, are all details an eye-witness would naturally record. Even apart from inspiration, the whole incident was indelibly imprinted on John's memory.

After the invitation to share breakfast from Jesus, 'now none of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' Yet, 'they knew it was the Lord', [John 21:12](#). John had first recognised him, [John 21:7](#), now they all 'knew' it was Him, indicated that they knew by experience, not by sight, yet none dared to ask Him who He was! They are convinced that He is the Lord, yet feel that He is changed, and reverence restrains them from curious questions.

Jesus looks after them, giving them a breakfast they would never forget, after fishing all night. He saw that they were tired, cold and hungry and fulfilled their needs. Their risen Lord waited on them, served each of them, [John 21:13](#).

'This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples,' [John 21:14](#). John has already recorded three appearances prior to this and this comes seventh in the ten recorded appearances in the four Gospels but this is the third time He appeared to the apostles as a group. 1. [John 20:19-25](#). 2. [John 20:26-29](#). 3. [John 23:1-23](#).

JESUS REINSTATES PETER

'When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again, Jesus said, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. Very truly I tell you, when you were younger, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."

Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!" Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back

against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?” Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.” Because of this, the rumour spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?” John 21:15-23

JESUS SPEAKS TO PETER

After they finished eating breakfast, Jesus spoke to Peter and asked him, ‘Do you love me more than these?’ [John 21:15](#). This has a few possible explanations.

1. That this refers to the boat, nets, fish, etc., ‘more than these things’, [John 21:15](#).

If so, it would refer to his work as a fisherman. As if Jesus said, ‘Are you really willing to give up all this to follow me?’ Was Peter feeling the pull to return to his former life? There would be much in favour of this if it could be proved that Peter had decided to return to fishing as a profession.

2. That this refers to the other apostles, ‘more than these others do?’ [John 21:15](#).

Peter had said, ‘though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away’, [Matthew 26:33](#) / [Mark 14:29](#) / [John 13:37](#). In this case, the Lord is deliberately reminding him of this; He wants Peter to learn humility.

We actually have a threefold question and affirmation. Peter had denied his Lord three times, [Matthew 26:69-75](#) / [Mark 14:66-68](#) / [Luke 22:54-62](#) / [John 18:15-27](#).

Just a short time ago, in the presence of the enemy denied all connection with the Lord, so now, in the presence of his friends, he affirms three times over that he loves the Lord, [John 21:15](#) / [John 21:16](#) / [John 21:17](#).

It’s interesting that things seem to happen in threes for Peter from this point on, [John 21:15-17](#) / [Acts 10:9-16](#) / [Acts 10:17-19](#). Perhaps relations between Peter and the others were difficult; perhaps it was hard for them to forget what Peter had done. He is now restored to full fellowship with his Lord and with his brethren.

Note the use of the words ‘agapao’ and ‘phileo’ in [John 21:15-17](#). In his first and second questions, [John 21:15-16](#), Jesus uses the verb ‘agapao’, which means high and devoted love. Peter, every time he replies, uses the verb ‘phileo’ which means loving as a friend.

In His third question, [John 21:17](#), Jesus uses the same word that Peter had used. Commentators are divided into two groups with this. Those who see the profound significance in the change of verb, and those who don’t.

Jesus says, ‘Do you love me?’, ‘agapao’, love me. Peter replies, ‘You know that I love you’, ‘oidas phileo’, ‘know I love’, [John 21:16](#). Jesus says, ‘feed my lambs’, ‘feed my sheep’.

The word ‘feed’, [John 21:15](#) / [John 21:17](#), is from the verb ‘bosko’, which means to supply with food, to nourish. The word ‘lambs’, [John 21:15](#), is ‘arnia’, and is symbolic of young converts.

The word ‘tend’, [John 21:16](#), is from the verb ‘poimaino’, and means to act as a shepherd; a ‘poimen’ is a shepherd, it’s the same word used in [Acts 20:28](#) / [1 Peter 5:2](#).

This continues with Jesus next telling Peter to tend the little sheep, ‘look after my little sheep,’ [John 21:16](#). In [John 21:17](#), Peter claims that Jesus knew by experience, and He had learned that Peter loves Him, and Jesus responds, ‘feed my little sheep’.

When Jesus spoke to Peter, it would probably have been in Aramaic, but there must have been something implied for John to record it this way. There could be a distinction in these words to do with love, according to the will and love according to the emotion; this would be similar to what Paul expresses in [Romans 7](#).

It’s interesting that from the time Peter denied knowing Christ three times, [John 18:15-27](#), things seem to happen in threes for Peter from that point on, [John 21:15-17](#) / [Acts 10:9-16](#) / [Acts 10:17-19](#).

He had to learn that it takes humility to follow Jesus, and this is a question we, too, must ask ourselves: Are we willing to follow Jesus, no matter what? If we truly love Him, we will do everything He commanded us to do, [John 14:15](#).

Jesus then gives a prophecy to Peter regarding his life and the method and situation surrounding His death, [John 21:18](#). Earlier, Peter had been a very much a free type of man; he had few problems and was able to move and think freely.

The time would come, though, when Peter would be restricted in his movement and be forced in a direction he wasn't willing to go. He would no longer be able to expose the free spirit that always caused him to be the first to put his foot in his mouth and the first to speak, [John 21:18](#). The impetuous Peter would be no more, [John 21:19](#).

Soon after New Testament times, the phrase 'to glorify God,' [John 21:19](#), became a common term for martyrdom. The tradition is that Peter died by crucifixion. Eusebius quotes Origen for the story that he asked to be crucified upside-down. By the time John wrote this, he knew of the death of Peter and how he had died, so he was able to draw the parallel himself, [John 21:20](#).

Notice [John 21:20](#), 'he turned and saw,' John following. In the last call to 'follow me,' [John 21:22](#), we see that Peter evidently understood the words literally and immediately began to walk after Jesus. But the command was probably meant figuratively, 'go on following me faithfully', [John 1:43](#) / [Matthew 8:22](#) / [John 9:9](#) / [John 19:21](#).

The words, 'follow me yourself,' [John 20:22](#), impress upon Peter that his responsibility is for his own faithfulness. Jesus is simply saying, 'don't let your doubts and perplexities about others hinder your own service.' We must obey without waiting to know what orders or promises may be given to others.

Despite his previous boasting, Peter had failed; he was now called to follow faithfully, even to martyrdom, [John 13:36-37](#). A call of encouragement to discipleship and the rigours of the apostolic office.

In [John 21:21-23](#), we see the beloved disciple. Peter saw his great friend standing near and asked, 'Lord, what about this man?', [John 22:20](#). He had been told about his own future; what about John?

Jesus' answer is a rebuke, [John 21:22](#). What was to become of John? [John 21:23](#). The reply was misconstrued to become the rumour that John would never die, that the Lord would return before his death. This idea must have grown stronger and stronger as John grew older, and he needed to squash the entire story; he does so here quite effectively.

The Mormons believe that John was translated into a deathless state, not quite resurrected, and is still alive today. John simply wanted to correct any misunderstanding concerning his own death.

The rumour was already up and running that John would never die; this simply isn't true, and Jesus never actually said it. Jesus didn't mean that John would remain alive until His final coming but was referring to His coming judgement upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70. He was rebuking Peter's curiosity, not affirming that John would live on till the Master returned.

'This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.' [John 21:24-25](#)

The word 'bearing witness,' [John 21:24](#), is in the present tense, which means they are still bearing witness. He is still telling the things of Jesus as well as writing them down. He is the one 'who has written these things', [John 21:24](#), the aorist describes a completed act, this 'witness' is the apostle John.

The group indicated by 'we know that his testimony is true,' [John 21:24](#), could refer to his fellow elders at Ephesus. The words were probably added by the Ephesian elders, to whom the preceding narrative had been given both orally and in writing.

John has been very selective, and a great mass of material remains. No matter how extensive our knowledge of Jesus, it is only a tiny fragment of what could be told, John 21:25. No human category is adequate for Him. No human writing big enough to contain Him.

Jesus did many, many other things which are not recorded in this or any book, John 21:25. The writer here uses hyperbole, an overstatement, to make his point. The book is now complete, and all matters have been attended to.