

LESSON ONE: Overview

WHO IS JESUS?

The question of who Jesus dates back over two thousand years. It has been asked and pondered by His followers, Jewish leaders, Romans, Kings, Queens, politicians, believers, unbelievers, theologians, philosophers, and even the modern media, both network and social. This list represents the many inexhaustible generations who at one time or another were asked or asked who Jesus is. I have pondered and search that same question. Who is Jesus? What has He done? Why should I place my trust in Him alone as the very Son of God and Savior of my soul? John, the beloved and disciple of Christ, sets out to answer this question in his testimony and witness of Christ. The very purpose of John's writing is not only to prove who Christ is, but that you may know and believe who He is.

I remember clearly my own testimony of coming to know who Christ is. I was eight years old. I had a belief in God and Jesus as a young boy, but I had never considered the significance and importance of knowing clearly what Christ had done. That is until my brother (like Andrew bringing his brother Simon Peter to Christ) pointed Christ out to me by letting me know that I had never place my trust and belief in Him alone for salvation. During the course of the following year I began to asked questions. I wanted to know from others what did this mean? I concluded at that young age the inescapable and undeniable fact that Jesus, was fact the Christ, the Son of the living God. (John 20.31). I believed that He died on the cross and three days later rose again from the dead. I repented from my sin and received Him into my life as Savior and Lord. In return, He gave me the gift of eternal life and the right to become His very child, saved by grace for all eternity (John 1.12-13; 17.13).

This is the heart of John's gospel. This is the message of the gospel, knowing and believing that Jesus is the Son of the living God.

INTRODUCTION

The gospel of John is the fourth and final written testament of Jesus Christ. It was written sometime around A.D. 85 by John the Apostle (the Beloved). John was the son of Zebedee (along with his brother, James) and was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. This gospel is more doctrinal than the other gospels because there was a need for newer generations (far removed from the apostles in time and geographical location) to know the person and work of Christ. Therefore, we find the premise of why John wrote this gospel to his readers, "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (John 20.31).

The Gospel of John is different than the other three gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), referred to as the Synoptic Gospels because they include many of the same stories, often in a similar sequence and in a similar wording. In contrast, John's content is distinct in that he writes about separate incidents and teachings which help us better understand the mission of Christ, some of which are not shared in the other synoptic gospels.

AUTHORSHIP

As stated above, John is the presumed author. The evidence from within the gospel tells us that the writer claimed to have seen Jesus' glory (1.1-4, 14). The writer of "these things" in (21.24) was also the same person as the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (21.7). He was also the disciple who sat beside Jesus in the upper room when He instituted the Lord's supper (13.23-24). The evidence outside the gospel is given by the early church fathers. Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons (ca. A.D. 130-200), wrote that he had heard from Polycarp (ca. A.D. 69-155), a disciple of John, that John had written this gospel. Other later church fathers supported this tradition, including Theophilus of Antioch (ca. A.D. 180), Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian of Carthage, and Tatian.

LOCATION

Eusebius claims that John composed this Gospel when he was at Ephesus. This would be logical, since John was known to be the pastor of this church according to tradition. Ephesus would have been the best place for the proclamation of the gospel for it was one of the largest centers of Christian activity in the gentile world.

AUDIENCE

There is support for Jewish and/or Greek readers. Since John mentions many Jewish customs, some would claim his readers were Jewish. Yet, John also explains many of these Jewish customs, translated names, and the locations of Palestinian sites which might have been for Gentile readers who did not live in that region or knew nothing of Jewish customs. The gospel could have been for the newer generation of believers who needed the evangelistic and apologetic doctrine of Christ during their time. The uniqueness of this gospel is that it can be used for all the above, to evangelize both the Jew and the Gentile (Romans 1.16) and to help believers with the void of knowledge in the Christians community, to clarify who Christ was as Paul prayed for the Ephesians, (Ephesians 3.14-21).

KEY VERSE & THEME

It is commonly accepted that the key verse in John's gospel comes towards the end. John 20.31 where he writes:

"but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name."

This is key for it actually summarizes for us John's purpose and desire for his readers as the apostle/evangelist makes known the person and ministry of Christ Jesus our Lord. Thus the key theme is that you might believe that Jesus is the Son of God. *"Do you believe this?" (John 11.26).*

PURPOSE

The purpose of this gospel has been hinted several times in this overview: To help the reader know and understand who Christ is (John 20.31). There seems to have been a history concerning the church in Ephesus with their lack of knowledge and love for Christ, as evidenced in Paul's

earlier letter to the Ephesians (Ephesian 3.14-21) and as Jesus' reprimands them in Revelation 3.4.

John provides a number of themes for his readers to help them to clarify and know who Christ Jesus is:

- God
- Life
- Healer
- Judge
- Bread
- Water
- Light
- Shepherd
- Resurrection
- King
- Head of the Church
- Resurrected Savior

THE SEVENS

One of the interesting features of John (whether it was intentional by the author or the Holy Spirit) are the seven signs, witnesses, and "I am's" found in the gospel. Now, I would not want to make too much out of this other than it is an interesting observation. Seven is the number of perfection in Scripture and ascribed to the Lord, so it would be appropriate that these groupings or topics would be found in John's gospel. I have grouped these below for your personal study and edification.

The Seven Signs which attest to Christ deity claims:

- Turning water into wine in Cana (2.1-11)
- Healing an official's son in Capernaum (4.46-54)
- Healing an invalid at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (5.1-18)
- Feeding the 5,000 near the Sea of Galilee (6.5-14)
- Walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee (6.16-21)
- Healing a blind man in Jerusalem (9.1-7)
- Raising Lazarus from the dead in Bethany (11.1-45)

The Seven Witnesses of Christ:

- John the Baptist: "This is the Chosen One of God" (1.34)
- Nathaniel: "You are the Son of God" (1.49)
- Peter: "You are the Holy One of God!" (6.69)
- Martha: "You are the Christ, the Son of God" (11.27)
- Thomas: "My Lord and my God" (20.28)
- John: "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (20.31)
- Jesus: "I am the Son of God" (4.26; 8.58; 10.36)

The Seven "I am's" of Christ:

- "I am the bread of life" (6.35)
- "I am the light of the world" (8.12)
- "I am the door for the sheep" (10.7; cf. v.9)
- "I am the good shepherd" (10.11,14)
- "I am the resurrection and the life" (11.25)
- "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14.6)
- "I am the true vine" (15.1; cf. v.5)

BOOK OUTLINE

- I. The Prologue: The Incarnation of the Son - 1.1-18
- II. The Ministry of the Son - 1.19-20.19
 - A. The Public Ministry of the Son - 1.19-12.50
 - B. The Private Ministry of the Son - 13.1-17.26
 - C. The Passion Ministry of the Son - 18.1-21.53
- III. The Epilogue: 21.24-25

STUDY OUTLINE

PART I:

The Public Ministry of Jesus - Chapters 1-11

- Lesson 1: Overview: That you may believe
- Lesson 2: The Word of God (1.1-18)
- Lesson 3: The Lamb of God (1.19-2:25)
- Lesson 4: The Giver of Life (3.1-36)
- Lesson 5: The Well of Life (4.1-54)
- Lesson 6: The Witness of Christ (5.1-47)
- Lesson 7: The Bread of Life (6.1-71)
- Lesson 8: The Teacher of Life (7.1-52)
- Lesson 9: The Light of Life (8.12-59)
- Lesson 10: The Compassionate Healer (9.1-41)
- Lesson 11: The Good Shepherd (10.1-42)
- Lesson 12: The Resurrection and Life (11.1-57)

PART II:

The Private Ministry of Jesus - Chapters 12-17

- Lesson 13: The King - (12.1-50)
- Lesson 14: The Servant - (13.1-20)
- Lesson 15: The Way - (13.21-14.31)
- Lesson 16: The Vine - (15.1-27)
- Lesson 17: The Helper - (16:1-33)
- Lesson 18: The High Priest - (17.1-26)

The Passion Ministry of Jesus - Chapters 18-21

- Lesson 19: The Trials - (18.1-19:15)
- Lesson 20: The Crucifixion - (19.16-42)
- Lesson 21: The Resurrection - (20.1-29)
- Lesson 22: The Appearance - (21.1-14)
- Lesson 23: The Final Message - (21.15-25)
- Lesson 24: Our Response: That You May Believe

CONCLUSION

The gospel of John is perhaps the most profound book in the New Testament. In this gospel we are told:

“No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him” (1.18).

This gospel seeks to explain Jesus as the One who manifest God to humankind so that we may see God in person through Christ (14.7). If you truly want to know what God is like, this study is for you. People for ages have attempted to imagine what God is like and usually end up with versions of themselves. Some today are even trying to explain God away through human reasoning. The incarnation of God through Christ gives us a limited view and revelation of who and what God is like. My prayer is that as you work through this study, your understanding of Christ will grow clearer through faith, and that by believing in Him, you too will have life eternal.

LESSON ONE - OVERVIEW
STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Reading the introduction section of the commentary on page 2. How does the gospel of John differ from the other gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke)?
2. Do people in the world generally believe Jesus is God? Who do you say Jesus is?
3. Read John 1:18. Has anyone ever seen God? How can one know who God is from this verse?
4. John 20:31 is the key verse of this gospel. What are the two things the author wants his readers to know?
5. In reference to the seven witnesses in John, read the verses below identify the witness and what they said about Christ.
 - John 1:34
 - John 1:49
 - John 6:69
 - John 11:27
 - John 20:28
 - John 20:31
 - John 4:26; 8:58; 10:36
6. Read John 1:14-18. How would you explain who Christ is to others?
7. Read John 20:31. The author wants his readers to believe in Christ. During the course of this study make a list of people you know who need to believe in Christ for eternal life and pray for them.

LESSON TWO: The Word of God
John 1.1-18
STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the main theme of John?
 2. Read John 1.1; 1 John 1.1. What is the “Word” and who is He?
 3. Read John 1.2-5; Genesis 1.1; Psalm 102.25; Colossians 1.15-17; Philippians 2.6 and Hebrews 1.10.
 Where did Jesus originate from?
 Who created all things?
 For whom are all things created for?
 Who is Jesus equal to?
 4. What does John 1.6-8 reveal about John the Baptist’s role?
 5. What does it mean to be a “witness” and to “testify”?
 6. What does John 1.9-11 reveal about the state of humanity?
 7. John 1.12 tells us that people who receive Jesus are born of God (Eternal Life), yet John 1.13 list three ways people are not born of God. List those below.
 not of _____
 nor the _____
 nor of the _____
 8. Who then gives the right to be born of God (John 1.13)?
 9. What is the most striking truth concerning John 1.14?
 10. In light of the questions above, how do you know you have eternal life?
- KEY THOUGHT:** John introduces the ultimate mystery. God took on human nature and became flesh.

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

The Word and the Father (1.1-2)

“In the beginning” refers to the timeless eternity of Genesis 1.1 in that “in the beginning, God created the heavens and earth.” John is essentially saying that in the beginning, the “Word” was already there. That is, that the “Word” predates time or creation. John makes it very clear that the “Word” is not just the beginning, but the beginning of the beginning. The “Word” was there before anything was.

The “Word” in greek is “logos.” The history of this word has roots in both Jewish and Greek thinking. The Jews spoke of God Himself as “the Word of God” (Exodus 19.17). In the mind of the Jew, the phrase, “The Word” would have referred to God Himself. For the Greek, they saw the “logos” as the power which puts sense into the world and cosmos, making the universe orderly instead of chaotic. Thus they would have seen “The Word” as the ultimate reason that controlled all things.

The relationship of “The Word” and God is purely a statement concerning the foundation of our faith. There is a Being known as “The Word.” This Being is God, because He is eternal (in the beginning). This Being is God, because He is plainly called God (the Word was God). Therefore, we see that the Father and the Son (the Son is known as “The Word”) are equally God, yet distinct in their Person. The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father. Yet they are equally God, with God the Holy Spirit making one God in three Persons.

The Word and the World (1.3-5)

“The Word” created all things. Therefore He Himself is an uncreated Being. Paul tells us in Colossians 1.16 that Christ is the source of all life. He is also the source of spiritual light as well. Without Jesus we are dead and we remain in darkness, that is because Jesus is life and light. That is why many people do not understand or believe in God because people who live in darkness cannot comprehend the light of Christ. Yet, God is able to save people because He is the light and light can not lose against the darkness; the darkness will never overcome it. Isaiah reminds us that “the people who walk in darkness will see a great light...and the light will shine on them” - Isaiah 9.2.

The Word and the Witness (1.6-13)

John the Baptist is not to be confused here with John the writer of this gospel. The baptist was the forerunner who came to bear witness of the Light that all through him might believe. The world needs this witness because it does not know Jesus Christ. Even though Christ created the world and created man in His image, man did not know Him. This shows the deep fallen nature of man who has rejected God. But, because of His Light, verse 12 tells us that though some rejected Him, others received Him and thereby became children of God. But understand this, verse 13 tells us how they did not become children of God - one is not God’s child based on blood (family lineage), or the will of the flesh (willing oneself saved), or the will of man (by man’s will). No, the only way a person can become a child of God is only by God Himself through His only Son, Christ Jesus our Lord (John 3.16; Romans 6.23).

The Word and Human Flesh (1.14-18)

The most striking statement ever recorded is found here in verse 14. “The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.” This is the incarnation of Christ. Not only would this amaze both the Jewish and Greek minds, but to all who witnessed this. This would have been blasphemous to the Jew to think that Jehovah God would lower Himself by taking on human form. The Greek had a low view of God (or gods). To them their ancient gods such as Zeus and Hermes were simply

super-men; they were not equal to the order and reason of the Logos. Yet, still John tells them that the Logos you know who brings order to chaos became human flesh.

I might add here that when Christ “The Word” became flesh He was fully God and fully man at the same time. Some do not believe this to be true. Some believe Jesus to be half God and half man. Still others believe that Jesus did not become God or take on Godly form until after His baptism. Paul tells us that “Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped” - (Philippians 2:6). John speaks to this as well when he writes, “we beheld His glory.” John is testifying as an eyewitness that “I saw His glory, the glory belonging to the only begotten of the Father.”

The witness of John concerning “The Word” (Jesus) is this, He brings a different order than the one instituted by Moses. What God revealed to Moses only reveals the transgression of our sin. What God revealed through Christ is the inexhaustible supply of grace and truth. This contrasts the order of rigid laws and regulations that held many in the bondage of their sin. But, Christ brings the truth through His teaching and His life and that message is this: “that grace would reign through the righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” - Romans 5:21.

CONCLUSION

Here are some applications to what we have learned through this passage:

1. Recognize in John’s prologue the great truth of who Christ is.
2. Christ is foundational to the Gospel.
3. The most startling theme in the gospel is the incarnation of Christ. He who created all things would come in the flesh and use His flesh unselfishly to die on a cross to become the propitiation for our sin.
4. For those who believe in this revelation, it becomes the sole knowledge of eternal life, but for others (Jews, Muslims, Unitarians, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and many others) the incarnation of Christ becomes a stumbling stone and reject its message and “The Word.”

LESSON THREE: The Lamb of God
John 1.19-2.25
STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Who is the Word of God and what did He come to do?
2. Read John 1:19-28. Who did the Jews think John the Baptist was and why?
3. What was John's response to them and what was his mission?
4. Read John 1:29-34. Who revealed to John that Jesus is the Son of God?
5. Read John 1:35-51. List what each disciple testified about Christ.
 Andrew:
 Phillip:
 Nathanael:
6. Read John 2:1-11. Jot down some initial observations. What does Jesus' first miracle symbolize?
7. Read John 2:13-22. What was Jesus communicating about worship in these verses?
8. Read John 2:23-25. What did John imply — when he said that Jesus did not need anyone's testimony concerning man? What would be Jesus' testimony about you

KEY THOUGHT: Jesus is the Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

The Curiosity of the Jews (1.19-28)

"The Jews" (v. 19) - The Jews here were a governing council of Israel, possibly the Sanhedrin, which had 71 members and was presided over by the High priest. The members were composed of two parties, the Pharisees and Sadducees. This party sent a delegation out to question John about his ministry, but most importantly, his identity, "Who are you?" Who did John claim to be? The Christ? Elijah, returned from the dead? Malachi 4.5 promised that God would send Elijah before the coming of the Lord, whom Moses predicted would come (Deut. 18.15, 18-19). John denied that he was neither, but stated his mission as one who announces and makes the way easier for people to meet the One who comes after him.

"Why are you baptizing?" (v. 25) - The question by the delegation proved their expectance and knowledge of what the coming Messiah ministry would be: to come with repentance and

spiritual cleansing (Eze. 36, 37; Zec. 13.1). John's response was that his baptism was to prepare people spiritually for the Messiah's coming. It was for repentance (Mt. 3.11; Mk. 1.4; Lk. 3.7-8). *"He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie"* (v.27), a reference of a servant in the house whose given task is to bow down and untie a guest's sandals. John is simply saying, "I am no one."

The Testimony of the Baptist (1.29-37)

"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (v.29) - John's announcement takes place the day after in Bethany. In this, John identifies Jesus' ministry and mission to be the one and only sacrifice that is needed to take away the sins of the world. The Jews were familiar with the lamb and its use for sacrifice during the Passover (Ex. 12.1-36). The Jews also were familiar with the teachings of the suffering servant who, as a lamb, would be led to slaughter (Is. 53.7), as a sacrifice to make atonement and purification for sin (Lev. 14.12-20).

"I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God" (v.34) - John faithfully fulfills his mission in life by preparing the way for Jesus and announcing His public ministry. How did John know that Jesus was the Son of God? Verse 33 tells us at first, John did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, even though we know that the two were cousins (Lk. 1.36). John did not recognize Jesus' Messiahship until God the Father revealed it to him when the Spirit of God descended on Jesus, the Son of God.

"The Trinity" - We should not miss the work and witness of the Trinity here. The Trinity is the threefold nature of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Wayne Gruden defines the Trinity as: "God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God." The work of the Trinity here is to identify Jesus as the Son of God (Mt. 3.16; Mk. 1.10; Lk. 3.22).

"the Son of God" (v.34) - John's sole mission was to prepare the way for others so that they may know who the Messiah is. This he does by identifying Jesus not only as the "Lamb of God" who takes away the sin of the world, but also, "the Son of God" pointing out the deity of Jesus, being equal with God, a theme that will be carried out through this gospel to John 20.31.

"Behold, the Lamb of God!" (v.36) - John the Baptist continues in his mission of preparing the way for the Messiah by pointing Jesus out to his disciples (v. 36). When they heard Him (Jesus) speak, they followed Him (v.37). This word "follow" means in a strong sense, they left the Baptist and joined themselves to be Jesus' disciples.

The Invitation of Jesus (1.38-39)

"What do you seek?" (v.38) - The NIV translates Jesus' question, "What do you want?" The word "seek" describes one who is striving after or seeking to find out. In other words, Jesus could be asking, "what are you looking for?"

“Come, and you will see” (v.39) - The invitation by Jesus is a opportunity for them to be able to come and listen to His teachings, observe His actions and response to His voice. Each person must find out who Jesus is for themselves. We can point them to Jesus as John did, but future disciples must examine Christ for themselves as God reveals Himself through Christ as He invites them to “come and see.”

The Revelation of Jesus (1.40-51)

“We have found the Messiah” (v.41) - The sharing and receiving the good news concerning Christ is often followed by the spread of good news. One of the first converts, Andrew, after examining Jesus made a profound statement when he found his brother, Simon (Peter), stating, “we have found the Messiah.” The author translates for his readers what “Messiah” stands for. It stands for, “Christ (Anointed One). In scripture we find a number of places where someone was set apart and consecrated for God’s purpose. One example was when Samuel anointed David as King in 1 Samuel 16.13. Whether or not Andrew witnessed what John did when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at His baptism is unknown, but in his seeking and following Jesus, he came to the conclusion that Jesus is the “Christ,” the “Anointed One” and wanted his brother Simon to know.

“You shall be called Cephas (Peter)” (v.42) - No one knows what will come of the person they introduced Jesus to. Andrew would have never known the impact Peter would eventually have in the church when he introduced his brother to Christ. But, Christ did when “Jesus look at Him” and changed his name, thus transforming into the person he wants him to become. A rock! Later, we know that Peter’s great confession of Christ would be the cornerstone truth to build His church upon, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God (Mat. 16.16).

“Follow Me” (v. 43) - Jesus, next goes into Galilee to Bethsaida and finds Phillip and ask him to follow. Jesus might have met Phillip traveling homeward from where John the Baptist was baptizing and simply invited Phillip to join his company of followers by asking him literally, “come after me.” Note the authority in Jesus’ command. John Calvin comments that the command of Jesus to us to come after Him is a inescapable command. One cannot refuse as the Apostle Paul found out on the road to Damascus (Acts 9.3-6).

“We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote” (v. 45) - When Phillip surrendered to Jesus’ call, they found themselves in Andrew and Peter’s home town, Bethsaida, which means “house of the fisherman” or “Fishertown.” While there, Phillip found Nathanael and told him to “come and see” (v.46) the One they have found whom Moses and the prophets spoke of. Jesus is the fulfiller of the Old Testament scriptures. Jesus is the prophet who Moses spoke of (Deut. 18.15-19). Jesus is the anointed One whose coming would bring peace, the knowledge of God, and the fear of God (Gen. 3.15; Num. 21.9; 2 sam. 7.12; Is. 7.14; Mic. 5.2; Zech. 9.9; Lk. 24.27; Acts 3.22-26). Nathanael’s response, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” is only because Galileans despised people from Nazareth because it was a village of little importance. Jesus still greeted him to Nathanael’s surprised and told him that “Before Phillip called you when you were under the fig tree, I saw you” (v.48). Something that only

Nathanael would have known. Jesus let Nathanael know that He knew more about him than he could ever know himself.

“You are the King of Israel” (v. 49) - Whatever doubts and prejudice against Jesus being from Nazareth went away in a instant when he first acknowledges Jesus as, “Rabbi (Teacher), then elevates Jesus by making the claim, “You are the Son of God,” with his final allegiance to Jesus being “the King of Israel” Perhaps Nathaniel thought of Psalm 2:6 which says, “But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.” Nathanael’s mind could not comprehend or describe Jesus in any other human terms but this.

“Truly, truly, I say to you...” (v. 51) - Jesus’ way of saying to Nathanael and the others, if you think your mind cannot get around that, wait until you see “the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” That’s something all the children of God through Christ Jesus our Lord will see. A reference to Revelation 19:11ff.

Out with the Old and In with the New (2.1-11)

Cana was the hometown of Nathanael (1.43). We learn that Jesus’ mother was there too (2.1). It was there that Jesus and His disciples were invited to a wedding. This probably reveals that the wedding was for a close relative or friend of the family. Andrew, Peter, Phillip, Nathanael, John (the unnamed disciple) would witness Jesus’ first sign: His authority over natural laws by changing the water into wine.

“the wine” (v.3) - The wine served in those days (like today) was subject to fermentation. This means, if consumed, one would become intoxicated. To help quench ones thirst without sub-coming to the effects of the alcohol, the ancient practice was to dilute the wine with water to between one-third and one-tenth of its strength. It was safer to drink the wine mixed with water than to drink the water because of the lack of purification.

“My hour has not yet come” (v.4) - This phrase used several times by John is in reference to Jesus’ death and resurrection. The full manifestation and glory of Christ would not be made known until He is lifted up. This sign is only a dim anticipation of the glory that will come.

“Six stone water pots” (v. 6-7) - These were earthenware pots used for ceremonial washing. “Signs” in the New Testament were not mere miracles, but some underlying reality. The reality here is a new order has begun. What was turned into wine was the water drawn from the well. The filling of the jars to the brim indicate that the appointed time for the ceremonial observance of the Jewish law had run its full course. The time now came for a new order to begin. The wine symbolizes the new order as the jars symbolized the old order.

“His disciples believed in Him” (v.11) - The end result for anyone who seeks to follow Jesus is to believe in Him.

My Father's House (2.12-22)

This next scene takes us to Jerusalem for Jesus' first visit since His public ministry began. It was during the time of the Passover. This would be the first of three Passovers John will mention in Jesus' public ministry. The Passover commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egypt and it was to be celebrated as instructed by God annually on the anniversary on 14 Nisan (March-April full moon). As Jesus went up to Jerusalem, to the temple, he found people selling oxen and sheep in the temple. These were the principle animals used for sacrifice. Imagine your place of worship being used as a COSCO and/or for currency exchange. The setting of the outer court for worship was full with the smell and buying and the selling of animals used for sacrifice. In order for the worshipper to purchase an animal, they would have to exchange their own local coinage for the temple coins, thus they would need to have their money exchanged for a price. Then they could go and purchase their animal for sacrifice and/or pay a temple fee. Jesus seeing that the holiness of God and His worship was at stake, improvised a whip (v.15) to drive out the animals and overturned the money changer's tables in order to cleanse the temple.

"My Father's house" (v. 16) - Jesus' zeal for His Father's house was to restore its order as a place of worship, not a place for business. A reminder to us all how easily the church can become a corporate organization instead of being the place of personal worship and service to the Lord.

"Zeal for Your House will consume me." (v. 17) - This is a reference from Psalm 69:9 that indicates that Jesus would not tolerate irreverence towards God.

"Destroy the temple" (v.19) - The Jews in (v. 18) demanded a sign for Jesus' authority to clear the temple. Jesus announces here for the first time in (v.19) His impending death on the cross and resurrection. John clarifies this in (v. 21) and states that His disciples remembered this saying when Jesus was raised from the dead.

Superficial Faith (2.23-25)

This section shows us that only God knows the heart of man. Even though (v. 23) says many believed in His name, Jesus did not "entrust Himself to them" (v.24) because "He knew all men." What does this mean for us? John MacArthur tells us that belief in Jesus' name is more than intellectual assent. It calls for whole-hearted commitment of one's life as Jesus' disciple. We are reminded in Matthew 25.41 many who have done righteous works will be accursed into the eternal fire which has been prepared for them and the devil and his angels. Why? You served yourself, not Christ.

CONCLUSION

One who is a child of God through Christ is one who is saved only by grace through faith. Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us that it is not what we do at church, what we say, how many memory verses we know, what works of services we perform, It's simply by faith. To come and see and follow. To examine for yourself and know that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God.

LESSON FOUR: The Giver of Life
John 3.1-36

STUDY QUESTIONS

9. In last weeks study, who did the witnesses say Jesus was?
10. How did Nicodemus know that Jesus was from God? (v.2)
11. Why did Nicodemus not know Jesus was the Son of God? (v.3)
12. What does it mean to be born again? (vv. 3-8) See also (2 Cor 5:17; Tit 3:5; 1 Pe 1:3; 1 Jn 2:29; 5:1, 4, 18).
13. Read Numbers 21:5-9. Why did Jesus use this story about Moses in Jn 3:14-15?
14. List the number of times the word “believe” is used in John 3?
15. What are the consequences of: (3:18-21; 33-36)
 Believing:

 Not Believing:

KEY THOUGHT: The truth of the Gospel is that the gift of eternal life is through God's only Son, Christ Jesus our Lord.

KEY TERMS:

Pharisee (“*the separated ones*”): The largest and most influential religious-political party in Israel during the New Testament times. They were called the “separated ones” because of their desire for religious purity according to the Mosaic law and their own traditions. They possibly descended from the “Hasidim” or “pious ones” during the Maccabean times. Their numbers were around 6,000 and transformed Judaism from a people of sacrifice to law by the development of oral tradition in the keeping of the law as the only way to please God. The Apostle Paul (Phil. 3:5) and Nicodemus (Jn. 3:1) were pharisees.

Ruler of the Jews: One who was a member of the Sanhedrin and ruled over the Jews as a Jewish "Supreme Court."

Rabbi: A title applied to teachers that means, "my master." These teachers were learned in the law of Moses without having an official appointed office.

Kingdom of God: Refers to the early messianic kingdom that will be earth phase of God's eternal heavenly kingdom. To "enter" into the "kingdom of God" means to "obtain eternal life" (Mk. 9.43, 45,47).

Born Again: Is the spiritual reservation of a person's whole nature. It is the act where eternal life is given by God to the believer through Christ Jesus our Lord (2 Cor. 5.17; Tit. 3.5; 1 Pet. 1.3; 1 Jn. 2.29; 5.1,4, 18).

SURVEY OF THE TEXT:

Nicodemus Admission - (3:1-3)

Nicodemus (“*victor over the people*”-Gr.) [v.1] was a pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, which was the governing council over the Jewish people in Palestine. Unlike some of his pharisaical peers who were antagonistic towards Jesus, Nicodemus was a seeker. He was friendly, courteous, yet puzzled by Jesus and His teachings. Nicodemus reminds me of theologians who know a lot about God, yet with all their learning and privileges, do not know who He is.

Like a seeker, Nicodemus comes to Jesus first with an admission, “*we know that you have come from God as a teacher*” (v.2). This admission of “we” is from the governing council. This shows that with the few miraculous signs Jesus performed, the Sanhedrin, through Nicodemus acknowledge Jesus’ divine authentication, but only as a teacher sent by God. The reason Nicodemus cannot see Jesus as the Son of God is because he is not born again. The Apostle Paul reminds us that... “*a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are*

foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” - 1 Cor. 2:14.

The problem with Nicodemus was not in what he knew — *”we know you have come from God,”* the problem was with Nicodemus’ heart. His heart needed to be spiritually regenerated by the Holy Spirit. He needed to be “born again” (v.3)

Nicodemus’ first question - (3:4-8)

Being “born again” is an act of God when eternal life is given by God (Jn 1:13; 3:16; 2 Cor 5:17; Tit 3:5; 1 Pe 1:3) when a believer repents from their sin and by faith, trust in the atoning sacrifice through Jesus Christ alone, the Incarnate Word. Until this happens no one can see God or His kingdom (v.4).

The water in (vv.5-7) refers to the water baptism of John, for repentance of sins (Matt 3:11; Lk 3:3). No one can save themselves. Salvation happens when we acknowledge own sin before God, then the Lord does His work within us by spiritually regenerating our soul into a new creation, a child of God (Jer 31:33; 2 Cor 5:17). This is becomes more clear when we look back at Ezekiel 36:25-27, *“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”*

Next, Jesus uses the wind as for why Nicodemus cannot understand. Just as no one can control the wind, we still see its effects (v.8). The same is with the Holy Spirit of God. Nicodemus cannot control or understand who and what Jesus does, but the effects of what Jesus is doing is undeniable. Yes, Jesus is from God — but He is more than a teacher from God — He is the Son of God (Jn 1:35).

“Nicodemus’ second question” - (3:9-15)

“How can these things be”- (v.9)? Nicodemus reveals his ignorance of the Old Testament Scriptures with his question (Isa 32:15; Isa 44:3; Ezek 36:25-28; Jer 31:33; Joel 2:28-29).

“Are you the teacher of Israel and you do not understand these things?” (vv.10-12) - Jesus’ question and answer shows that Nicodemus’ question implied he did not believe what Jesus had said as seen in vv. 11-12, *“...you do not accept our testimony.”* This concerned Jesus given Nicodemus’ reputation. His study of the scripture should have made him aware that no one can come to God, on their own strength or righteousness, without the necessity of God’s spiritual regeneration.

To help Nicodemus understand, Jesus referred to the Old Testament incident (Num 21:5-9) when during the Exodus the Israelites disobeyed God and were punished by God by an infestation of

poisonous snakes whose bite was fatal. Moses made a bronze snake — a symbol of their judgement — and raised it on a pole. He then instructed the people to simply look up to the serpent for the promise of healing. Jesus' point of this illustration to Nicodemus was in the "lifted up." Just as Jesus predicted His death in (2:19), He predicts His death again by being lifted up on the cross. Just as those who looked at the bronze serpent received physical healing in the Exodus, those who look to the Son of Man "lifted up" on the cross will live spiritually and eternally (vv. 14-15).

"Whoever believes" - (3:16-21)

"For God so loved the world..." (v.16) - The mission of the Incarnated Christ and the cross is the result of God's love for the evil sinful "world" of humanity (Jn 6:32; Rom 5:8). This is radical for the fact that the Jews knew God loved the children of Israel, but Jesus makes it clear that God loved all peoples regardless of race.

The word "world" in the Greek is where we get the word, cosmos ("kosmos"). The world stands under the threat of God's wrath because of the fall (3:36; Rom 1:18). Yet, God in His gracious love, reached out and chose some from out of the world for salvation (15:19; Rom 6:23). Though He does not take pleasure in pouring out His wrath on the lost, He does rejoice when His own turn from their sin to Him (Ezek 18:23). God's ultimate purpose is the salvation of those who believe in His Son.

Therefore, the consequences of belief are: new birth (vv.3,5); eternal life (vv. 15-16) and salvation (v. 17).

The primary purpose of the Son was to save, not to judge (v.17). Jesus came into a world that was already condemned. There was no need for Him to judge. The world already stood accused in its sin (Rom 5:12). Jesus simply came to redeem those who were His own (Eph 1:4-5).

What does it mean to believe (v.18)? It means more than mere intellectual assent to the claims of the gospel. It means to place ones whole weight of their being on Jesus Christ alone for salvation. In doing so results in receiving a new nature (v.7) which produces a change in heart and obedience to the Lord (Eph 4:17ff).

"This is the judgement..." (v.19) - The world (the people in it) loves sin. *"There is none righteous, not even one"* - Rom 3:10. The reason why people do not receive God's gift of eternal life is because they love darkness more than the light of truth concerning Jesus. People in darkness cannot comprehend the light (1:5).

Coming to Jesus means repentance. It means admitting that our deeds are evil and that we need to be born again. When the people heard Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36) *"they were pierced to the heart, and said ...Brethren, what shall we do?"* Peter said to them... *"Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of yours sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:37). That gift was new life — a regenerated life (2 Cor 5:17).

“John the Baptist’s final testimony” - (3:22-36)

This next section is John the Baptist’s final testimony regarding Christ (v.30). Jesus’ ministry is now moving to the forefront and the one who went before Him now slowly fades into the shadows so that the primacy of Christ ministry may be made known. John testifies that Jesus is above all (v.31) and the Father loves the Son and has given Him all things (v.35).

John concludes this chapter by giving two basic truths (v.36): (1) If you trust and obey in the Son, you will have eternal life. (2) If you are defiant and disobedient, you will experience the ultimate consequence of your failure to believe. The wrath of God (Heb 3:18-19).

My prayer is that you trust and obey so that you may have life eternal through Christ Jesus our Lord.

LESSON FIVE: The Well of Life
John 4.1-42

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In review of last weeks session: What does it mean to be born again?
2. Why was the Samaritan woman surprised that Jesus would initiate a conversation with her? - John 4:7-18.
3. What is the difference between the water at Jacob's well verses the water Jesus gives?
4. Why was the woman so eager to receive the water from Jesus? - John 4:15
5. What was the goal of Jesus to get the woman to confess her sin?
6. What was the end result of Jesus' conversation with the woman? What was the fruit that was harvested? - John 4:27-42.
7. What boundaries keep you from being a witness of Christ to others?

KEY THOUGHT: Every believer must come to “know” for themselves that Jesus is “the Savior of the World.”

KEY TERMS:

Samaritans: The Samaritans were a people who are from the central fertile region of Canaan called Samaria. It's inhabitants were the tribes Ephraim and Manasseh (Joseph's two sons). They were allotted this land based on a promise by Jacob (Gen 49:22). Later when the nation of Israel divided into two Kingdoms (1 Ki 12:16) the Northern kingdom called Israel settled and established its capital first at Shechem, which was a revered site in Jewish history. This kingdom established it's own god (golden calf, 1Ki 12:28) and continued in pagan worship until conquered (2 Ki 17:6).

In 722 B.C. Assyria conquered the northern kingdom (Israel) and took most of its people into captivity.

Then, the Assyrians colonized Samaria and intermarried with the remaining Jews (Ezra 9:1-10:44; Neh 13:23-28) and introduced their pagan idols which the Jews worship as well as the God of Israel. (2 Ki 17:29-41).

Judah (southern kingdom) fell to Babylon in 600 B.C. and some were taken to captivity. 70 years later a remnant were permitted to return and rebuild Jerusalem. Those who resided in Samaria resented and tried to undermine the re-establishment of the Nation of Israel and it's monotheistic of Yahweh at the Temple in Jerusalem. In return, the Jews detested the mixed breed and worship

practices of their northern cousins and thus walls of bitterness went up on both sides and hardened over 550 years.

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

“From Judea to Galilee” - (4:1-6):

The main objective of Jesus’ ministry was to preach (Mk 1:38; Lk 4:18, 43) rather than baptism (1 Cor 1:14-17). He delegated baptism over to His disciples and taught that the “benefit of sacraments depends not on the hand that administers them” (Matthew Henry Concise Commentary).

One of the uniquenesses that sets John’s gospel apart from the other three is that he mentions an early ministry in Judea, whereas the other three did not and only focused on Jesus’ ministry in Galilee.

Sychar was the city of Samaria that many scholars identify with ancient “Shechem” (Gen 33:18). The history of this ancient site goes back to Abraham (Gen 12:6,7) where he received the first divine promise. Jacob purchased a piece of land, settled there, and purged his home from idolatry (Gen 33:19; 35:4). He also dug a well which bears his name to this day (Jn 4:5; 39-42).

Joshua gathered all Israel together before God and made a covenant with the people to serve the Lord (Josh 24:1-15). Sychar (Shechem) was one of the cities of refuge (Josh 20:7) and also the place where Joseph’s bones were buried (Josh 24:32). Rehoboam was appointed king (1 Ki 12:1-9), but Jeroboam took up his residence here. The city is most famous with its connection of Jesus’ conversation with the woman at Jacob’s well (Jn 4:5). Today its’ modern name is Nablus.

A Surprising Conversation: (vv.7-9)

The Samaritans were descendants of pagan peoples settled by the Assyrians 700 years before (See “Samaritans” left column box). The well was a community place for socializing as women waited their turn to draw water from the well. The woman who came to the well by herself at (the sixth hour - v. 6), which was at twelve noon. This signifies that this woman was sexually promiscuous (4:16-18). The encounter between Jesus and the woman was unusual because of several factors:

- Jesus was a Jew - “for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans” - (v.9)
- Jesus speaking to a woman alone - “give me a drink” - (v.7). This was a breach of social custom for Jesus (a Jewish man) to be speaking to woman in public.
- Jesus (a rabbi or religious leader) speaking to a woman who was a known sinner - “for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband;” - (v.18).

Cultural Boundaries Broken

The conversation initiated by Jesus with the request, “give Me a drink” (v.7) was one of surprise from the woman’s perspective given the information above. She had come to this well many times before and probably did not have anyone to speak with, much less a Jewish rabbi. So, her response would have been appropriate to Jesus, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a

drink since I am a Samaritan woman?” - (v.9). The surprise goes even beyond race and gender, but it had religious implications. To comply to Jesus’ request would mean He would need to drink from a ceremonial polluted cup. Something a Jew would have never done, for Jews and Samaritans do not use common vessels (F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, p.103).

The Gospel of Jesus has no boundaries. It is not a gospel just for the Jews, but for all peoples (“for God so loved the world...” - Jn 3:16) including a Samaritan woman with a reputation. How important that is for us to know that Jesus came to be the Savior of the world, not just one race.

Spiritual Conversation (vv. 10-18)

Jesus takes control of the conversation. Instead of pursuing the cultural differences between Jews and Samaritans, Jesus takes the conversation to a higher plane, a spiritual plane. “If you knew the gift of God...” - (v.10). Jesus here is speaking of a gift that is greater than the purest earthly spring can offer. “He would have given you living water” - (v.10,13,14).

In John 2, water was used to symbolize that the old order of the law has run its full course (2:7). In John 3:5, water was referenced by Jesus in a spiritual sense for repentance. Now Jesus uses water to symbolize that the old order inherited by Samaritans and Jews contrasts the new order to come. Read Jeremiah 2:13 where the God of Israel speaks of Himself as “the fountain of living waters” that Israel has forsaken in favor of “broken cisterns” they made for themselves and can not hold water. Jesus applies Himself as the “living water” that is running with a fresh and ongoing supply of God’s grace.

“Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep...are you greater than our father Jacob?” - (vv.11,12). Just like Nicodemus, the woman failed to comprehend what Jesus meant. Certainly, anyone who is able to accomplish this would have to be greater than Jacob. The reference of Jacob, might come from the time when he purchased the plot of land and settled there in Shechem (Jn 4:5; Gen 33:18-20), but there is no mention of Jacob actually digging the well. Yet, again after Jesus tells her once more that, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst;” - (vv. 13-14), her failure to comprehend is expressed in her desire to avoid making frequent trips to Jacob’s well (v.15).

Jesus instruction to go call her husband was socially correct (v.15). As stated above no rabbi would have spoken to a woman without her husband present. Jesus knowing her spiritual condition (her immoral lifestyle) had something else in mind. He wanted to drive the conversation to her greatest need, her need for redemption. She needed to be cleansed from her sin. Jesus makes this request to cause her to confess that she had no husband, but her confession was only partial. Jesus reveals He knows more about her than she was willing to confess and proceeds to tell her she was halfway correct that she has no husband and then says, “you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband” - (v.18).

We are reminded here that when we confess our sin to Christ, He knows all about our sin. In another letter, the Apostle John writes, “If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” - (1 John 1:8-9).

Our greatest spiritual need is to be redeemed from our sin. Jesus has come to save us from our sin. But, we must acknowledge truth concerning our sin before Him. For He knows everything there is to know about who we are and what we’ve done. One day

Subject Changed (vv. 19-26)

It seems like it never fails that when I get to close to touching a person’s heart that they will inevitably change the subject. Here, the woman perceives Jesus as a prophet (v.19) and switches the context towards Jesus being a Jew and what Jews say about where worship must take place (v.20). The context for this is found in 1 Kings 12:16 when the Kingdom of Israel was divided and Jeroboam set up his kingdom in the north and built Shechem (1 Ki 12:25) and established his own worship system out of fear that the people would want to go back to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice and be reunited to the southern kingdom (Judah). So, he made two golden calves and perverted the truth concerning God bringing His people up out of Egypt by saying, “behold, your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt” (1 Ki 12:28). This became a sin “for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan” (1 Ki 12:30).

Jesus told her in a sense — you do not know God and because you do not know Him, you can not worship Him in truth (v.22). The Jews were entrusted with the truth concerning the oracles of God (Rom 3:2). But, now a new order was now being introduced which will put an end to such questions as to where to worship God. The most important question is not where, but how to worship God (v.23) “True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers” - (v. 23) How must we worship God, “in spirit and truth”. Why? Because “God is spirit”. Because God is spirit, He is invisible (Col 1:15; 1 Ti 1:17; Heb 11:27). This means that God is no longer confined to one specific place. The hour has now come (v.23) through Christ’s ministry, death, resurrection, and exaltation to worship the Father. Christ is now our object of true worship because He is the true temple (Jn 2:19-22; Rev 21:22) and only those, who know the truth concerning who He is (v.26) must worship Him in spirit and truth.

Spiritual Crop (vv. 27-42)

The disciples returned from the city when Jesus’ conversation with the woman ended. The disciples were concerned about two things. One, who was this woman? Two, they were concerned that He had not yet eaten (for that is why they went into the city - v.8). When they urged Jesus to eat, they did not understand His reply (v.32). Jesus then tells them that His food is to accomplish the will of the Father (v. 34).

“Four months, and then comes the harvest” - (v.35) - As Jesus was speaking to His disciples, He probably was referring to the crops around them. Crops take around four months to mature to harvest time. It was these crops that Jesus used as an illustration for them to look up - for while

he was speaking the people from the city, wearing white clothing seen above the growing grain might have looked like white heads on the stalks, an indication that the harvest was ready. Because Jesus already knows the hearts of all men (2:24), He saw the readiness of these people for salvation (vv. 39-41).

When the woman left Jesus, she left her water pot (v. 28) and went into the city to tell everyone to “come and see...this is not the Christ is it?” (v.29). So, from that city it is recorded that “many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified.” - (v. 39). They came to Jesus and he stayed with them two days and more believed in Him.

The Samaritans constitute for us in a series of witnesses already demonstrated that Jesus is the Messiah. But, His Messiahship is not contained to be just for the Jews. His Messiahship crosses cultural boundaries. This is our primary objective that we have find Christ when He commissioned His disciples to go into all the world when He said “and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). “For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

LESSON SIX - "THE WITNESS OF CHRIST"
STUDY QUESTIONS
John 4:46-5:47

1. In review of last weeks session: What is the greatest spiritual need in everyone before they can be save? - in other words, what must one do with their sin?
2. The Royal Official came to Jesus simply wanting his son to be healed, instead Jesus uses this an opportunity to do what? - Jn. 4:46-54
3. In relation to the paralytic being healed on the Sabbath - what were the Jews more concerned about? - Jn. 5:5-17
4. Why were the Jews seeking to persecute and kill Jesus? - Jn. 5:16-18
5. What were the five witnesses Jesus in defense of His Deity? - Jn 5:31-47. Which one was the most damning to the Jews?
6. How can we know that the Word of God is true? - 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20. - Are you abiding in the Word of God? - Jn 8:31

KEY THOUGHT: The works that the Father gives Jesus to fulfill is the evidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

KEY TERMS:

“SIGNS” (Jn 4:48): The Apostle John uses the word “sign” seventeen times in his gospel. Always in chapters 2-12, with one exception, (20:30). Because Jesus performed so many “signs” he chose the best to inspire belief. Easton’s Bible Dictionary states that “Miracles are seals of a divine mission...and the man who works a miracle affords thereby clear proof that he comes with the authority of God.”

Signs were visible objects, marks, or symbolic gestures pointing to things not seen. They are usually caused or initiated by God, in most cases in miraculous ways (Jn. 2:11; 4:50; 5:8; 6:5ff; 6:16ff; 9:1-7; 11:1-45). Signs can also be something that points to things that God instituted or created, i.e. —

Keeping the Sabbath rest imitates God’s rest after creating the world (Ex 31:15). Circumcision is a sign of God’s promise to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17:11). The rainbow was a sign promising that God will not destroy the world by water and rain (Gen 9:13). The passover plagues were signs of warning and judgement (Ex 7-12). The value of signs point to the reality of God fulfilling His plans, purpose, and promises through Christ Jesus our Lord. The negative response to signs usually disregards the person of Christ over the constant need of the display of signs which represent a state of disbelief.

FEAST OF THE JEWS: The Jews had daily (Lev. 23), weekly, monthly, and yearly festivals (Num. 28:1-8; Ex. 29:38-42; Lev. 6:8-23; Ex. 30:7-9; 27:20). There were seven that required regular observance:

1. The weekly Sabbath (Lev. 23:13)
2. The feasts of Trumpets (Num. 28:11-15)
3. The Sabbatical year (Ex. 23: 10,11)
4. The year of Jubilee (Lev. 23-35).
5. The Passover
6. Pentecost
7. Tabernacles.

Every Israelite male was expected “to appear before the Lord” (Deut. 27:7). With all the males gone, God promised to protect their homes (Ex. 34:23-24). No invasion ever took place during these three festivals between the time of Moses and Christ. It was not until after Christ that the Roman general, Cestius, slew fifty of the people of Lydda while the rest had gone up to the fest of Tabernacles, A.D. 66.

The reason for the festivals was to maintain religious and national unity and to remember what God has done, to trust in His protection, and to give thanks for His provision.

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

The Signs: - (4:46-5:15)

Sign #2 - "The Healing of the Royal Official's Son - (4:46-54). Jesus returns to Galilee(v.45) and the Galileans (the men) went to receive Him because they saw all the things He did in Jerusalem. and were there for the feast. While in Cana, the same place He performed His first sign (changing water into wine), a royal official's son was sick to the point of death. He implored Jesus to come and heal him. Jesus uses this as an opportunity to demonstrate His deity and told the official "Go; your son lives" (v.50). When he left Jesus, his slaves met him and told him the good news that his son lives at exactly the hour Jesus told him.

- "*Royal Official*" - (v.46) - This title was probably given to the one who officially served King Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39. He was a man of influence, wealth, and privilege, and who wielded significant authority. This official kept "implored Him to come down" (v.47). The word "implored" simply means to "ask" or even "pray" by beseeching or reason. Thus, regardless his official status, as a anxious father grasping for one last hope of curing his son he humbles himself and recognizes Jesus as the remaining hope for saving his son.

Jesus says to the crowd, "unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe" (v.48). Jerusalem was not only fresh on the Galileans minds, but also on Jesus's (2:23). Thus far, the signs and wonders are only causing a superficial belief in Jesus. Perhaps, this occurrence was to test not the faith of the Galileans, but the faith of this royal official. The faith of the Official is noted in (v.50) before he knew Jesus healed his son. He "believed the word." He trusted in Jesus' Word before seeing the results. Again, isn't that the definition of faith, trusting before seeing? Notice some examples of this:

- 2 Corinthians 5:6 - "we walk by faith, not by sight"
- John 20:29 - "Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed"
- 1 Peter 1:8 - "and though you have not seen Him, you love Him and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."

Matthew Henry writes: "Diligent comparing the works of Jesus with his word, will confirm our faith... Thus, the power of one word of Christ, may settle the authority of Christ in the soul."

Sign #3 - The Healing of the Paralytic - (5:1-15).

Jesus is now back in Jerusalem for the feast of the Jews. Scholars are not clear on which feast this may be. Nevertheless, He is there once again and at the pool of Bethesda which is near the sheep gate (east gate of Jerusalem that faces the Mount of Olives) just north of the Temple complex. Jesus came to a gathering place for the infirm called the "pool of Bethesda" who were hoping to benefit from its healing waters. Bethesda means, "the place of outpouring."

One of those there was a paralytic man who had been ill there for 38 years. One of the signs of Jesus equality with God is by His spoken Word. Just as He spoke the world into creation (Gen. 1:3), Jesus commands to the power to cure. Thus Jesus commands the man to “get up, pick up your pallet and walk” (v.8). The man “immediately” became well, picked up his pallet and began walking (v.9)

The healing took place on the Sabbath (v.9). According to Ex. 20:8-11, work was forbidden on the Sabbath, but doesn't instruct what kind of work. Thus, the rabbinical opinion outside the law developed 39 activities that were forbidden based on oral tradition, which included “carrying anything from one domain to another” - (Mishnah Shabbath 7:2; 10:5). Because of this, the Jews who saw the man carrying his pallet (v.10) were more interested in criticizing the man for carrying his mat on the Sabbath than in celebrating his miraculous cure (vv.9-12).

When asked who healed him, the man did not know at first until he found Jesus and reported to the Jews that it was Him (vv. 13-14). Then the Jews began to persecute Jesus because He did this on the Sabbath. Jesus responded to them by equating Himself with God (v. 17).

The Gospel Transformation Study Bible tells us, “The fact that Jesus healed the lame man on the Sabbath is both intentional and significant. Jesus has authority over Israel’s Sabbath, for he is the Lord of the Sabbath (Lk. 6:1-11; Mk 2:23-28). The Jerusalem temple had become a house of commercial business (Jn 2:16), but God meant it to be a “house of mercy.” Only through Jesus can we find God’s mercy and grace, and enter into true Sabbath rest (Heb. 4:1-10) ceasing from our futile efforts to save ourselves, as we trust in Jesus’ perfect work on our behalf.”

The Defense: - (5:16-30)

In this section Jesus responds to the persecution of the Jews (v.16) and their motivation to kill Him (v. 18) by telling them that God does not suspend His activities on the Sabbath (v. 17). Jesus proposes a thought that will exercise the mind of the rabbis. “Did God keep His own laws?” In this case, does God keep the Sabbath law? There is no way God could stop working. Since the entire world and universe is solely dependent on his providential care. His care over creation is unceasing. Therefore, “if God, the Father is working, I too am working” (v.17)

Not only was Jesus going against the oral tradition of the law concerning the Sabbath, He was also equating Himself with God by calling God His father (v.17). This infuriated the Jews. How does Jesus then go on to give defense that He is equal to God in nature? Laurence Richards gives us this list from the following verses:

- v. 17 - Jesus calls God - “My Father...”
- v. 19 - Jesus claims total harmony with the Father in all His works.
- v. 20 - Jesus is loved by the Father, having full knowledge of His plans and purposes.
- v. 21 - Jesus is empowered by the Father to give life as the Father has and does.
- v. 22 - Jesus is entrusted with authority and judgement by the Father.
- v. 23 - Jesus is equal in honor with the Father.
- v. 24 - Jesus is the determiner of human destiny.

- v. 25 - Jesus will raise the dead.
- v. 26 - Jesus, like the Father, is uncreated, having life in Himself.
- v. 27 - Jesus is given the right to exercise judgement because He is the Son of Man.

In being equal with the Father, Jesus follows the initiative of the Father to perfection (v.30). Thus, His judgment is just because everything He hears, says, and does comes directly from the Father. “It is the very submission of Jesus to His Father, His unqualified commitment not to please Himself but the One who sent him, that guarantees that all He says and does, even on the last day, is completely in accord with the Father’s will.” (Don Carson (Pillar NT Commentary).

Jesus not only has the authority to exercise judgment in regards to the Father’s house (2:16), the Sabbath (5:17), but also when it comes to the eschatological age (the Last Days, the Day of the Lord). When that day comes, be sure to know that His judgement will be true (Jn 8:16) because His judgement will come from the Father.

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away...and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds...and if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” - (Revelation 20:11-15)

The Witness: - (5:31-47)

This next and final section affirms the credentials of the Jesus is the Son of God as Jesus produces five witnesses.

- *The First Witness: (v. 31)* - Jesus uses Himself as a witness. This would not have been valid in Jewish courts and Jesus gives reference to this, nevertheless He counts His testimony for He knows where He came from and where He is going (8:14).
- *The Second Witness: (vv. 32-35)* - Jesus uses John the Baptist as a witness. John had heard God’s voice and saw the Spirit descend. John told His disciples that Jesus was the Son of God (1:19-34).
- *The Third Witness: (v. 36)* - Jesus presents His miracles that He performed (10:25-14:11). As I have stated before, John uses seven miracles as signs to Jesus being the Son of God. The three shown thus far show Jesus’ power in different ways: (see signs in the left column).
- *The Fourth Witness: (vv. 37-38)* - Jesus now bring the Father to the witness stand. This witness is one of condemnation. Jesus tells them that “you have neither heard His voice at any time” - meaning — The Father had sent His word to the people of Israel ‘in many and various ways’ (Heb. 1:1); but they did not accept it. Interesting enough, if they would have believed Moses’ words then they would believe Jesus for Moses wrote about Jesus (5:46; Lk 24:27).

- *The Final (Fifth Witness): (vv. 39-41)* - Jesus, finally uses Scripture as the final word of witness. For both the Law and the Prophets predict Jesus' coming, and describe His ministry. This would be the most convicting witness and most damning.

Even though they search the Scriptures (v. 39) thinking that in them they have eternal life - the truth is - those same Scriptures Jesus says, "it is these that testify about Me."

Jesus later will tell His disciples that a true disciple of His is one who continues in His Word. Because it is in the Word that they will find the truth and that truth will always point them to Christ Jesus as the Son of the Living God (Jn 8:31). Knowing that truth will make them free (Jn 8:32).

LESSON SEVEN - "THE BREAD OF LIFE"

John 6:1-71

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In review of last weeks session: What is the final witness and authority concerning Jesus?
2. How many people did Jesus feed with just two fish and five barley loafs? and What did this miracle demonstrate? (6:1-14)
3. Jesus walked on and calmed the ragging sea, what do we learn about Jesus and His ability to do this? (Hint: Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16).
4. The feeding of the five thousand and calming the sea represents what Old Testament character and historical event? What is Jesus proving here?
5. What is Jesus saying about Himself when He declares He is the "Bread of Life?" and What was the response of the Jews? (vv. 35-42)
6. If the sayings of Jesus are hard for followers to take, how are they able to believe, who grants them to believe? - (vv. 60-65)
7. Are you a true believer of Christ? What makes you different than those who "withdrew" from Jesus? (vv. 66-70)

KEY THOUGHT: Jesus, as the Bread of life, is the source and sustainer of eternal life for those the Father draws to Him.

KEY TERMS:

Bread: "Bread" was the staple food in Palestine and is often used as a synonym in scripture for "food," representing that which sustains the basic needs of everyday life. Most bread was made from grain (some from lentils or beans) that was ground into flour, mixed with salt and water, kneaded into a dough, and baked. Some bread included leaven to give it substance.

How bread was use:

- Bread was a symbol of hospitality (Neh 13:1-2; Matt 14:15-21).
- Bread was considered a gift from God.
- Bread was used during the passover (without leaven as required).
- Bread was used as the "bread of Presence ("shewbread") which represented the twelve tribes of Israel in the temple (Ex 25:30).
- Bread was referenced by Jesus in the "Lord's Prayer" (Matt 5:11) as a way of asking God to meet our basic needs in life.

- Bread also was a title Jesus gave to Himself, “the Bread of Life” referring to the eternal life He alone can give (John 6:33-35).
 - Bread is also used by Jesus symbolically during the Last supper to foreshadow that believers must “eat His flesh” (represented by bread) and “drink His blood” (the wine) - Jn 6:53-59.
 - Finally, bread was used to symbolically to represent those things that were present in daily life (Pss 127:2; 80:5; Prov. 4:17; 20:17).
- (The Bakers Illustrated Bible Dictionary, “Bread”).*

Disciples: The word for disciple in the greek (“mathetes”) means student. By definition, a disciple is a follower and one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another. The word itself in the Bible is only found in the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and Acts when referring to the Apostles. Even though a follower of Christ could be called a disciple, not all were true disciples. There are true disciples and there are false ones.

A true disciple of Christ is one who loves Christ above all else - even above one’s own family (Matt. 10:34-37; 19:29). A true disciple also lives a sacrificial life of denying self, even to death if need be (Luke 9:23-24). A true disciple is willing to yield to the Lordship of Christ in everything - even unto persecution. If a disciple believe Jesus has the gift of eternal life, then a true disciple would die for Christ.

A false disciple is one who crushes under the pressures of life. When they are afflicted by the worries of this world and are seduced by the wealth of the world (Matt. 13:21-22). In our current chapter (6:60,66) shows us that not all disciples are true believers. They are the ones who abandoned Jesus and withdraw from following Him. They came to follow Jesus only seeking their own selfish gain and desires. Jesus tells us though, that the only way for one to become a true disciple is granted by God the Father (Jn. 6:44, 65)

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

Feeding the Five Thousand: - (6:1-14)

Jesus and His disciples were now on the west side of the Sea of Galilee (Tiberias) and it was near the time for the Passover, the feast of the Jews (v. 4) and large crowds followed Him because of the signs they saw Jesus perform. Jesus seeing this and knowing what He was going to do tested His disciples (the Twelve).

The Crowd (v.10): John tells us that the crowd numbered about five thousand men. Some conservative numbers would put this number around 10,000 at least because Matthew tells us that there were women and children there too (Matt 14:21).

The Cost (v. 7): Philip did a quick survey and came back with the data and told Jesus that it would take approximately 200 denarii (eight months wages) to buy bread for this many. In today’s numbers that would be around \$30,000 based on 2011 average American monthly salary (work.chron.com). The point of this research was to show how impossible it would have been for them to come up with the funds to feed this crowd. Andrew took a different approach by bringing

to Jesus a boy who had “five small barley loaves and two fish” - (v.9). The point, after surveying the available resources there was simply not enough food to go around.

The Confession (v. 10-14): Jesus told His disciples to have the people to sit down on the green grass (an indication that it was spring, near the time of the Passover). From the synoptic gospel we are told He commanded them to have the people sit in groups of fifty (Mark 6:39; Luke 9:14). When they were grouped and seated Jesus went about to demonstrate the power of God.

- *First, by giving thanks (v.11)* - “eucharisteo” is the greek word here, by which we get “Eucharist” (thanksgiving), commonly used at communion. But, we are not to draw any significance from this other than Jesus crediting the Father in heaven for the provision of food. F.F. Bruce states that “If Jesus used the regular form of thanksgiving, he would have said, ‘Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth the bread from the earth.’”
- *Second, by distribution (v.11)* - The word used here (diadidomi) describes Jesus taking the fish and barley loaves and dividing them and handing them to His twelve disciples who then in return passed the food out among the 5-10 thousand who were seated in the grass.
- *Third, liberal quantity (v.11)* - One final note on this scene is that Jesus was not frugal in handing out the food. John reports that the crowd could have “as much as they wanted.”
- *Forth, Satisfaction (v.12)* - The people were filled up and satisfied.
- *Finally, Abundance (v.12)* - “Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost.” - Here John shows us that however plentifully the Lord lavishly bestows His grace (Eph. 1:3), He has always enough and to spare for others. The Lord is never impoverished by the generosity of His giving. There were twelve baskets of leftovers collected (v.13).

“This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.” - (v. 14) - The prophesy that the people were referring to was Deuteronomy 18:15, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers - it is to him you shall listen.” Just as Moses responded and fed the Israelites in the wilderness (Exod 16:13-18) - Jesus’ timing of feeding the five thousand just before the Passover becomes the foreshadow of Jesus Himself. Jesus did not come to provide elements for the Passover, but to be the meal Himself that will take sin away (Jn. 1:29).

Jesus walks on the water: - (6:15-21)

Crises on the Sea: (vv.15-19) - “The sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing” - (6:18) - Jesus knew that the people were wanting to make Him king at that moment and went to a mountain by Himself while the twelve crossed the sea of Galilee on a boat at night. As they were crossing, the wind, which often does on the sea there, came on them strong. They continued to row another three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the sea coming near them. If Jesus was to be the second Moses, He would definitely do for them what the first Moses had done for their forefathers and deliver them from their oppression. Here, just like in the exodus, there was a crises with the sea.

Calming of the Sea: (vv. 20-21) - This miracle demonstrates Jesus' deity by His sovereignty over the laws of nature. Here we see the creator of the universe, who made the land and sea in control of the forces and suspends the law of gravity and place calming the disciples fears and lands the boat miraculously to the place they were going (v.21) ashore, at Capernaum.

Curiosity around the Sea: (vv. 22-25) - When the crowd noticed that the disciples had set off by themselves in their own boat and no other boat had been used (v. 23) they were curious in how Jesus could have gotten across the sea. Jesus gives them no answer to satisfy their curious minds, instead He reveals to them that they were only interested in His ability to perform signs and had missed the real significance of the feeding and why He is here (v. 26).

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

Jesus gives several answers to questions asked by this group of followers. The answers He gives is to correct their opinions of Him.

To the People: (vv. 26-40)

Question 1: "Rabbi, when did You get here?" (v.25)

Answer: "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled." (v. 26). Jesus was not flattered by the peoples attention. Jesus knew they were looking for Him because they wanted a "bread Messiah" much like the Samaritan woman only wanted the water for her own selfish desire (4:11-15). Jesus exhorts them to search for "food which endures to eternal life" (v. 27).

Question 2: "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" (v.28). This question points to their desire for self-sufficiency.

Answer: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him who He has sent." - (v.29). - Instead of working out the right formula to please God by your works and to achieve eternal life (a.k.a. the Rich Young Ruler - Matt 19:16-22; Mk 10:17-27), Jesus points them to the gift of God. i.e. - John 3:16. Paul reminds us of this point as well when he wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit - "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." - Eph. 2:8-9

Question 3: "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? (v.30). Really? The people seem to have holy amnesia. The people still wanting to evaluate Jesus by Moses' ministry of giving them mana (v. 31), yet even those people in Moses' time were not satisfied.

Answer: "...not Moses....but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven." (v.32). Jesus told the people that Moses did not give them spiritual bread. Just like Jacobs well in (4:13) would leave a person thirsty again, the manna that was given to them did not have the means of sustaining spiritual life. Jesus is claiming here that He is the only true source of spiritual

nourishment (Deut 8:3). Physical food is necessary for physical life - spiritual food is also necessary for spiritual life.

Request: “Lord, always give us this bread.” - (v. 34) - Again, the startling resemblance of their request with the Samaritan woman concerning the water of life.

Response: “...you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.” - (v.36) - Jesus gives the people a startling response by saying that true believers will never hunger or thirst because they come to Him believing in Him, because He is the “Bread of Life.” But, He tells them - you are not my one of my own because you do not believe in me.

Application: To them - “belief” meant acceptance of his competence based upon miracles. To Jesus, “belief” means commitment based on trust.

“*Bread of Life*” - This is one of seven declarations that John uses to prove that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus claim of being the “Bread of Life” is that He desires people to receive Him not based on what He did, but Who He is. But, this was beyond their comprehension because the Father had not given them over into Jesus’ hands (v.37). The only way for a person to possess the “Bread of Life” that Jesus offers is by the access the Father gives them. When the Father draws people to Himself (v. 44) they are able to know the truth and “Behold the Son and believe in Him” -(v. 40) and they will have eternal life.

To the Jews: (vv. 41-58)

When John mentions the “Jews” he means those who oppose Jesus. Mainly, those in governing leadership over the people.

Reaction #1: “...the Jews were grumbling about Him...” (v. 41). The reason they were grumbling is because of His claim in being “the bread that came down out of heaven.” Again, taking issue with Jesus’ claim of deity, equating Himself with God. Jesus

Rebuke: Jesus rebuke them for their grumbling and told not to “grumble among themselves” - (v. 43). For no amount of grumbling will change the fact that “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws Him...” - (v. 44).

Resurrection: And those He draws unto Himself, He will raise up on the last day. Jesus gives His disciples the promise of the resurrection.

Restating: (vv. 46-51): Jesus restates that the key to knowing God lies in the person of Christ who descended from heaven to provide the living manna that the human nature requires. But, to eat this bread means to receive and believe in Christ as one’s life.

Reassurance: “O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.” - (Psalm 34:8). - They only way to know how good the Lord is take and eat of Him. In verse 51 - Jesus introduces His vicarious death, the sacrifice of his body for the sins of the world.

Reaction #2: “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” - (v. 52) - The Jews took Jesus literally.

Response: Jesus, adds salt to the wound by bringing up another repulsive figure by adding, “and drink His blood...” - (v. 53). - Jesus as gross as it may seem is saying that only real food and real drink produces real life. When you partake of Christ, He is offering real life, eternal life (vv. 55-58).

III. To the Disciples: (vv. 59-71)

Our final section concerns with the grumbling among His disciples (v. 61) because they found his sayings above to be (pardon the pun) to difficult to swallow.

Trapped: “does this cause you to stumble?” (v.61) - Jesus perceives that some of His disciples were struggling with His teaching and had literally “trapped them in.” The word “to stumble” in greek is (skandalizom). Originally it means “to spring back and forth” or “to slam closed.” Basically, Jesus is asking...”did I lay a trap?”

Tough: Jesus challenges the grumbling disciples with a question by saying in effect, “You find yourself unable to accept my claim that I came from heaven, to eat my flesh, and to drink my blood - then, what will you think if I tell you that I will ascend into heaven? Will you believe then?” - Swindoll says it best by stating - “If this teaching has brought you to your end, you don't stand a chance with later teaching.” As a result of this tough teaching, “many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore” (Jn. 6.66). I am not sure what strikes me more - the reference number of this verse or the resolve of the many who abandoned Jesus because of His teaching. Both are an indication that flesh cannot comprehend the glories and marvelous grace of Christ.

Truth: Jesus turns to the twelve to say, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” - (v. 67). Yet, Jesus knows who His own are (v.64). A great assurance for all of us who are in Christ that nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” - (Rom 8:39). “To whom shall we go? You have the Words of eternal life.” - (v. 68). This is the response of the one who truly believes and understands Jesus’ teachings. The nature of salvation is belief, not intellectualism. The Jews wanted to see and believe, but “blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.” - (Jn. 20:29). Thus we have Peter’s confession...”We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.” - (v.69).

Another Truth: “Did I myself not choose you...yet one of you is a devil?” - (v. 70). - Though the twelve stayed with Jesus - Jesus interjects another truth - But, I chose you. Choosing, in this case does not refer to salvation, but an invitation to become disciples of Christ. Some who are invited to follow Jesus are not true disciples. Judas illustrates this truth for he is “a devil” that Jesus was

speaking of who will betray Jesus. “Many are called, but few are chosen” - (Matt. 22:14). - This is always a difficult pill to swallow.

CONCLUSION

1. Many people admit they want a savior. Many might even admit of wanting Jesus to be their savior. Their problem is very similar to the Jews. They want to see first and believe later. They want a sign, and another sign before they invest in belief.
2. Another issue is that one cannot believe unless the Father in heaven gives them the ability to believe (6:44, 65; Eph 2:8)
3. But, to the one who is born of God through Christ Jesus there is the abundance of eternal life that comes to those who seek the Son of God, the “Bread of Life.”

LESSON EIGHT - "THE TEACHER OF LIFE"

John 7:1-51

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In review of last weeks session: What is a true believer of Christ?
2. What was the motive of Jesus' brother in encouraging Him to make Himself known at the Feast in Jerusalem? (7:2-4) and what was Jesus' response to them (v. 6)?
3. Were Jesus' brothers believers? (v. 5)
4. Why did Jesus change His mind in going to the Feast in Jerusalem? (vv. 6, 10, 14, 39)
5. How is one able to know that Jesus' teaching is true and from the Father in heaven? (vv. 16-18)
6. What does Jesus promise for those who believe in Him? (vv. 37-39)
7. What point is Nicodemus making in (7:51)? and How does this affect you and others when reading this gospel that John is presenting? What will it prove?

KEY THOUGHT: As uncertainty may grow among many in the world, one basic truth remains, to do the will of God is to receive the teachings of Christ.

KEY TERMS:

"Feast of Booths" or "Tabernacles" was the ingathering of the harvest of grapes and olives (Ex 23:16; Lv 23:33-36; 39-43; Dt 16:13-15), while grain was reaped between April and June. It was a 7 day feast from the 15th to the 21st of Tishri (September). This was the most popular feast among the big three (Passover, Pentecost, and Booths) says, Josephus. It was accompanied by the rural people making makeshift structures of light branches and leaves to live in for one week (hence the booths or tabernacles - Lv 23:42) while the city dwellers built similar structures on their homes.

Jesus' Brothers: The Bible tells us that Jesus had brothers and sisters (Matt 12:46; 13:56; Lk 8:19; Mk 3:31). His brothers were James, Joseph, Simon and Judas (not the betrayer). Even though His brothers are named, His sisters are not. Note in those passages that they are always called brothers and sisters, never cousins or kinsmen and their relationship is always defined with reference to Him, not to Joseph or to Mary, which would indicate that they were children born from Joseph and Mary. Finally, note that Mary was not a perpetual virgin as some may believe (Matt. 1:25).

- James became the leader of the early church. James was also known for being such a prayer warrior that he spent so much time in prayer that his knees were calloused like those of a camel.
- Judas (Jude) became the writer of the short letter that bears his name. He was a respected leader in the church and perhaps a traveling missionary who saw the problems he wrote about.

Although Jesus' family was skeptical of His ministry, the Resurrection changed their minds, because they were joined with Mary and the other disciples in the upper room waiting for the Holy Spirit (1:14).

Jesus' Hour: *"My time is not here"* (7:6) - This section of scripture emphasizes a key factor that everything concerning Jesus' ministry is about His appointed hour. Jesus never allowed anyone to dictate the divine time of His glory, His death on the cross. Jesus rejected pressure from His mother (2:4), his brothers (7:3-4) and the crowd (7:30) because His hour of opportunity ("kadiros") had not yet come.

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

I. THE DIVINE TIME OF GOD - (7:1-13)

The Reluctance (7:1-2): *"for He was unwilling to walk in Judea"* (v. 1). Jesus was not "unwilling" because He was afraid that the "Jews were seeking to kill Him," He was reluctant because the hour of His glory had not yet come. John chose not to include Jesus' later Galilean ministry, but he does record that Jesus did not return to Judea (v.1) at once because of the plot by the Jews to seize Him and the attempt to kill Him (5:18). In time, their hatred towards Jesus would increase (7:19; 30, 32, 44, 8:59; 10:39; 11:8, 53) until at the His divine hour they would crucify Jesus on the cross.

The Request (7:3-5): *"For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly"* (v.4). There could be a couple of ways to read into the motives of Jesus' brothers here. One motive could have been to urge Jesus to take control of the revolt that was in the air in Jerusalem concerning Him (7:1). Another motive could have been that His brothers saw an opportunity for Jesus to acquire some publicity, to enhance His popularity to gain more followers. Both could be applied together underscored with some sarcasm that He abandon His strategy of teaching crowds in obscured places and of risking death.

"For not even His brothers were believing in Him" (v.5). The reason that Jesus' brothers could not comprehend what Jesus ministry plan was is because they were not believers. It is not until after Jesus' resurrection that His brothers became His followers (Acts 1:14). Paul list one incident where the resurrected Christ appeared before His brother James (1 Cor. 15:7). But, until then, His brothers at this stage did not believe in Him and saw Him as a failure because in their eyes He was not being the kind of person the Messiah would be and the kind of things He should do.

The Response (vv. 6-13): *“My time is not yet here” (v.6a).* Jesus’ response to His brothers resembles the one He gave His mother at the wedding in Cana (2:4). Jesus did not live by opportunity, Jesus lived by the divine calendar that was predetermined by the Father. When that appointed time by the Father came, Jesus would then go up to Jerusalem to be “shown to the world” in a more profound way.

“but your time is alway opportune” (v. 6b). The word “opportune” is (“hetoimos”) which means “ready at hand.” Jesus here is telling His brothers that “any time” is an “opportune” time for you. We would say today, “any time would do, preferably now.”

People of unbelief do not work on God’s timetable or within His purposes. They are unable to perceive because they do not possess divine insight. Whereas Jesus committed Himself to the Father’s time table (8:20; Ac 1:7; 17:26)

The Right Time (vv. 10-13): *“...then He Himself also went up...” (v. 10).* Jesus’ brothers had already left for the feast. While there the Jews were seeking for Jesus. They grumbled and debated about His identity and ministry. For Jesus, now the sovereign hour had come on His own terms, not on the terms of any man. Jesus was not being deceitful to His brothers, but simply walking in the divine plan of the Father. Jesus would attend the feast for the final time. But, He would do so on His own sovereign time. Jesus would now be in full control of His death based on the Father’s opportune time.

II. THE DIVINE TEACHING OF GOD - (7:14-39)

The Source of Jesus’ Authority (vv. 14-18): *“How has this man become learned, having never been educated” (v.15).* When Jesus finally made His presence known at the feast by beginning to teach in the temple, the Jews again, were astonished by His teaching. Rabbis usually engaged in some formal rabbinical study. The Jews took note that Jesus never had any formal training, yet were astonished by His teaching. This is similar situation a year later when the Sanhedrin was struck by the boldness of such “unlearned” and ignorant men like Peter and John argued their case (Acts 4:13). They were speaking in the name and authority of Jesus’ name.

“My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me” (v. 16). Another aspect of the purity of Jesus’ ministry was that He was not trained by any man. The source of His training came directly from the Father. We know that rabbis or teachers of the Law (such was the Apostle Paul was) were trained by schools like the school of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). The Hillel school was known for its balanced education, giving students exposure to classical literature, philosophy, and ethics. Jesus, on the other hand, was not. This amazed the Jews. But it was not His ability to read or write, but the authority by which Jesus spoke. Most teachers and Rabbis spoke from the teachings of others. Jesus was very clear that His teaching did not originate from any man, nor Himself, but came from God, the One who sent Him.

“...whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself” (v. 17). The only way for anyone to know the weather someone is speaking the truth of God’s word must have the readiness of heart. They are the ones who are “willing to His (God’s) will.” Jesus later will state that the one who abides in His word “will know the truth, and truth will make” them free (Jn. 8:31).

“He who speaks from himself seeks his now glory” (v. 18). Jesus points out that other saviors and messiahs acted for their own selfish interests, thereby they reveal themselves to be false. Jesus,

God's only Son came to glorify the Father and accomplish His will (2 Cor. 2:17; Phil 2:5-11; Heb 10:7).

The Sign of Jesus' Authority (vv. 19-31): *"When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, while He?" (v. 31).* A clearer way to say this would be, "the Messiah could do no greater kinds of signs than those this man has done." Jesus began this discourse with the Jews by mentioning the Law giver Moses and pointed out to them that they themselves have not carried out the Law - "Why do you seek to kill me?" - (v.19). This accusation only drives His point further, in that, they would not be reacting to Him in a negative and hateful way if He were a fake religious messiah. But, since they are desiring to kill Him, their hatred of Him demonstrates that He is from God (Jn 15:18-19).

"are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath?" (v. 23). Jesus reminds them that the reason they are breaking the Law themselves is that they are not keeping the Sabbath themselves by circumcising a child on the Sabbath. The Law required that a child be circumcise on the eighth day (Lev 12:1-3). Jesus points out their hypocritical position since they were angry that He healed a man on the Sabbath and if they were going to judge Him, judge Him base on righteous judgment, not with hypocrisy (v. 24).

The Seal of Jesus' Authority (vv. 32-39): In this section speaks about His death and resurrection and the promise of the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus seal upon those who truly believe in Him. The priests and Pharisees are greatly concerned that there are still some who believe that Jesus is the Messiah (v. 32), therefore they order officers from the temple to go and seize Jesus in order to delay people from turning to Jesus.

Jesus, thus speaks once again of His death and they where He is going they will not be able to follow Him. This only increases the crowds curiosity. They then, surmise that perhaps Jesus was going to go to the Greeks and teach them (v. 35). Thus, on the last day of the feast (v. 37) Jesus introduces the promise of the Holy Spirit for anyone who truly believes in Him (v. 37-38). John comments that Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit that would eventually come on those who believed in Him. But, that would have to wait until He is fully glorified. (v. 39). This would be the final seal of Jesus authority. The use of the word "glorified" (v. 39) shows how important the passion of Christ was to be. For the revelation about the Holy Spirit divided the era of the Law from that of the Spirit (1:17; Ezek 36:26-27; Jer 31:30).

III. THE DIVINE TEST OF GOD - (7:40-52)

The Certainty of Jesus: *In this final section we see that some show the beginnings of faith, "This certainly is the Prophet" (v. 40).* In reference to whom Moses spoke of in Deut. 18:15 when He stated, "The Lord your God will raise up for you prophet like me from among you, from your brothers - it is to him you shall listen."

The Contempt against Jesus: Others go on showing contempt, “surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?” (v. 41). This creates divided friction between the two groups because they are unsure as to where Jesus is from.

The Courageous Curiosity concerning Jesus: This same incident became troublesome for Nathanael when he assumed that Jesus place of origin was from Nazareth (Jn. 1:46), yet He had courageous curiosity to “come and see” Jesus for himself. Nicodemus seeks to do a similar thing by pointing out that a true verdict requires an assessment of the evidence brought against a person (7:51). This is the test that would be required by the Sanhedrin by God. To submit all the evidence and facts about Jesus and then decide whether or not He is who He says He is.

APPLICATION: This is John’s judicial purpose of His gospel. To submit evidence to His readers to be considered and inspected before any conclusive judgement could be made of Jesus. The hour, the teaching, and the signs are evidences submitted for all to inspect so that they may believe or not Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

LESSON NINE: “The Light of Life”
John 8.12-59

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In review of last weeks session: How do we know that the teaching of Jesus is true.
2. According to John 8. 12-20, why are the Jews so opposed to Jesus?
3. Reacting to Jesus’ statement in v. 21, what did the Jews think Jesus was going to do? Why could they not follow where Jesus was going? (v.23)
4. How can a person truly be a disciple of Christ? (v.31)
5. How is true disciple of Christ different from the Jews who oppose Jesus? (vv. 31-47)
6. What is the correlation between v.52 and v.58? What is Jesus claiming to be?
7. In reading v.56; Hebrews 11.13; and Genesis 12.3 - What legacy and example does Abraham leave for all who would be true disciples of Christ?

KEY THOUGHT: Jesus is claiming to be the genuine light by which truth and falsehood are distinguished.

KEY TERMS:

Inerrancy of Scripture: The doctrine of biblical inerrancy is extremely important because truth matters. Inerrancy effects the truth concerning the character of God and the foundational understanding of everything the Bible teaches. Below are points about the inerrancy of Scripture by S. Michael Houdmann:

1. The Bible itself claims to be perfect (Ps. 12.6,7; Pr. 30.5).
2. The Bible stands or falls as a whole.
3. The Bible is a reflection of its Author, God (2 Tim. 3.16; 2 Pet. 1.21; Jer. 1.2).
4. The Bible judges us, not vice versa (Heb. 4.12; Rom. 9.20).
5. The Bible’s message must be taken as a whole.
6. The Bible is our only rule for faith and practice. If it is not reliable, then on what do we base our beliefs? (Jn. 6.67-69).

Therefore, the original autographs of Scripture are inerrant, but none of the original autographs are in existences. What we have today are thousands of ancient documents and citations that are virtual copies of the original autographs. A belief in inerrancy supports a reverent, careful investigation of the text. - S. Michael Houdmann.

The trouble with John 7.53-8:11: There may be a note in your Bible about this passage which states that the later manuscripts add the story of the adulterous woman. That is to say that the best greek manuscripts (the earliest ones) do not include this narrative. When they do, it appears in a variety of places (Baker Illustrated Bible Commentary). All the early church Fathers omit this narrative and no Eastern Orthodox church father cites the passage before the tenth century (Pillar NT Commentary). The reason for its being cited here may have been to illustrate (7.24) and (8.15) or the Jews sinfulness over against Jesus' sinlessness (8.21, 24, 46) [Pillar Commentary, John, OliveTree notes]

Inerrancy of Scripture: The note about concerning John 7.53- 8.11 brings up the conversation about the inerrancy of scripture. The doctrine of biblical inerrancy is extremely important because truth matters. Inerrancy effects the truth concerning the character of God and the foundational understanding of everything the Bible teaches. S. Michael Houdmann points out six things about the realizability of the Bible.

1. The Bible itself claims to be perfect (Ps. 12.6,7; Pr. 30.5).
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Therefore, the original autographs of Scripture are inerrant, but none of the original autographs are in existence. What we have today are thousands of ancient documents and citations that have allowed us to virtually re-create the autographs. A belief in inerrancy supports a reverent, careful investigation.

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

I. THE TRUTH OF WHO JESUS IS (8.12-32)

Jesus is the Light: *"I am the Light of the world"* (v. 12a) - Light and darkness are important themes in John's gospel and epistles. Light reveals reality as God knows it. Darkness is the shadowy world of illusion cast by human perception of what it believes to be reality. A world of delusion, deception, and fantasy. If the world has no light of truth, then it can make up whatever form of reality it wants. That's why John's opening comments in describing the Son of God as the *"Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it"* (Jn. 1.5). Meaning, that darkness (or people walking in darkness) can not lay hold or seize the "Light" of truth that comes from the Son of God.

Believers who walk in the truth of God's Word are able to see just how dark this world is. A world that is eclipsed by the long shadow of sin (MacArthur). Non-believers walk in spiritual blindness, stumbling deeper into sin's hopeless gloom. Trapped in the snares of immorality, idolatry, and all the "unfruitful deeds of darkness" (Eph. 5.11).

Jesus is the Way: *"he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of Life" (v. 12b)* - This is the hope for those who trust in the Son of God alone. Jesus uses a word, "follow" (akoloutheo) which means "a road, a way." Jesus, later will state that *"I am the way" (Jn. 14.6)* - the road to the Father in heaven. The prophet Isaiah speaks about *"the people who walk in darkness will see a great light' Those who live in a dark land (Isa. 9.2)*. Only those who believe in who the Son of God is will have the eternal light of truth and life. Anyone else does not have the slightest possibility of knowing the reality of light - only the eternal depravity of darkness.

"You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also" (v.19). The unfortunate reality for the Jews here is that they did not know who Jesus was, thus did not know who God the Father.

"I go away and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going you cannot come" (v.21) - Jesus as the incarnate Word of God is to be seen on the earth as light for just a brief time. It is during this brief moment of history that they have opportunity to accept Him for what He is, then they will receive the right to become God's children; eternal life will be theirs. But, as stated in the prologue of this gospel, John writes, *"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him" (Jn. 1.10-11)*.

Notice the phrase - *"and will die in your sin"* - in the next verse they were saying to one another - *"surely He will not kill Himself, will He?"* - thinking he may go and commit suicide, yet Jesus interrupts their debate to clarify to them what He meant.

"When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I Am He" (v. 28). A similar statement He made to Nicodemus (Jn. 3.14). Jesus is trying to help them to understand that He had come from the presence of the Father and that even though He will be lifted up on a cross, He will return to the Father (from where He came), but, because they are from the world, they will die in their sins, unless - *"you believe I am He, You will die in your sins" (v.24)*.

APPLICATION: *"and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (Jn. 8.32)*. Let me stop here for a moment., This is the true reality. Jesus came from the Father in heaven. We (all of us) are from the world. Even though Jesus Cramer to die on the cross for the sins of the world, if one does not believe in Him that person will die in their sin and be forever lost and destined for the lake of fire (Rev. 20.15). *"Whoever believes in Him shall not perish But have eternal life" (Jn. 3.16)*. The only way to be released from the bondage of sin and death is by believing in the truth, the truth that Jesus is the Christ. This truth will set you free.

II. THE TRUTH CONCERNING THE JEWS (8.33-47)

You are a slave to sin: *"everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin" (v.34)* - The Jews responded to Jesus' words about being free by stating that they have never been enslaved, thus, have no need to be set free (v.33). Still perceiving every word of Jesus from an earthly mindset, the Jews considered themselves exempt from spiritual danger since they were descendants of Abraham (Gen, 12.1-3; 15.1-21; 17.1-14; 22.15-18). Jesus deals with this by telling them that sin enslaves all who act disobediently towards God and alienates that person from God and makes it impossible for that person to have a personal relationship with the Father. The act of sin can possibly be overcome, but the attitude and habit of sin are inescapable (Expositor's Bible Commentary).

You are not Abraham's children: *"You are doing the deeds of your father" (v.41)*. Jesus goes on to tell them that no descendant of Abraham would ever seek to kill the Son of God (v. 37-38). If they were Abraham's children then they would *"do the deeds of Abraham"* (v.39), which means they needed to exercise the same kind of faith that Abraham did (Gen. 15.6; Gal. 3.6). The Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians, *"Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham"* (Gal. 3.7). Since they were not doing the deed of faith like Abraham, and were seeking to kill Him (v.40), they could not be Abraham's children.

You are the children of Satan: *"You are of your father, the devil..." (v.44)*. Jesus describes the devil as one who *"was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because truth is not in him"* (v.44b). Later, Jesus will describe the devil as a *"thief"* who comes only to *"steal and kill and destroy"* (Jn. 10.10). The sad reality is that anyone who does not believe in Jesus, belongs to the devil. Like the old adage, "Like father, like son" are those who do not believe.

APPLICATION: The only reason why non-believers reject Jesus is because of the truth. People who are enslaved in the darkness of sin reject truth. Darkness cannot have any relationship with the light of truth. Even, when they acknowledge truth - they suppress it in their own wisdom.

Note Romans 1.21-22 - *"For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they become fools."*

Jesus challenges them to prove Him guilty of sin (v.46). Had Jesus not been sinless, someone in the hostile crowd would eagerly have charged him with at least one sin. Perhaps that was the reason why some scribes placed the story of the adulterous woman (Jn. 7.53-8.11) before this passage because it was about the sinfulness of the Jews and the sinlessness of Christ.

III. THE REAL IDENTITY OF JESUS (8.48-50)

Jesus is not a Samaritan with a demon "...that You are a Samaritan and have a demon" (v.48). The Jews and Samaritans had some common beliefs, especially with the Pentateuch, but the Samaritans had more tolerance for other religious influences around them. Thus, since Jesus did not agree with the traditional interpretation of the Law by the Jews, they aligned Him with Samaritans and calling Him a crazy man, a man with a demon.

Jesus denies the allegations (v.49) and tells them that His only aim was to honor and glorify the Father. Their aim, Jesus tells them, was to disgrace the Father and reaffirms that anyone who receives His message will never die (v.51).

This seemed absurd to the Jews that to receive eternal life was to keep Jesus' word. The reason they believe this to be crazy talk is because their ancestor Abraham and the Old Testament prophets who were known to be God's messengers all died, how is it that Jesus could have power over life and death? - Only God has that power (v.53).

Jesus is Yahweh, the Great " I AM" - "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am" (v. 58). How is it that Jesus can make the audacious claim to have power of death and life? It is because He is God! Not only is Jesus greater than their "Father Abraham" and the "prophets", He is the One that their father Abraham *"rejoiced to see in My day"* (v.56).

Jesus claims here that Abraham had a preview of Jesus' ministry and rejoiced in it. The writer of Hebrews comments that, *"These all died (including Abraham) in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth"* (Heb. 11.13).

Abraham saw the blessing of God from afar off when God told him, *"I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"* (Gen.12.3).

"...before Abraham was born, I am" (v. 58). The one phrase the crowd could not have unmissable understood were these words by Jesus. If they did not understand anything else Jesus said, this they understood. To them, these words would be received as a blasphemous claim. The phrase "I Am" is rooted back in the Hebrew memory of the Exodus when God the Father identified Himself to Moses as "I AM" (Ex. 3.14).

Jesus was making His claim to deity. *"...was born" (came into being)* means an event that took place. Jesus is stating that just like any human being who was born and knows their birthday, Jesus makes known to all who were listening that, He has always been, in continual existence, even before Abraham was born.

APPLICATION: Just as Moses was sent by God to free the Israelites from the bondage and slavery of the Egyptians, Jesus was sent by the Father to free us from the bondage and slavery of

sin and death when He would be glorified on the cross as the atoning sacrifice offered up once and for all (Heb. 7.27).

All anyone who is His own need to do is look up to Jesus and believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, who came to take away our sin and receive from Him eternal life. The great "I AM" - *"The Alpha and the Omega...who is an who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1.8). "...the Living One and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forever, and I have the keys of death and of Hades" (Rev. 1.18).*

LESSON TEN: “THE COMPASSIONATE HEALER”

John 9:1-41

Study Questions

1. In review of last weeks session: How important is belief for a disciple of Christ?
2. What was the purpose of the blind man’s affliction? (vv. 3-5)
3. What was the reaction by the blind man’s neighbors when he regained his sight? What did they do with the blind man and why? - (vv. 8-13)
4. List how the Pharisees and the blind man saw Jesus? (vv. 16-34) - Hint, look for their responses or confessions.
5. How does Jesus’ statement in being “the Light of the World” in v. 5 relate to His purpose for coming into the world in v. 39
6. What good can come by being persecuted for Christ? Read (vv. 35-38 and Matt. 5:11-12). How does this encourage you as a believer?

KEY THOUGHT: The works of God is to bring glory to Him and spiritual sight to those who are spiritually blind.

KEY TERMS:

Sin Defined: “Sin” is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature by an individual (Wayne Grudem). Simply put - “Sin is lawlessness” - (1 John 3:4). Sin is also the nature of the human race. “We were by nature children of wrath” - (Eph. 2:3). Every person is also born with the unwritten law within their consciences (Rom. 2:15) and their sinfulness demonstrate their lack of conformity to the moral law of God. Sin is also a serious and is harmful to our lives and souls. Sin brings destructive consequences and it affects us and others. Sin is opposite to everything that is good in God’s character. Because sin contradicts God’s holiness, he must hate it.

Sin’s Origin: First - God Himself did not sin, and is not to be blamed for sin (Deut. 32:4; Job 34:10). It is impossible for God to do wrong (Jms. 1:13). Man sinned (Gen. 3:1-19), angels sinned (2 Pet 2:4), and both sinned willfully and by a voluntary choice. Before Adam and Eve

sinned by their disobedience to God, sin was already present in the angelic world with the fall of Satan and demons (Ezek 28:11-19).

Sin's Affect: We inherit sin's guilt through Adam and it's affect of death has spread to all (Rom 5:12-14). Thus, God inputed Adam's guilt to us by His righteous judgment (Rom 5:18-19). We also inherited a sinful nature because of Adam's sin - this is sometimes called "original sin" - (Psalm 51:5). This nature renders every part of our being sinful before God - not just parts - but all (Rom 7:18; Titus 1:15). Even in our actions we are unable to do spiritual good before God. This means we not only lack any spiritual good in ourselves, but we also lack the ability to do anything that will in itself please God (Rom 8:8).

Hope for the sinner: It is not natural for people to repent from their sin (Rom 3:10). Only God gives a person the desire to repent and trust in Christ as long as they do not harden their hearts (Heb 3:7-8, 15; 12:17)

Portions of this article were taken from "Bible Doctrine" by Wayne Grudem

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

I. RESTORATION OF PHYSICAL SIGHT (9.1-34)

The Jews Question - *"Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parent, that he would be born blind?"* - (vv. 2) - John doesn't give us too much details about the transition into this portion of scripture, but it is logical to assume from (v.1) that the context follows chapter 8 as Jesus hides Himself from those who were about to stone Him (8:59). The opening verse tells us that Jesus passed by and saw a man who was blind from birth. This prompted His disciples curiosity about the man's disability, which was, did sin cause his disability, if so, was it his own sin or his parents?

The man's disability - The man's disability was that he was born blind. Because it wasn't by disease or injury, the disciples were curious as to why? Their first conclusion, as was common in first-century Judaism, that his affliction was the just penalty because of sin, either his own sin or his parents. We find an example of this by Job's friends who assumed Job's affliction was the result of some sin in his life (Job 4:7-9). The Pharisees and Sadducees regarded any misfortune as the direct result of someone's sin. Religious people try to pair down life into quantifiable terms by which good earns rewards of blessings while the afflicted earns their just reward for doing wrong.

God's work on display - *"it was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him."* - (v. 3) - Jesus reassures His disciples that this man's affliction was not the result of sin, but for the glory of God. On one end, sin indirectly caused his affliction, but only because of the fall. Thus God did not cause the blindness, but a fallen world did.

Charles Swindoll comments, “The blind man lay at the intersection of the world’s affliction and God’s preordained choice to turn his blindness into an occasion for rejoicing; he lay waiting for the preordained moment when Christ would ‘pass by’ and then fulfill His Father’s mission.”

F. F. Bruce writes - “This does not mean that God caused the child to be born blind in order that, after many years, his glory should be displayed in the removal of the blindness - it does mean that God overruled the disaster of the child’s blindness so that, when the child grew to manhood, he might, by recovering his sight, see the glory of God in the face of Christ, and others, seeing this work of God, might turn to the true Light of the World” - (Gospel of John, FF Bruce).

“we must work the world of Him who sent Me” - (v. 4) - Sometimes our focus on the human condition and how to fix it is backwards. Instead of looking back as to how it happen; the Lord is more concerned about moving forward, putting his power on display for man’s benefit.

A keyword that is noted from time to time is “must.” John uses the word to actively describe His urgency to fulfill the mission that the Father has given Him (3:14; 10:16; 12:34; 20:9). Jesus realizes that His time is short and still has the Father works to accomplish before He accomplishes the Father’s greatest work - His death on the cross.

Jesus point’s out that while He is in the world that He is “the Light of the World” and they would be left in darkness once again until the coming of the Holy Spirit to empower them to do the works of the Father after Jesus departs from this earth (John 14:16ff).

“He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes” - (v. 6) - John tells of the account of how Jesus recreated the man’s eyes to restore the man’s sight to be able to see physically for the first time in his life. Jesus did a similar thing by using His saliva in the healing of the deaf mute man (Mk 7:33) and another blind man (8:23). This account is different in that Jesus used His spittle to make clay.

Perhaps the idea here is looking back at creation in how God created man from the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7) and uses the same process to symbolize the Lord’s creating a new set of eyes for this man to see with - thus to display the power of God for man’s benefit. Nevertheless, Jesus after putting the clay paste on his eyes instructs the man to go wash in the pool of Siloam and wash it off. The end result was - *“he went away and washed and came back seeing”* - (v. 7).

The Friends Disbelief - (vv. 7-13) - Because the man was such a familiar sight among his neighbors they were shocked and in disbelief that this could really be *“the one who used to sit and beg?”* - (v.8). Others were convinced that this was not the same guy. They began to ask him, *“How then were your eyes opened?”* (v.10) and he answers by saying *“Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me to, ‘Go to Siloam and wash’”* - (v. 11) which he did - and because of their respect of the Pharisees, and this took place on the Sabbath, the neighbors saw it as a religious issue and brought the man to the authorities to seek counsel concerning this miracle.

The Pharisee’s Difficult Problem - (vv. 14-17) - The pharisees ask the man once again to retell how he had regain his eye sight. The man retold the story just as he did for his neighbors.

Afterwards the Pharisees had a difficult decision to make about Jesus. Because this took place on the Sabbath, some were saying that Jesus was a sinner - *“This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath”* - (v. 16a). Yet, others were saying - *“How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?”* - (v. 16b). Then, they ask the man - *“What do you say about Him...?”* - (v. 17a). The man responds by declaring Jesus as a prophet.

The Jews Disbelief - (vv. 18-23) - Not being satisfied with the man’s response, in disbelief, the Jews go to his parents to inquire from them, hoping to find a reason to dispute this miracle if he had not been blind from birth, but the parents confirmed that he was in fact blind from birth and tell the Jews they were not sure as to how he is able to see - mostly out of intimidation - *“Because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue (v. 22).* Therefore the parents evaded being excommunicated from the synagogue by stating that their son was an adult capable of answering for himself.

The Jews Decision - (v. 24) - *“Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner.”* - With no other conclusion to make, the Jews command the man to “give glory to God” for his healing and declared Jesus a sinner since He healed the man on the Sabbath and since the Law forbade working on the Sabbath, Jesus was obviously a sinner.

The Man’s Determination - (vv. 25-34) - “The Expositor’s Bible Commentary” points out a parallel and contrast between the healing in chapter nine and the one in chapter five. The parallel was that both took place at a public pool. Both concerned men had incurable diseases. Both were healed on the Sabbath. Yet, the contrast was that the first man in chapter five was healed and voluntarily reported the incident to the Pharisees and identified Jesus afterwards. In this story (chapter nine) - the man had no knowledge of Jesus’ whereabouts, nor did he report the matter to the authorities. Jesus’ then tells us that the first man had sinned and urged him to cease doing so (5:14). But, this man’s condition was not the result of sin nor was he sinning (9:3).

The man in our story today - was not intimidated by the Jews and was determined to tell the truth concerning Jesus.

“One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see” - (v. 25) - Many of us cannot explain how Jesus saves us - all we know is that one time we were in darkness and the next we saw *“the Light of the world.”* I was blind, but now I see...”Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound!”

The Jews being persistent in their questioning the man began to exhaust his patience with a sarcastic statement that insinuated that the Jews wanted to be Jesus’ disciples too (v. 27). Insulted by this man’s sarcasm, the Jews made it clear that they were Moses’ disciples who gave them the Law and rejected Jesus as a prophet Whom they believed was not a keeper of the Law (v. 28).

The Man’s Deduction - (vv. 30-34) - *“If this man were not from God, He could do nothing”* (v. 33) - Since, according to Jews argument that “God does not listen to sinners” (v. 31) - The man’s deductive reasoning led him to the conclusion; how could Jesus performed this miracle if he were under divine condemnation - the healing in itself should be enough to prove that this Jesus is from God.

To this - the Jews attacked the man's character and excommunicated him, isolating him from his friends and family and from any kind of employment (v. 34) (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

II. RESTORATION OF SPIRITUAL SIGHT (9:35-41)

Jesus' Deity Affirmed - (vv. 35-38) - Being expelled by the world for the sake of Christ produces a positive result for the faithful. Jesus' own words in the beatitudes from the sermon on the mount stated; *"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me"* - (Matt 5:11) - Why? - because of verse 12 - *"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

Hearing that the man was barred from the synagogue - Jesus finds him and asked him, *"Do you believe in the Son of Man"* and the man responds by saying - *"Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"* - To which Jesus tells him that he has both seen him and is talking with you (v. 35-37). This is very similar to Jesus' confrontation with the Samaritan woman (4:26).

"'Lord, I believe.' And he worshiped Him" - (v. 38) And so, the light comes on and the man responds by faith by believing in Jesus as the Son of Man, the Christ. This expression of faith leads him to worship Jesus. Only a person who believes in Jesus Christ can authentically worship Him as Lord and Savior. The act of worship here by the man is *"proskuneo"* - which means "to kiss" or "to do reverence by bowing down." That is why only a person who has authentically confess Jesus as Lord can worship Him - This confession involves the humble act of bowing ones life and heart and body to Christ in yielded worship to Him as Lord.

Jesus Declares His Purpose - (vv. 39-41) - Jesus makes known not only to the formerly blind man - but to those Jews who were listening that the destiny of all humans rest on Christ. *"For judgement I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind"* - (v. 39). The pharisees standing near by then asked, "Are we blind too?"

Jesus' response to the Jews was deliberate and to the point - If only they had acknowledge their blindness - in not understanding who He was and where He came from - perhaps they might be like this man. But, since they were claiming they could see when they were blind - there would be no grace for them, only judgment because of their sin which remains (v. 41).

CONCLUSION: I want to compare and contrast between the blind man and the Jews as mentioned in (Baker Illustrated Bible Handbook). The blind man receives both, physical sight and spiritual light, while the Jewish leaders slide further into spiritual darkness and blindness.

The Blind Man:

- 9:11 - "The man they call Jesus (healed me)."
- 9:17 - "He is a prophet"
- 9:25 - "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know, One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

- 9:33 - “If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”
- 9:38 - “Then the man said ‘Lord, I believe,’ and he worshiped him.”

The Jewish Leaders:

- 9:16 - Doubt Jesus is from God because he break the Sabbath Law.
- 9:24 - They view Jesus as a sinner
- 9:29 - They question Jesus’ origins
- 9:34 - They reject Jesus’s miraculous works
- 9:39 - Jesus sums up their fate - I come to judge those who remain in sin.

The irony of this story is that the man born blind begins to see and the leaders born with sight become blind.

How well do you see today - are you in the light as He Himself is in the Light? (1 John 1:7).

LESSON ELEVEN: “THE GOOD SHEPHERD”

John 10:1-42

Study Questions

1. In review of last weeks session: How can being persecuted for Christ sake be a good thing for believers?

2. Compare and contrast the differences between the good shepherd and the thief? (vv. 1-5)

3. Compare and contrast the differences between the good shepherd and the hired hand? - (vv. 7-18)

4. What significance is there that Jesus declares Himself as both the Good Shepherd and the Door Keeper? What does that mean for the flock? What must the door keeper be willing to do?

5. What kind of security do the sheep (believers) have in Christ? (vv. 27-30) - and why?

6. What encouragement can you draw from the fact that while many do not believe in Jesus, many do - especially in light of the Samaritan woman, the blind man and John the Baptist testimony? (vv. 41-42)

KEY THOUGHT: Jesus cares for and leads His sheep (His people).

KEY TERMS:

Sheep: Sheep were an important part of the economy and represented prosperity or poverty in Israel during Bible times.

Sheep also symbolized the people of God. Scattered, when without leadership they were characterized as being like sheep without a shepherd. They were also used to illustrate human sin as straying sheep. Because of this, sheep were important to the offering of sacrifice for sin. A sheep was seen as the innocent one not deserving death and punishment, slaughtered for the sin of man. This became the example of Christ Jesus who came as the “Lamb of God” who came to take away the sin of the world.

The Bible also views the sheep to picture God’s relationship with His people and their rulers. They were also used for judgement in the way a shepherd separates his sheep from among the goats. The sheep pictured as the people of God, the goats illustrate those destined for wrath.

The sheep were used in stories to depict God's love as in the case of the shepherd searching for his one lost sheep.

In John 10, Jesus contrasted his care for His flock with other religious leaders, especially the Pharisees who behaved as thieves and robbers.

Sheep were one image that describes the church of Christ. Peter was instructed by Jesus to take care of His sheep, the church (John 21).

Shepherd: A shepherd is a keeper of the sheep. The first shepherd was Able (Gen. 4:2). Shepherding was the primary occupation for many during the early days of Israel's history (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses). "Shepherds" are used over 200 times in the Bible and the word is often translated, "feeding."

Shepherds lead their sheep (Ps 23) and protect them (1 Sam 17:34). They guard and care for the sheep, even carry the weaker ones in their arms (Isa. 40:11).

Kings and leaders were often designated as shepherds over the nation of Israel (2 Sam 5:2; Jer 23; Ezek 34) and God Himself (Ps 23; Isa 40:11).

Sheep that were cared properly for by a good shepherd meant wealth. In return the sheep provided food, milk, wool, and hides.

Shepherds are mentioned only 16 times in the New Testament. They were the first ones to visit Jesus at birth (Lk 2:8-20). The shepherd was used to illustrate Jesus' relationship to His followers as being the "Great Shepherd" (Heb 13:20).

Jesus declared Himself as "the Good Shepherd" who knew His sheep and lay down His life for them (John 10:7-18).

Paul viewed the church as a flock guided by shepherds whose title is translated as "pastor" (Acts 20:28).

NOTE: John 9 and 10 represent a continuous flow. There is no time gap or break. The audience is still the same. Jesus is speaking to His disciples, the formerly blind man, Pharisees, and others from the crowd.

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

Jesus is the Shepherd of God's People:

"...but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them." - (v. 6) - "those things" which Jesus was saying to them was a parable that Jesus used as an imagery to depict Himself as the Good Shepherd of God's people.

A parable or (paraballo - greek) is a figurative speech used in instruction to convey lessons or principles by using inanimate objects or people in various situations. Parables might be used, as in this case, to compare two contrasting objects (Jesus and false messiah's). Key words such as "truly, truly", or "He who has ears..." usually alert the listener to pay close attention to what was just said. Unfortunately, Jesus' listeners "did not understand" the "figure of speech" Jesus spoke.

- What is Jesus trying to say...Jesus is saying..."I am the only means by which anyone can approach the Father and receive His gift of salvation."

A. The True Shepherd:

"But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep" - (v. 2) - In Jesus' day, sheep were kept in a pen which had a gate through which the sheep entered and left. The pen itself was usually a rough stone or mud-brick structure, only partially roofed, or a cave in the hills. It would have only a single opening that the sheep passed when they bedded down for the night. This opening Jesus calls a "door" and it was guarded by a "door keeper" (v. 3) or "hired hand" (v. 12). When the shepherd wanted to retrieve his sheep, he would approach the "door keeper" who would let the shepherd in the pen to call out his own sheep by name and lead them out of the pen as they follow him (v. 3).

The "door keeper" was not the true shepherd, but an "under-shepherd." He would recognize and know the true shepherd of the flock. He was hired to guard and assist the shepherd in the caring of the flock.

"the sheep hear his voice" - (v. 3) - Sheep can hear and recognize the call of their own shepherd, even if there are several or more shepherds calling at the same time. Shepherds have their own unique call and sounds which their sheep recognize. When the sheep hears its own shepherd's call, they gather around the shepherd to be led and they follow him (v. 4). Not so for a stranger's voice - the sheep or flock would simply not follow the voice of a stranger. Even if they pretended to be the shepherd, use his same call or sounds - the sheep would not follow him but "flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers" - (v. 5).

B. The False Shepherd:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep...he is a thief and a robber." - (v. 1) - Because the sheep would not listen or follow a stranger's call (v.5), the thieves would have to get around the "door keeper" and climb in the pen by some other means. The only reason they climb in is to kill the sheep, to steal the sheep, and to destroy the sheep (v.10)

Jesus explains why this happens - its because the "under-shepherd" - the "hired hand" (v. 12) - "flees" when he sees a wolf coming. Out of fear he abandons the flock for the sake of his own life. Why should he give his life up...the flock doesn't belong to him. He is not the owner. So he flees from danger. Thus, the evil one can come in and create chaos among the flock because there is no one there to protect them.

Jesus contrasted Himself against the false messiahs who by pretense or violence attempted to gain control of the people through illegitimate means. Jesus - the true shepherd enters the gate by the lawful method of entry. That is why Jesus is not only the True Shepherd...but He is also the "door keeper."

C. The Door Keeper:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep" - (v. 7). - Jesus suddenly shifts the metaphor from being the "true Shepherd" to being the "door keeper." This becomes the third "I am" statement of Jesus.

1. *Jesus is the "bread of life" - (6:35)*
2. *Jesus is the "light of the world" - (8:12)*
3. *Jesus is the "door of the sheep" - (9:7)*

In changing the metaphor, Jesus was the shepherd who calls and cares for the sheep, here He is the gate that protects the sheep.

The gate and the door keeper were extremely important in protecting the sheep at night. When the sheep returned to the fold in the evening after grazing all day, the shepherd stood in the doorway of the pen and inspected each sheep as each one enters in. He would as the psalm writer writes..."anointed my head with oil; my cup over flows." - (Ps. 23:5). Meaning, the shepherd would apply anointment on any area of the sheep who were scratched or wounded to keep them from being infected and would give water to those who were thirsty. After the whole flock was safely in - the shepherd would then lay down across the doorway so that no intruder (man or beast) could enter without him knowing. He was the door - he decided who could enter the fold and who was excluded (John 14:6). - "Your rod and staff, they comfort me." - (Ps. 23:4)

D. The Good Shepherd:

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." - (v. 11) - This now becomes the fourth "I am" statement of Christ. Unlike the "hired hand" or the "false messiah" - Jesus, as the good shepherd "lays down His life for the sheep." This means a voluntary sacrificial death. The substitutionary death for sinners on the cross. The innocent dying for the lost. The Good Shepherd stands ready to sacrifice his total self for the sake of the sheep.

In the Old Testament, we see David - a type of Christ in the Old Testament who was a good shepherd. As a good shepherd, David tended his father's flock outside of Bethlehem. David was willing to give up his life voluntarily for his father's sheep. Read what he said to King Saul before taking on Goliath:

"Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has killed both lion and the bear." - (1 Samuel 17:34-36).

This is the role of the good shepherd. To lay down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is only concerned about his pay, not his life, nor the welfare of the sheep.

E. The Shepherd of Many:

"I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also; and they will hear my voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd" - (v. 16) - This verse simply refers to Gentiles who will respond to the voice and call of Christ and become part of His fold in the church (Rom. 1:16). When Jesus was about to ascend into heaven after His resurrection we have His commission to His disciples to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19; Lk 24:47; Acts 1:8). Jesus mentions these future believers in His priestly prayer; "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word." - (Jn 17:20).

F. The Sovereign Shepherd:

“No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.” - (v. 18) - What Jesus is declaring here is that He is sovereign. When it is time for him to die - He will do it voluntarily and only when it is His hour to do so. Jesus has not allowed anyone to capture or execute Him before His time (5:18; 7:44-45; 8:20, 59; 10:39; 11:53-54). Only when He declares that hour (12:23) would it be possible for His enemies to arrest Him.

The plan - as He has receive from the Father (v. 18) was to submit Himself to death on the cross and then rise up from the dead victoriously alive. Only Jesus can carry out this plan. Only Jesus has the love both for the Father and the flock to carry out the command of the Father’s purpose.

G. The Security of the Sheep:

“and I give them eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand” - (v.28) - This verse speaks of the eternal security of the believer who is in Christ Jesus. When the sheep (believer) are given by the Father to the Son - they belong to His flock. They show their allegiance to Him by recognizing the shepherd and by evidence of their obedience to the shepherd. In return, the sheep (believer) are given eternal life - permanent life and protection. As the Apostle Paul writes - “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” - (Eph. 1:3).

“I and the Father are one” - (v. 30) - Our eternal security then - rests with Jesus, the good shepherd who has the power to keep his flock safe for the Father. Both the Father and the Son are committed to keeping us perfect, protected and preserved - eternally secured through Christ.

H. The Stand of the Shepherd:

“the Jews picked up stones again to stone Him” - (v. 31) - This would be the third attempt the Jews tried to stone Jesus (5:18; 8:59). The stand of this Good Shepherd would once again land on the Word of God. In response to the Jews attempting to stone Him, Jesus quotes Psalm 82:6. Jesus uses this Psalm to prove that the word “god” can be legitimately be used to refer to others than God Himself. If God can address others as ‘god’ or “sons of the Most High” why should they object to His own statement that He and the Father are one? - Charles Swindoll tells us this is a bit of irony common to rabbinic argument by turning the accusation around with the quote from Psalm 82.

Jesus then challenges them, if you don't believe in me - then believe in the works I do (v. 38). Since His works are the same as the Fathers works, then this should be part of their evaluation of Him. But because they did know who the Father was - how would they know the works of the Father. Jesus then eludes his adversaries and goes away where John the Baptist was first baptizing at the Jordan and stayed there.

I. The Spiritual Fruit of the Shepherd:

“Many believe in Him there” - (v.42) - There are always going to be more who reject Jesus than believe. But, Jesus’ ministry is not without fruitfulness. In the midst of unbelief, John records that many believed in Jesus. Just like the Samaritan woman, faith was preceded by the witness of another, in this case - the blind man, many came to faith because of what Christ did in His life.

LESSON TWELVE: “THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE”

John 11:1-57

Study Questions

1. In review of the last session on “The Good Shepherd”: What security or assurance do you have in knowing that Jesus is not a hired hand, but the true shepherd of your life?
2. What kind of relationship did Jesus have with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary? How is that relationship similar or different to His disciples?
3. Why did Jesus delay and not go help His friend Lazarus? How would it have benefited the disciples? (vv. 7-16)
4. When Jesus finally arrived to be with Lazarus’s family, how did Martha approach Jesus? Did she lack faith? Was she disappointed in Him?
5. What was Jesus’s main purpose in allowing Lazarus to die?
6. What were the reactions by the sisters, disciples and the crowd as they witness Lazarus being raised from the dead?
7. What is your reaction to this story? How have you approached the Lord in times of loss? What comfort have you received from Him and has your faith in Him increased? Do you believe that one day Jesus will raise your body from the grave?

KEY THOUGHT: Death has no power of Jesus. Those who believe in Him have eternal life.

KEY TERMS:

Biblical Mourners: Mourning was the expression of grief at a time of death or loss. Most customs in the Bible encouraged a vivid expression of grief. The period of mourning varies in scripture. The Egyptians mourned for Jacob for 70 days (Gen. 50:3), Israel mourned for Aaron (Num. 20:29) and Moses (Deut. 34:8) for 30 days. One Jewish tradition practice mourning on the third, seventh, and fortieth days, and on the anniversary of after the burial. Mourning usually accompanied with wailing and if a family could afford it - hired professional mourners to add their chants and lamentations and shrieks.

The resurrection: The resurrection is the being raised from the dead. In the Bible there are three primary categories of resurrections. Miraculous healings - such as Elijah raising the Zarephath widow’s son (1 Kings 17:20-24), Jesus raising Jarius’s daughter (Mark 5:41-43), and Paul on Eutychus (Acts 20:9-12). There is also our Lord’s resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12-19) as He overcomes the power of evil and death which also gives believers the hope of general resurrection for those who believe in Him.

The Old Testament position was that God would ransom a person's soul from Sheol (the place of the shades) as Psalm 49:15 states. Israel's position was that the righteous dead would see God (Job 19:26). This built the Jewish expectation concerning the resurrection.

In the New Testament, there were two positions deep within Judaism. The Sadducees rejected any belief in the resurrection because it was not part of the revelation in the Law given to Moses. The Pharisees in contrast, believed in the resurrection. They believed that the good dead are transferred into other bodies.

For believers in the New Testament, the resurrection is based upon Christ's resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12-58; 1 Thes 4:14-18; 1 Pet. 1:3-5). The idea is that this mortal body will take on a new immortal one by transformation (Phil 3:21). This means a new dwelling (2 Cor. 5:2), and new clothing (2 Cor. 5:4; Rev 6:11).

There is also in the New Testament teaching the contrast between the resurrection to life with the resurrection to judgement (John 5:29; Acts 24:15). This is similar to the first and second resurrections in Revelation 20.

Burial Process: The Jews were to bury a corpse on the day of death. They would wrap the body in strips of cloth or in a sheet, called a burial cloth. Just to be sure, they would return to the grave to make sure the person was dead. I am sure there have been a number of incidents where one perceived to be dead, but possibly in a coma. One could imagine how unsettling it would be to wake up and find yourself trapped in a tomb.

Because Lazarus had been dead four days and that this body began to decay removed any doubt that Jesus called forth a dead man to life.

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

This narrative by John testifies for us the power and authority Jesus has over death. Jesus and His disciples were retreating in the Transjordan region where John the Baptist first baptized (10:40). This was the east bank of the Jordan river or better known as the Transjordanian Highlands. Word reached Jesus that a dear friend of His (Lazarus) was sick. The news was sent by Lazarus's sisters, Mary and Martha who were in Bethany, a small village east of Jerusalem on the other side of the Mount of Olives and just west of Jericho.

Now, John comments that Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair (v.2). This is the first time that we are introduced to this family, even though it seems that John assumes that some of his readers have heard of at least one member of the family. The scene that John speaks of can be found in Luke 8:37-38 and takes place during a meal at a pharisee's house as Jesus was reclining at a table. John actually mentions this scene later in the next chapter (12:3). Here is Luke's account of what happened:

“And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner and when she learned that he was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them the perfume.” - Luke 8:37-38NASB



Probably no other narrative describes what worship is than here. The word worship in the New Testament that is use many times is (proskuneo) which means “to kiss or bow down before.” Notice, she a sinner, found Jesus, unashamedly bowed before His feet weeping and using the very tears from her eyes along with the perfume to washed and anointed the Savior’s feet with her hair. This was the same Mary, along with her sister, who sent word that Lazarus was gravely ill.

The Death of a Friend (11:1-37)

Lazarus falls ill (vv. 1-6) - “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick” - (v.3). What a special relationship to be loved by Jesus. John points out this one unique relationship that Jesus has with Lazarus and his sisters. What’s even more interesting is that Jesus knows where this sickness will lead and does nothing to prevent it. He has the power and the authority to heal his friend, but He chooses to remain where He is two days after receiving the news (v. 6).

These verses direct us to those times when we pray out of desperation for some important need in our lives. A loved one in our family is suffering from a terminal illness. Hard economic times and unemployment threatens our financial security. Various trials plague our very comfort. Then, we are reminded that Jesus loves me, thus we supply prayer request towards heaven knowing that the Lord, He answers prayers and I have the faith to believe He will deliver us from this trial. How could He ignore the ones He loves who are part of His will? But, the love one dies, you lose your job and home. Why didn’t God respond? Didn’t I have enough faith? Torn by doubt - your thoughts betray you and you conceive the idea that the Lord doesn’t love you as much as you though He did.

This is not an opportunity to allow your confidence in prayer or God's love for you to fail. We do not know the purpose of God. Mary and Martha did know what Jesus's purpose was for Lazarus. Only Jesus knew what that purpose was - the others would not know until Lazarus would be raised.

“Lazarus is dead...” - (v.14) - When Jesus decided it was time to go back towards Jerusalem, His disciples were greatly concerned about the Jews who were seeking to stone Him (v. 8). Jesus announced to them that their friend Lazarus “has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him” (v. 11). The response by the disciples is classic - “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover” (v. 12) - as if, “come on Jesus - don't risk your life over a friend who can't get up out of bed.” Then, Jesus plainly tells them - “Lazarus is dead.”

“...and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there...” - (v. 15) - This is a strange reaction. Why should Jesus be glad that He was not there to save Lazarus from dying? Why should Lazarus's death bring any benefit to the disciples? Look at the next phrase - “...so that you may believe...”. Everything that the Lord does - He does with purpose and a benefit for those who love Him. “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose” - (Romans 8:28).

The good that will come out of Lazarus's death for the disciples is that they will see the demonstration of power that would certainly certify the Father's blessed approval of Jesus as the Son and confirm the faith of the sisters and the disciples.

“Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died” - (v. 21). - The time between Lazarus's death and Jesus' arrival at Bethany was four days. There was no hope for resuscitation from a coma and Lazarus's body would have begun to decay in the hot Palestinian climate. The family must have been well known since many “Jews” came to comfort Martha and Mary (v. 19). Most of these Jews were probably relatives, friends and some hired mourners who accompanied the body to the grave. Mourning usually lasted several days.

When Jesus arrived, Martha went out to meet Jesus, but Mary stayed at the house (v. 20). Martha's words to Jesus (v. 21) expressed both reproach and persistent faith. She was truly disappointed that Jesus had not arrived earlier, for in doing so, He could have healed Lazarus. But, with her brother now gone, she was content that God would grant Jesus whatever He asked (v.22).

Sometimes in life we mix a bit of faith and reproach when we look back at times when God could have intervened for us, but He chose not to. We are not able to see the full story of our lives that the Lord has yet to unveil before us.

“Your brother will rise again” - (v. 23).

Martha took Jesus' words to mean, what she already believed, that he would arise “on the last day” (v.24). Martha probably received Jesus' words as comfort, much like we would comfort a Christian who lost someone dear to death. We would remind them of the Apostle Paul's words in

1 Thessalonians 4:16 -

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first...”

But, that was not what Jesus meant. Jesus had in mind something wonderful for her and Mary and that day would bring glory to the Father and Christ Jesus Himself and confirm the faith that the sisters and the disciples already had in Christ.

The Resurrection and Life (11:25-44)

“I am the resurrection and the life...” (v.25) - In one comforting utterance, Jesus shares with Martha that He has the power to raise her brother from the dead. Jesus is not only the “water of life” (4:14), and the “bread of life” (6:35), but as He declared in a earlier discourse, has the power and the right to raise those who believe up from the dead (5:25). All is needed is faith to believe. For the assurance for the believer is eternal life (“he who believes in Me will never die. Do You believe this?”).

Do you? Do you truly believe that all power and authority has been given to Jesus to raise believers from the dead? If you truly believe in Jesus, do you believe He will raise your body up from the grave? Martha responded, “Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world” (v.27). This narrative causes us to ask what is faith? Hebrews 11:1 tells us:

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it men of old gained approval.”

Faith is trusting in something you cannot explicitly prove. It’s intellectual assent and trust. Intellectual assent is to believe that something is true and trust is relying on the fact that the something is true. Jesus is asking Martha - “do you believe this?” Martha, emphatically responds by saying - “I do!”

“Remove the stone...Lazarus come forth.” - (v. 39 & 43) - Verses 28ff tell us that Jesus then entered the village and saw the Jews mourning. Mary came to Jesus when He came to the sisters’s house. Mary fell at Jesus’ feet and He was moved. In what would be the shortest verse in scripture states: “Jesus wept” (v.35). Jesus, being fully God was also fully man - here we see the compassion and emotion of Jesus over a dear friend - the one he loved.

As Jesus approached the tomb, which was a cave with a stone lying against it (v. 38), Jesus asked them to “remove the stone.” Then Jesus restates to Martha about believing and gives glory and thanks to the Lord and then SHOUTED! - “LAZARUS COME FORTH!”

I can think a number of epic scenes in the Bible that are in similar climatic tones. Creation, the Red Sea, Elijah on Mt. Carmel, Jesus’ birth, Mount Transfiguration, the cross, the resurrection and Jesus’ coming again. This event is epic in that for the first time the Jews see the creator of the universe bring back to life one of their own. Dead, decaying, wrapped and bound from head to toe - Lazarus comes out from the tomb to display the wondrous power and glory of the Lord.

You may recall at the beginning of this gospel the authors words:

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” -(1:14). John shares with us the glory of Christ as He raises His beloved friend from the dead.

If you believe in Jesus, are you not His friend? Jesus calls us friend - “but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15). Jesus was making known to His friends who He truly was and His friends believed. For - “many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what he had done, believed in Him” (v. 45a).

Yet, not all believed.

The Conspiracy and Withdraw (11:45-57)

“So from that day on they planned together to kill Him” -(v. 53). - Even though many believed, there again was a contingent of unbelievers. These reported to the Pharisees what Jesus had done (v. 45b). As the Chief priest and Pharisees met together, they asked one another what they should do with Jesus. They were concern that everyone would believe in Him and they would be removed from power and destroyed by the Romans (v. 48). Caiaphas recommends the elimination of Jesus rather than having to contend with Rome.

“it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish” - (v. 50). - Could it be that John, the author, included this statement by Caiaphas as an ironic and unconscious prophecy of Jesus’ sacrificial atonement for the nation so it might not perish? This statement unintended or not is applied not only to the nation of Israel, but also to the “children of God” who have been scattered throughout the world. “For God so loved the world (not only Israel) that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” - (3:16).

“Therefore Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews...” - (v. 54). - Jesus and His disciples once again retreated in the country near the wilderness to a city called Ephraim, a small city more likely the city Ephron in 2 Chron. 13:19, the modern et-Tayibeh which is four miles northeast of Bethel.

“and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves” - (v.55) - While there, John mentions the third passover in his gospel and that pilgrims from various parts of the country began to assemble in Jerusalem for ceremonial cleansing. As this took place, many sought for Jesus, wondering “if He would come to the feast at all” (v. 56). Meanwhile, the chief priests and Pharisees had issued a warrant that if anyone saw Jesus to report it so they might seize Him (v. 57). This notice made public was sufficient to let the crowd know in Jerusalem the intentions of the Sanhedrin. Their real plan was to put Jesus to death once they had Him in their power, this was probably not common knowledge.

CONCLUSION:

This chapter ought to be of great comfort to you and others on several levels.

1. Though loved by Jesus - He may not always respond or act or answer request the way you expect Him to. If you are given a different outcome in life through some trial or loss - know for certain - that the Lord is working out His purpose for those He loves and has called according to His own purpose.
2. Sometimes we might get disappointed in the Lord because He didn't come through the way you might have expected. This may cause us to mix faith and reproach in our approach to Jesus. But, be assured, this is only because we do not see the larger picture. Remember, the Lord is sovereign and He will not forsake the righteous (Psalm 37:25).
3. Faith is trusting in something you cannot explicitly prove. It's intellectual assent and trust. Intellectual assent is to believe that something is true and trust is relying on the fact that the something is true.
4. If you believe in Jesus, you are His friend and what has been revealed to Him by the Father, He has revealed to you because you are His beloved friend.

LESSON THIRTEEN: “THE KING”

John 12:1-50

Study Questions

1. In review of the last session, how does knowing that Jesus is the resurrection and the Life help you to trust Him and to help others who are grieving?
2. In John 12:1-11 - What could the perfume that Mary used to anoint Jesus with, could have been used for? What did Jesus say it will be used for?
3. Who else in verses 9-11 were the Jews planning to kill and why?
4. What things did Jesus’ disciples not understand in verses 12-16?
5. What sort of response did the Greeks receive from Jesus in verses 20-26? Why did Jesus respond they way He did?
6. What time has come for the Son of Man (v. 23) and what impact will it have on the world (vv. 31-34)?
7. What is your reaction to why people reject Jesus (vv. 39-40)? What good could come from God’s reason why His people reject Him?

KEY THOUGHT: The hour has come for the Son of God to be glorified as the King of Israel.

KEY TERMS:

Perfume: The perfume that Mary poured out on Jesus’ feet equaled to about 11 ounces. This was a vastly great amount to pour on a person. The perfume or ointment was “pure nard” which was an Indian oil that came from the root spikes of the nard plant. It was pure ointment and because it came from outside Palestine, it was very expensive.

Matthew and Mark tell us that the perfume was in an alabaster flask, the neck of which Mary broke to pour it out on Jesus head as an act to honor Jesus (Matt. 26:7; Mark 14:3).

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

We now come to a significant transition in Jesus’ life. The first eleven chapters covered no less than three years of Jesus’ public ministry. Chapter 12 will only cover less than a week, it inaugurates His private ministry. Then, chapters 13-20 completes Jesus’ private ministry and finishes up with His passion ministry in just three days.

REVIEW / FAST FORWARD: We witnessed in chapters 1 through 11 the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry as He widely traveled up and down Israel healing and teaching thousands of followers. Because of this following, Jesus’ was targeted by and caught the attention of the chief

priests and Pharisees. At the close of chapter 11, the Jewish leaders began to seek a way to eliminate Jesus for the fear of losing their influence and in their minds the nation of Israel. But, because of His popularity, Jesus avoided assassination due to the crowds during His triumphal entry. This allowed Him once more to teach in the temple, confront the religious leaders, correct their theology concerning sin and salvation, their abuse of power, and to make straight their warped view of messianic expectations.

The thrust of Jesus ministry was presenting the truth of God, His Kingdom, and its good news. As much as these truths attracted believers who were prepared to receive Jesus, those same truths violently push the non-believers to the breaking point. Thus, the appointed “hour” of Jesus’ glory has come. Now is the hour of His suffering, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. During His final week on earth, Jesus will be surrounded by close friends, preparing His disciples for His death, yet faithfully executing the Father’s plan as He is led to the cross like a lamb to slaughter. But first, John records three incidents in Chapter 12 that demonstrate the glory of the Son of God, the scene in Bethany, the entry into Jerusalem, and the hour of His glory.

I. The Scene in Bethany (12:1-11)

“Jesus...came to Bethany” - (v.1) - John indicates for us that Jesus arrived in Bethany (Lazarus’ home town) six days before the passover. He had come from Ephraim with His disciples to get away from the crowds (11:54).

“So they made Him supper there,” - (v.2) - In the synoptic Gospels, Matthew and Mark state that Jesus was dining at the home of Simon the Leper (Matt. 26:6; Mk 14:3). The dinner was probably the evening meal on Saturday. Notice that Martha was dutifully serving in her usual role as hostess (v.2; Luke 10:38). If you recall, Martha in Luke’s gospel, describes Martha’s agitation with Mary who was not helping her with all the preparations and complained and asked Jesus to tell Mary to come and help. Jesus gently rebuffed Martha by telling her that she was bothered by many things and she only needed to be concerned with one - “Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Lk. 10:42). Once again, the scene is similar - Martha is serving and Mary is about minister to Jesus at His feet.

“and the house was filled house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.” - (v. 3) - Jesus was probably reclining near the dinner table as was custom and while reclining, Mary anointed Jesus’ feet with “a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard”. As she anointed Jesus’ feet, she wiped them with her hair. Matthew and Mark noted that Mary poured it also on Jesus’ head. There would have been enough to pour on Jesus’ head, arms, hands, and feet (Matt. 26:7; Mk. 14:3).

Judas Iscariot (the one who will betray Jesus and who had been stealing from the money box) complained that Mary had just wasted a year’s income on Jesus’ feet and it could have been given to the poor. The amount she poured on Jesus probably equaled to 11 ounces. This was more than a lavish amount to pour on a person. Thus, it represented Mary’s great love and high regard for Jesus. The act of anointing usually symbolized consecration to a divine work - perhaps Mary

sensed Jesus' coming death. This perfume might have represented Mary's life savings. Obviously, by pouring the perfume out on Jesus' feet filled the whole house with it's aroma.

"Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial" - (v. 7) - We have no indication that Mary would have known about Jesus' dying soon. Nevertheless, Jesus permitted her to keep the ointment for His burial.

II. The Entry in Jerusalem (12:12-19)

"...many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus" - (v. 11) - Verses 9-11 are transition verses to set up the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem once last time. But, even more, John records this to show us the sharp division that has now developed in Judean society. If there were any doubt concerning Jesus among the crowd, those doubts were swayed by Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. This included some who were in opposition to Jesus - they were turning away from the leaders to follow Jesus. This only made the desire of the leaders to murder Jesus all the more - and not only Jesus, Lazarus too (v.10).

Ultimately, a decision about Jesus has to be made in peoples minds and hearts. You will either believe He is who He says He is or you will reject Him. Recall in the opening chapter where John testifies:

"He (Jesus) came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name," - (1:11-12).

"HOSANNA! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, even the King of Israel" - (v.13). - The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is greatly important only in that all four Gospel writers recorded it. Matthew and Mark placed this event before Mary's anointing of Jesus in Simon's house (vv. 1-8). However, John's order is probably the chronological one, in view of his time references, plus the fact that Matthew and Mark frequently altered the chronological sequence for thematic purposes.

The scene shifts from the quiet dinner on Saturday night with a few close friends to a nosy public parade through the streets of Jerusalem on Sunday (Palm Sunday). NOTE: This was the only public demonstration that Jesus allowed during His earthly ministry.

The feast by which the people were already gathered for was the Passover feast. Here are some of the elements of this parade of the crowd declaring Jesus as the Messiah - King of Israel.

1. *Palm branches - (v.13) -* The palm branches were date palm fronds or branches. The practice of waving these branches was a common practice at national celebrations in Israel (Lev. 23:40).
2. *"Hosanna!" - (v.13) -* "Hosanna" is the translation of a Hebrew word that means "give salvation now." The phrase was commonly used during their praise at the feast of Tabernacles, Dedication, and Passover. It is also part of the Hallel passages in Psalms 113-118 that the temple choir sang at these feasts (Psalm 118:25). The significance of this phrase was that the Jews referenced it to the Messiah (11:27 - Martha's confession). This

particular phrase - is a quote from Psalm 118:26 when the writer wrote to honor the coronation of the Davidic king of Israel.

3. *“Fear not, daughter of Zion...”* - (v.15) - This phrase is recorded in Isaiah 40:9. It addresses those to whom good news about Zion comes. The phrase “daughter of Zion” is a common Old Testament description of the people of Jerusalem as the oppressed people of God (Isa. 1:8; Jer. 4:31; Lam. 2:4; Mic. 4:8; Zeph. 3:14 etc...). The context of Zech. 9:9 is worthy of observation:

“rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

Here - even though the Messiah had appeared, fulfilled the prophecy, and many believed, they only believed in the prospect of Jesus being able to free them from Rome and set up God’s kingdom on earth. But, because many still did not believe, including the Jewish leaders, Jesus’ reign would not begin then. He would not “give salvation now” to them because of Israel’s rejection of her King.

Many even today believe Jesus because they assume he will act the way expect or want Him to. This is not true faith. Remember true faith is intellectual ascent and trust. Simply trusting in Jesus alone for the hope and eternal salvation, not what you expect or want Him to do for you. He is a Genie - He is Christ the Lord - the Son of God.

III. The Hour of the Son’s Glory (12:20-50)

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” - (v. 21) - There were Greeks who were attending the feast to worship. Now, whether they were actual Greeks or not - they could have been simply gentiles who were God fearers. Often the New Testament refers to any Gentile who came from Greek-speaking world as Greeks (cf. 7:35). These probably came from Gentile areas of Palestine such as northeastern Galilee or Decapolis, or even further away.

These, as I stated were probably God fearers who worshipped Yahweh along with the Jews, but not necessarily Jewish proselytes. Gentiles were allowed to participate in synagogue worship and the annual feasts, and they would have worshipped in the temple court of the Gentiles.

Jesus response seems aloof to the curiosity of the Greeks. Instead of entertaining the Greeks here - Jesus stayed focus on the one agenda set by the Father, the Cross - He will not be distracted by this goal of accomplishing the Father’s will because...

“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” - (v. 23) - Up to this time that hour had not been near or ready (2:4; 4:21, 23; 7:30; 8:20). The “hour” is the reference to Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension. The “Son of Man” was Jesus’ favorite title for Himself. It signifies the suffering and glorification and it avoided the misunderstanding use of the other messianic titles.

“Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” - (v. 24) - Jesus, here, describes His body as a “grain of wheat” that someone plants “into the earth.” When it dies, it produces a great harvest. Jesus is illustrating that His coming death is necessary for the harvest to come. Jesus’ sacrificial death would result in eternal life for many other people (1 Cor 15:36-38).

Jesus makes the application of this principle for His followers - “He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal” - (v.25). If you live for yourself, you are wasting your life. Nothing good, at its end comes from it. Solomon wrote - “all is vanity.” At the end of the day what matters most he writes, is this: “fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person” - (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Thus, Jesus points out in (v.26) that being His disciple means putting Jesus first (10:4). The disciple who wants to “serve” Jesus “must follow” Him. Where Jesus goes - the disciple goes. Where the Shepherd goes - the sheep goes. True servants stay close to their masters as sheep are by the side of their Shepherd - so must those who believe and call themselves - disciples of Christ.

“Now My soul has become troubled;” - (v. 27) - Jesus soul is troubled because His death would mean that He would be separated from the Father and bearing God’s wrath for the sins of the world. The word “soul” (psyche) here means the seat of the human affection, feelings, and heart. John does not record for us the struggle that Jesus went through in the garden the night before His crucifixion - instead, he narrates that struggle here on this occasion instead. The conflict that Jesus was facing was His desire to avoid the cross and His desire to obey the Father completely. As we learn in the synoptic gospel in the story in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39; Mk 14:36; Lk. 22:42) Jesus in His prayer yields to the Father will.

“Now judgement is upon the world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” - (v. 31) - Lawrence Richards wrote that what Jesus meant by His words here was, “His death, God’s ultimate self-revelation would be complete, From then on, belief and unbelief would mark a line that divides mankind into two groups, distinct in nature and in destiny.”

“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself” - (v. 32) - The reason that judgement will come to the world is because Jesus’ passion on the cross will constitute that judgement. The Jews thought they were judging Jesus when they decided to believe or disbelieve on Him. In reality their decisions brought divine judgement on themselves. By “lifting up the Son of Man” (crucifying Him), they were condemning themselves. This would not be the final judgement - but Jesus is saying that now judgement is upon the world. Recall in John 3:17 - *“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”* Jesus’ death is the result of man rejecting God’s Son - thus when man made the decision to crucify God’s only Son - God was about to pass “judgement” on the world for rejecting His Son (Acts 17:30-31).

This passion involves Jesus' enemies lifting Him up on a cross. The cross would bring people to faith in Him, and His exaltation would involve others coming into God's presence around Him. Thus Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension would "draw all" people to Himself. His death would make all people savable in the sense that His death would reconcile the world of humanity to God (Rom. 5:18; 2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb 2:9; 1 Jn 2:2).

The Sovereign Hand of God through the Death of the Son:

Why could only some believe and others reject Jesus? John quotes Isaiah to answer this: "For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them." - (Jn 12:40 -rf. Isa. 6:10).

This verse explains why the Jews rejected Jesus - "because God, not Satan, blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts."

Why would God do this? Why? Because in the economy of God's sovereign wisdom He brings good out of rejection. This rejection was designed by God (Roms, 9-11) and was an judgment act on His part. Paul wrote, (Roms. 11:11) that it was "by Israel's transgression that salvation has come to the Gentiles." Good came from Job's suffering. Good came from the way Joseph was treated by His brothers. Good came from the Jews who rejected God's Son. All this for His glory (Isa. 6:5).

"He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me." - (v. 44) - Jesus makes one more appeal for belief. Before the judgement of His death. The rejection of His own. Jesus tells the crowd, to those who were listening, "when you believe in Me, you are believing in the Father. If you reject Me - you reject the Father." Jesus point is clear - "His sayings come from the One who judges all things (v. 48). Judgement will be based upon the Words of Christ - all will be judged on the last day on whether they received His words or not. It is important to believe now!

LESSON FOURTEEN: “THE SERVANT”

John 13:1-38

Study Questions

1. In review of the last session: Who blinded the eyes of those who did not believe in Jesus? (12:39-40). How did Jesus describe the sense of urgency to believe in Him? (v. 35-36).
2. In John 13:4-11 - What act did Jesus perform and what did He say the reason was for?
3. Did Jesus act of washing the disciples feet constitute a new ordinance? If not, what did it represent? (v. 15)
4. Jesus “became troubled in spirit” - why? (v. 21). What else could have added to Jesus’ troubled spirit?
5. Who entered into Judas’s heart and what was Jesus command to Judas? (v. 27). What was Satan going to cause Judas to do?
6. To obey Jesus’ new commandment to “love one another” by what example are we to do this? What may this kind of love look like today? (v. 34).

KEY THOUGHT: Humility and servanthood are necessary characteristics of Christians. If we are followers of Christ, we must follow His example of servanthood.

KEY TERMS:

The Passion of Jesus: The word “passion” (grk - paschein) is a term that describes the “suffering” that Christ would experience in this short final period of His life. It begins with the triumphal entry into Jerusalem and includes His Last Supper, agony in the garden and His arrest, trial, and execution by crucifixion.

Last Supper Timing Conflict: The synoptic gospels tell us that Jesus and His disciples eating the Passover meal on Thursday evening (Nisan 14) and Jesus being crucified on Friday. John’s gospel tells us that disciples had eaten on Thursday evening, but the Jews had not (18:28). John’s gospel even goes on to say that Jesus’ trial and Crucifixion were on the day of preparation for the Passover and not after the eating of the Passover, so that with the trial and Crucifixion on Friday,

Christ was actually sacrificed at the same time the Passover lambs were being slain (19:14). How could the synoptics and John's gospels both be correct on the time? The timing issue has to do with how the Jews in the north and south calculated days.

Josephus, the Mishna, and other ancient Jewish sources tell us that the Jews in the north (Galilean area where most of the disciples were from) calculated their days from sunrise to sunrise. While, the Jews in the south (around Jerusalem) calculated their days from sunset to sunset. Since the priest (and Sadducees) mostly lived near Jerusalem, those groups followed the southern time zone.

As confusing as this might be, this dual time zone permitted the feast to be celebrated legitimately on two adjoining days, thereby permitting the temple sacrifices to be made over a total of four hours rather than two.

Therefore, being Galileans, Jesus and the disciples considered the Passover day to have started at sunrise on Thursday and to end at sunrise on Friday. By God's sovereign design Jesus celebrated Passover and was sacrificed on Passover day.

Foot Washing: Foot washing during Jesus' took place when a guest placed his foot on a rest in a wash bowl. Then a slave poured water on the foot to wash away the dust of travel. The task was assigned to the lowest menial servant. For Jesus to stoop and wash the disciples feet was a stunning example of humility (vv. 4-5).

Some Christians in history took Jesus' command binding and literally. They practiced "foot-washing" as an ordinance of the church, along with water baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Grace Brethren and certain Mennonite churches, among others, view foot-washing as a third ordinance. Most Christians believe that Jesus meant that His disciples should follow His example of serving humbly, rather than specially, and literally, washing each other's feet.

None of the New Testament writers prescribe foot-washing as another ordinance. 1 Timothy 5:10 does speak of it as an example of humble service, not as an ordinance of the church.

The biggest clue to this is that, Jesus Himself, called the foot-washing an example of humility (v. 15).

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

I. The Setting: - (vv. 1-3)- As stated in the previous chapter Jesus' ministry has transitioned from His public ministry to the masses to His private ministry and "Passion" (see side bar for explanation of the "passion"). In this scene, Jesus shares a final meal, the Passover Feast, with His disciples in an upper room on Thursday evening after sunset (see side bar for synoptic conflict versus John's "Last Supper" timing). Jesus' realizing that "His hour had come" (v. 23) led Him to prepare His disciples for that hour, and what it would mean for them. The double emphasis on "loved" sets the tone for the whole Upper Room Discourse.

"knowing" - (v. 1, 3) - Charles Swindoll comments that this word refers "to intelligent comprehension with an emphasis on the process or act of knowing." He goes on to say, "In the Upper Room, Jesus placed a great emphasis on His disciples knowing the mind of God so they might become integral to His redemptive plan." Their struggle in knowing God's will, would be no more once the Holy Spirit indwells them. But, until then, Jesus wanted them to know the full

extent of His love and that the “hour” of His departure was in His hands, given to Him by the Father to reveal the full extent of His love for the world.

“*Judas Iscariot*” - (v. 2) - Jesus knew that Judas was going to play a huge roll in His departure by betraying that evening (v. 2). John had already told us that the devil had already entered into Judas’ heart (6:70; 13:3). In verse 3, the devil had already put into Judas’ heart to betray Jesus.

“*The Apron of Humility*” - (v. 4) - Now, Jesus “knowing” that all things have been given sovereignly into His hands takes on the form of a servant to wash His disciples feet. As Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:6 how Jesus “existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant,”. Here, Jesus “lays aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself” (v.4) and begins to wash the disciples feet.

II. Servanthood Realized (vv. 4-20)

“What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.” - (v.7) - Jesus washed “the disciples feet” while being fully aware of His authority from the Father, His divine origin, and His divine destiny. John’s mention of this awareness stresses Jesus’ humility and love still further. Washing feet in such a situation was the role of the most menial task of servants (cf. 1:27). Jesus reversed the normal roles, and assumed the place of a servant rather than that of a rabbi. What did His act demonstrate for the disciples?

1. His act demonstrated love (v.1)
2. Provided a model of Christian conduct (vv. 12-17)
3. Symbolized cleansing (vv. 6-9)

Jesus even dressed Himself as a slave (v.4). His humble service would take Him even to death on the cross (Phil. 2:8). Unlike Jesus who was modeling love and servanthood, we find in Luke’s account (22:24) that none of the disciples did not want to wash each other’s feet for they were disputing among themselves “which one of them might be regarded the greatest.”

While most of the disciples remained silent as Jesus washed their feet, Peter could not refrain from objecting (vv.6-8). Jesus encouraged Peter to submit to having his feet washed, with the promise that he would understand later why Jesus was washing them (vv. 12-20). Peter eventually was willing to submit to a more thorough cleansing. His words reflect his impetuous nature, his high regard for Jesus, as well as his failure to understand, and his self-will (v. 9). The disciples would not understand this lesson and Christ’s death until after He arose and the Holy Spirit enlightened their minds.

We, like the disciples need this lesson in humility. Andrew Murray applies this thought this way, “The church is filled with a worldly spirit of competition and criticism as believers vie with one another to see who is the greatest. We are growing in knowledge, but not in grace (2 Pet. 3:18). Humility is the only soil in which the graces root,”.

“Do you know what I have done to you?” - (v. 12) - Jesus now returns back to His role as a teacher. He begins to explain the significance of what He had done. This question prepared them for the lesson that followed. Jesus had given the twelve a lesson in humble service (v. 15). He took a lower role than theirs for their welfare.

As Jesus’ disciples today, we should willingly and happily put meeting the needs of others before maintaining our own prestige (cf. Phil. 2:1-11).

Jesus’ example here is not literally follow my example of foot washing, but in the spirit of the lesson of humbly serve others rather than disputing who is the greatest among you. (see side bar) “If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.” - (v. 17) - Knowing what one ought to do, and actually doing it, are frequently two different things. Jesus promised God’s favor (blessing) on those who practice humble service, not on those who simply realize that they should be humble (cf. 8:31; 12:47-48; Heb. 12:14; James 1:22-25). This is one of only two beatitudes in John’s Gospel (cf. 20:29).

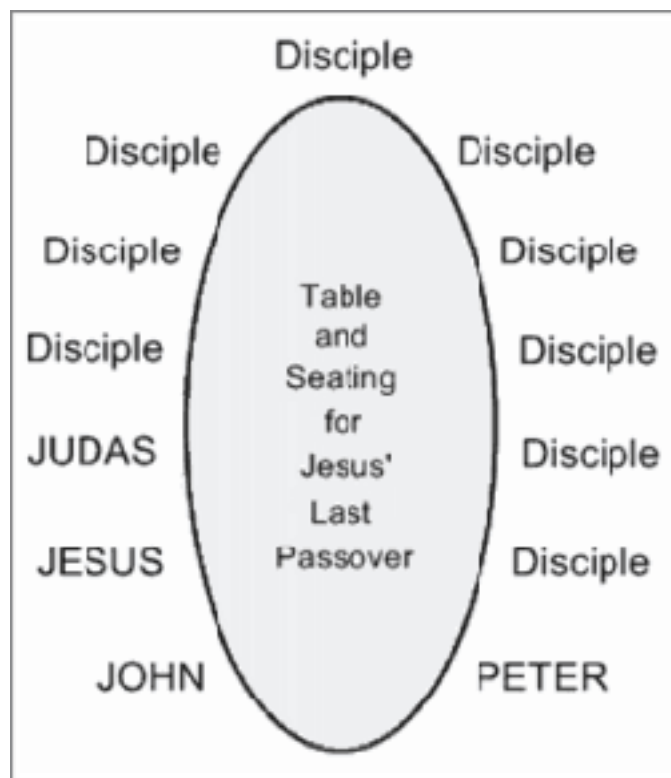
III. Betrayal Predicted (vv. 21-30)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me.” - (v. 21) - Jesus had only briefly communicated His betrayal until now (cf. 6:70; 13:10, 18). Now He gave the twelve more specific information. The knowledge of this impending betrayal and death visibly “troubled” Jesus’ spirit. This announcement created silent suspension among the twelve as to who that might be (v. 22).

John makes reference to himself for the first time in (v. 23) while he reclined next to Jesus on his left elbow. Peter was more likely positioned somewhere across the table and gestured to John to ask Jesus to identify the betrayer. By leaning back against Jesus’ chest, John could have whispered his request quietly.

Leonardo da Vinci’s “The Last Supper” is a masterful painting, but it does not represent the table arrangement as it would have existed in the upper room. *(The image shown here is more likely how they were arranged.)*

“That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him” - (v. 26) - Jesus identified “Judas” as the betrayer to John. The “morsel: or piece of bread was probably a piece of unleavened bread that Jesus “dipped” into the bowl of paschal stew. The host would customarily pass a morsel of dipped bread and meat to an honored guest. Jesus did this



to Judas. He would then hand each person present a morsel (Edersheim 2:506). Judas must have sat conveniently near enough to Jesus (cf. Matt. 26:25) in the honor guest position, immediately to the host's left (see diagram). Thus, this apparent contradiction may have explained John's lack of response to Jesus' words about the betrayer, because if Jesus handed Judas the dipped morsel, then Judas in John's perspective could not have been the betrayer, but the honored guest.

In (v.27), Judas accepted Jesus' food but not His love. Instead of repenting, Judas resisted and opened the way for Satan to take control of him in a stronger way than he had done previously (cf. 3:16-19). John points out that "Satan (himself, not a demon) then entered into him" (v. 27).

This reminds me of God's discourse with Cain in Genesis 4. If you recall, the Lord had regard for Able's offering, but did not have regard for Cain's, because Able gave from the firstlings of his flock and Cain only the fruit from the ground (Gen. 4:3-4). This made Cain angry and the Lord asked Him why he was angry and then said, "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it" (Gen. 4:7). In the end, Cain allowed sin to get the best of him and rose up and murdered his brother (Gen. 4:8).

"What you do, do quickly" - (v. 27) - Here we see a similar scenario with Judas. Unfortunately for Judas, the opportunity for repentance had passed and Jesus did not appeal to him to change his mind and simply told him to get on with his evil work. Jesus' hour had come, and it was essential that Judas not thwart God's plan by delaying it.

Thus, none of the disciples new for certain what was said and why Judas suddenly left. John records that they supposed that because he had the money box that he went to buy the things needed for the feast or to give something to the poor (v. 29).

IV. Love Commanded (vv. 31-38)

With Judas now gone, Jesus could prepare his true disciples for what lay ahead for them. This would be His farewell discourse, His last and most important instructions, preparing them for His death and His promised to return again (14:1-3).

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another." - (v. 34) - In the hour of Jesus' glorification, Jesus begins to announce His departure by commanding His disciples to love one another as He love them. His departure to meet with the chief priest signaled the beginning of the Son of Man's glorification. Even in His "troubled spirit" (v. 21) concerning His betrayal and death, Jesus' concern is for His "children" (v. 33).

The command to "love one another" was not a completely new thought, but in the Mosaic Law the standard was "as you love yourself" (Lev. 19:18). Now, Jesus is calling on His disciples to a new and higher standard, "as I have loved you."

This new commandment was now part of a new covenant that Jesus would ratify with His blood (Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). under this new covenant, God promised to enable His people to “love” by transforming their hearts and minds (Jer. 31:29-34; Ezk. 36:24-26).

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” - (v. 35) - It is only by God’s transforming grace that believers can “love one another” as Jesus has “loved” them. This supernatural love would distinguish the disciples of Jesus from all others. Every believer manifest some supernatural love because the Spirit of God indwells within the believer (1 Jn. 3:14). However, it is possible to quench and or to grieve the indwelling Spirit, so that we do not manifest much love (cf. 1 Thess. 5:19; Eph. 4:30).

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:43-47), Jesus taught His followers to love their enemies and one another. These instructions do not contradict one another or present two different standards. They only distinguish different people to love.

CONCLUSION:

1. Even as His “hour” approaches, the Love of God through Christ is sovereignly in control. Loving His own to the very end, even those like Judas. We know that in this “hour” God demonstrated His own kind of love, even while we were enemies at war with Him, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).
2. What we learn about the love of God through Christ is that His love is unlike our love. Even though the Mosaic Law taught that we should love others as ourselves, Jesus’ more higher standard of love tells us to love others as He loved us, sacrificially, as a servant, putting the interest of others before themselves, even if it meant dying for them (Phil. 2:1-11).
3. To love one another is a direct command by Christ that we all should obey until He comes again (v. 34).

LESSON FIFTEEN: “THE WAY”

John 14:1-31

Study Questions

1. In review of the last session: Besides the command to love one another (13:34), what did Jesus teach His disciples to do for one another and how did He demonstrate it and why was it significant? (vv. 4-20)
2. In John 12:34; 13:21, 33, 38; 14:1, 27b - Why were the disciples hearts troubled?
3. Where was Jesus going and what was He preparing for the disciples and how would they be able to know the way to the Father? - John 14:2-6
4. How did Jesus show the Father to the disciples? (vv. 9-12)
5. Who does Jesus promised to send in His place to help the disciples? - (vv. 16-26)
6. What does Jesus promise to give to His disciples to before He leaves? (v. 27)
7. What troubles your heart? What does your fear reveal? How can you resolve your troubled heart and fear?

KEY THOUGHT: Jesus’ words comfort and encourage the troubled hearts of His disciples.

KEY TERMS:

The Rapture: The rapture of the church is the event in which God “snatches away” all believers from the earth in order to make way for his righteous judgment to be poured out on the earth during the tribulation period. The word “rapture” is never used in Scripture, but it is a term that is described primarily in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 and 1 Cor. 15:50-54.

In this event, God will resurrect all believers who have died, give them glorified bodies, and take them from the earth, along with all living believers, who will also be given glorified bodies at that time.

This event is imminent and will take place when Jesus Himself will descend from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air to be with the Lord forever.

This will involve instantaneous transformation of our bodies to fit us for heaven. The event will be quick like lightning. It is to be distinguished separately from Jesus’ second coming when then

Jesus will descend all the way to the earth on the Mt. of Olives to defeat His enemies and set up His millennial reign on the earth in Jerusalem (Zech. 14:3-4).

The Trinity: There is no way to sufficiently describe and define the Trinity here in such a small space. But, you would be uninformed if I did not make mention of it here since the Trinity is fully represented in John 14. The easiest way to define the Trinity is this: “God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God” (John Grudem).

The Holy Spirit: We have seen much about God the Father and God the Son in John’s gospel. We have also witnessed the inter-workings of these two distinct Persons of the Trinity as the Spirit has been working in the background. Now, in John 14, Jesus gives the third Person of the trinity an official name: Counselor. Christians understand the Holy Spirit not as an influence or force, but as a Person, who with God the Father and the Son are united in Scripture’s one God. What ministries does the Holy Spirit have in our day? Lawrence Richards gives us these points: He is the Source of believer’s spiritual power (Jn 14:16-17; 16:5-15; Acts 1:8). He bonds us to Christ and to each other, making us one church one family of God (1 Cor. 12:13). He enables us to know God’s will and to control our sinful natures (Rom. 8:5-11). He transforms our character and makes us more Christlike (Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Cor. 3:18). He equips us for ministry, distributing spiritual gifts that enable us to contribute to the salvation and growth of others (1 Cor. 12-14; Rom. 12). The Holy Spirit empowers the believer to live and serve Christ the Son on this earth until God the Father calls them home.

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

SETTING: Remember, Jesus and His disciples are in the upper room celebrating the Passover Feast on Thursday evening. Jesus, while giving His final instructions and command to love one another as He has loved them, is also announcing His soon departure. His going away to a place they are not yet able to go for now. Peter in His impetuous way wanted to know where Jesus was going and that he would lay down his life for Jesus. Jesus rebukes Peter by telling him that before a rooster crows, he would have denied Jesus three times (vv. 31-38).

A PLACE PREPARED: (14:1-6)

“Do not let your hearts be troubled” - (v. 1a) - The disciples had much to be troubled by. The Jewish leaders were plotting to kill Jesus. Jesus Himself was predicting His own death and that one of them would betray Him. To top it off, Jesus also predicted that Peter would deny ever knowing Jesus three times. We learned earlier in John 12:27 that even Jesus’ was troubled because He knew what lay ahead for Him. The disciples were troubled because they did not understand what lay before them. Now, He was going to leave them (13:33), but they had abandoned everything to follow Him, yet, Jesus says, “do not let your hearts be troubled”?

“believe in God, believe also in Me” - (v. 1b) - Jesus reassures His disciples that, “Hey guys - everything is going to be ok. Just as you trust and believe in the Father - trust me in this. This is going to work out and for the better.” They were troubled because uncertainty and discouragement had weakened them. They were lacking faith. Jesus wanted to strengthen them.

Recall the story when the disciples were on a boat in the middle of the night. Jesus was delayed and walked out on the water to meet them. When they saw Him, they perceived Him to be a ghost. Jesus’ words to them was similar - “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid (Matt. 14:27). Peter asked Jesus to call him out. Jesus said come. Peter began walking on the water, but when he took his eyes off Jesus and saw the wind he became frightened and began to sink. When we lack faith in trouble times this is when we fear the most and begin to sink. Jesus says, “do not let your hearts be troubled - believe in me.”

“I go to prepare a place for you” - (v. 2) - What keeps Christians pressing on in this world? The hope of eternal salvation and heaven as our home. God’s revelations about the future should have a comforting and strengthening effect on His people (1 Thess. 4:18). The hope that Jesus is presenting to His disciples is that if “I go away, I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to your new home.”

“My Father’s house” - (v.2) - Jesus is describing heaven. Commentaries tell us that the house that Jesus is referring to is the church, but John never uses the word church, he records Jesus calling it, “the Father’s house.” This phrase occurs no where else in Scripture and since Jesus also uses the metaphor such as - “dwellings places” one has to assume that He is referring to a real home in heaven for believers. The imagery here is taken from the oriental house in which the sons and daughters have apartments under the same roof as their parents. You can still see this arrangement today in the middle east and Mediterranean.

The purpose of Jesus’ departure was to make this place ready so He may welcome them permanently. Certainly He would not go to prepare a place for His friends unless He was expecting them to arrive sometime later.

“I will come again” - (v. 3) - Jesus’ words should comfort not only the disciples here, but all believers. John MacArthur states that Jesus refers to the rapture of the church (1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 3:10) - (see side bar for “rapture”)

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life;” - (v. 6) - In verse 5, Thomas, being the pessimist in the group interrupted Jesus by saying, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” This is a series of three questions that interrupts Jesus’ conversation with the disciples. The other two are by Philip (v. 8) and Judas (not Iscariot) in verse 22.

Thomas’s question in verse 5 is simply voicing the disciples’ confusion about Jesus’ destination. Being unclear as to the destination of the “Father’s house,” Thomas is just simply asking how to get there. Jesus had already told the disciples three times that He would die and rise again (Mk.

8:31-32; 9:30-32; 10:32-34). But, their preconceived ideas concerning the Messiah's mission did not allow them to interpret Jesus' words clearly.

Jesus gives disciples the coordinates (directions) to the "Father's house." He says, "I am the way," "truth," and "life." Jesus is saying that He is the way to God because, He is the truth and the life. The "truth" of Jesus embodies God's supreme revelation of Himself (1:18; 5:19; 8:29), and He is the life because He contains and imparts divine life (1:4; 5:26; 11:25, 1 Jn 5:20).

1. Jesus is NOT saying that He was one way to God among many.
2. Jesus is NOT saying that He pointed the way to God.
3. Jesus IS saying that "no one comes to the Father but through Me" (v. 6b).

Jesus concludes His answer to Thomas's question by stating, "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him and have seen Him" - (v. 7).

THE FATHER PRESENTED: (vv. 8- 15)

"Lord, show us the Father" - (v. 8) - Jesus' last statement in verse 7 opens the door for another interrupted question by one of His disciples. This time, Philip asked Jesus to "show us the Father." As much as the disciples knew Jesus and held Him in high regard, they still could not realize that He was the full and accurate revelation of God the Father. That is essentially what Jesus said to Philip in verse 9. "How long have I been with you guys?" "Have you guys not been listening to My words (v.10)?" "Have you not seen My works (v.11)?" "Do you not understand that I am going to be with the Father (v. 12)?"

APPLICATION: Jesus is saying to His disciples that if you believe in the Father, believe also in Me because I AM the exact representation of the Father (1:18) and God is exactly like Me (Jesus). The disciple's long exposure to Jesus should have produced greater insight, still that insight is only the product of God's gracious enlightenment. Consider these reminders on who enlightens the heart and soul of those who are saved:

- "for by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;" - (Eph. 2:8).

"flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" - (Matt. 16:17).

"For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God" - (1 Cor. 2:10).

THE SPIRIT PROMISED: (vv. 16-26)

Speaking of the Spirit, John includes in Jesus' discussion, the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. To know more about the Spirit see the comment above on the "Holy Spirit" from the overview section of this study.

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever." - (v. 16) - Jesus' love for His disciples shows by His concern that they not be left alone. He soon will be leaving them, yet, He would not leave them as "orphans."

In verse 16, and the verses that follow, Jesus introduces and describes the work of the One who will be with them forever.

Notice first, Jesus comforts His disciples by saying, this person will be just like me. We find this in the word “another (grk -allon),” which means, another of the same kind.

The Helper: Second, Jesus gives the Spirit the name, “Helper.” The word “Helper” can also be translated “Counselor.” It comes from the greek word “parakletos.” Actually, the word is made up of two words - “para” - which means - to come along the side. The other is “kaleo or kletos” - which is translated - to call. The full meaning of this word, or in this case, name is - the One that will come to the disciples has been CALLED ALONG the SIDE of the disciples to COUNSEL them and HELP them. He (Holy Spirit) will be their strength and guide in all things pertaining to faith.

The Trinity: In verse 16, Jesus refers to the Trinity (see above comment about the Trinity). Notice in the verse, Jesus, “the Son” would request that the “Father” send the “Spirit” to take the Son’s place as the believer’s encourager and strengthener.

Spirit of Truth: Now, Jesus identifies the “Helper” as the, “Spirit of Truth” in verse 17. That is, the truthful Spirit who would bear witness to confirm and communicate the truth (v. 6; 1:32-33; 3:5-8; 4:23-24; 6:63; 7:37-39).

Warren Wiersbe comments, “To be filled with the Spirit is the same as to be controlled by the Word. The Spirit of Truth uses the Word of truth to guide us into the will and the work of God.” The unbelieving “world cannot receive” Him because it cannot see Him and knows nothing of Him. The disciple on the other hand, knows Him because He empowered Jesus. The Spirit had been with them in this way as well, strengthening them when they occasionally preached or performed miracles under the authority of Jesus. But, in the future, when Jesus goes to the Father, the Spirit would not only be with them, but in them as well.

The Holy Spirit: Finally, Jesus call the Spirit by His full name - “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit...He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you” - (v. 26). This is the particular ministry of the Spirit. To teach and bring into the memories of the disciples the things that Jesus had said. Those things would become clear in the light of His “glorification” (2:19-22; 12:16; 20:9). This is also seen in the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20:

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

APPLICATION: Today, the believer, the one who knows and believes on Jesus, is indwelled by the Spirit. Romans 8:9 says:

“However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But, if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”

The ministry of the Spirit would begin on Pentecost when the church began (Acts 2:4). Remember Jesus' promise to the disciples before He ascended into heaven, "but, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" - (Acts 1:8).

THE GIFT OF PEACE (vv. 27-31)

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you;" -(v. 27) - Remember, the disciples have troubled hearts. Jesus began this part of the discourse in the upper room with "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (v. 1). Jesus will once again remind them in verse 27, "Do not let your hearts be troubled, not let it be fearful."

Jesus promises to give them peace (grk- eirene; Heb - shalom). This was a customary word of both greeting and farewell among the Jews. Jesus uses it here as a farewell. Jesus probably meant that He was bequeathing "peace" to the eleven - as an inheritance - that would secure their composure and dissolve their fears by letting the "peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard their (your) hearts and their (your) minds in Christ Jesus." - (Phil 4:7; Col. 3:15).

This peace does not exempt them from trials and conflicts. Rather, it is a settled confidence in knowing that one is right with God (Rom. 5:1) and that He is sovereignly in control of all things.

CONCLUSION: Disciples today are also not exempt from trials and conflicts of life. We will have tribulations. When a believer is right with God through Christ they first have positional peace with God, that is, knowing that they are in right standing with the Lord because they are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1). Because of this, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Second, believers today are just as much bequeath with the peace of Christ as the eleven in this chapter. This peace is independent of the circumstances we face. It's foundation is in the knowledge that God is our Father, Christ is our Savior and heaven is our home. If God is for us, who can be against us. Nothing in this world can ever separate us from the love and peace that is given by Christ Jesus our Lord.

LESSON SIXTEEN: "THE VINE"

John 15:1-27

Study Questions

1. In review of the last session: What selfless act of love could you demonstrate to show that you are a servant of Christ? Give an example of what that looks like today.
2. In John 15:1-11 briefly describe the vineyard, the God-head and it's relationship to disciples. Who is the true vine, the vinedresser, and the branch?
3. What does Christ desire His disciples to do? (v. 5)
4. What benefit is there in abiding in Christ? (vv. 4-5) What is the negative outcome from not abiding in Christ? (v. 6)
5. Where is the source of the believers fruitfulness in ministry? (vv. 5, 7) What is the end result of fruitfulness? (v. 8)
6. Who appoints the disciples to serve? (v. 16) What should a disciple expect by being associated with Christ? (vv. 18-25)
7. What are some clear ways that you can abide in Christ and produce fruit? What is the ultimate purpose for abiding in Christ and producing fruit? How have you experienced the world's hate for you because of Christ?

KEY THOUGHT: An abiding relationship with Jesus is proof to being His disciple. A relationship that bears fruit and glorifies the Father.

KEY TERMS:

The Vineyard: The vine is a common illustration in the Old Testament of God's people. It depicts the Israel being transplanted from Egypt (Psalm 80:8-11) and brought to a fertile soil (Ezek. 17:1-6). Though enemies may trample on the vineyard (Jer. 12:10-11), God tends to it carefully and looks for fruit (Isa. 5:1-7). This imagery in the Bible shows us God's activity, His nurture, and His expectation for His people (Matt. 21:33-41). Though Israel has been characterize as the a vine, Jesus, in John 15 presents Himself as the "True Vine" (15:1).

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

SETTING: Jesus and His disciples leave the upper room (14:31) because Jesus' enemy ("ruler of this world" - 11:30) is coming. Where they are going, John does not reveal, he simply picks up what would be Jesus' seventh and final "I AM" statement." Below are all seven "I AM's" listed together:

- "I AM the Bread of Life" (6:35)
- "I AM the Light of the World" (8:12)
- "I AM the Door for the Sheep" (10:7, 9)
- "I AM the Good Shepherd" (10:11, 14)
- "I AM the Resurrection and the Life" (11:25)
- "I AM the Way, Truth and the Life" (14:6)
- "I AM the True Vine" (15:1, 5)

Kent Hughes tells us that the picture here of Jesus being the "True Vine," the Father being the "Vine Dresser," and the disciples being the "branches," is a picture of the organic relationship that the disciples have with the Lord. He describes it as "the sap that runs in His veins runs in ours." Hughes also points out that the image of the vineyard was used as the Hebrew symbol of national life. This is because "in the temple at Jerusalem, above and round the gate, a richly carved vine was extended as a border and decoration." The vine branches, tendrils and leaves were made of gold, the bunches hanging on them were costly jewels. It was placed there first by Herod. Jews added to its embellishment. Hughes states, "this vine must have had an uncommon importance and sacred meaning in the eyes of the Jews." The vine as a symbol of Israel also appeared on the coins of the Maccabees. Perhaps, Jesus had this image in mind to encourage His disciples for the dark hour they were about to encounter.

Abiding in Christ: (15:1-11)

The point of this section is about cultivating an abiding relationship with Christ, the "true Vine" not the salvation of individual believers. Jesus knew that as the disciples witness His "hour" of passion and personal persecution for being associated with Him, they would need to know how to remain close to Him through an abiding relationship. This abiding relationship would be found through His Word and His Spirit.

"I am the true vine" - (v. 1) - Jesus is saying that He is the faithful remnant of Israel, the true Vine and fruitful Vineyard (Isa. 5:1-7; Ezek. 15:1-6). All through their history, Israel failed to produce the fruit that God desired from His people, the vineyard. Because of the nation's lack of fruit, Jesus contrasts Himself as the "true vine" that will produce good fruit as God intended (Ps. 80:7-9; 14-17). This is important to note, because no vine can produce good fruit unless it is good stock.

"My Father is the vinedresser" - (v.1) - Isaiah 5 describes the Father who planted, cultivated and dressed the vine (the house of Israel). Here the Godhead is represented with the idea that no vine will produce good fruit unless someone competent cares for it. God the Father is the competent vinedresser.

"He takes away...He prunes it" - (v. 1) - In the process of tending to the vine, the Father (vinedresser) removes unfruitful branches and prunes those that are fruitful. This clears the way of unnecessary wood so the branch may be more fruitful. Two words describe this process here:

“He takes away” (airo) which means to “lift up”

“He prunes” (kathairo) which means “to cleanse.”

The careful process of pruning and training the vine involves the vinedresser lifting up sagging branches and snipping away smaller shoots which will yield more fruit. Those branches that are not producing fruit he “takes away” because they are not good. Now, some believe that Jesus is teaching that a believer can lose their salvation. This is not correct.

“Every branch in Me...” - (v. 2) - No one can be a part of Christ’s vine unless they abide in Him (14:20), therefore anyone who is in Christ, He calls them His branch. They are grafted in Him and part of the vineyard of Israel (Roms. 11:11-31). We must remember that this is a parable. Parables are not good to base theological doctrine on. Here’s why: “Every branch” is “every believer.” How do we know they are believers? Because Jesus says they are “in Me.”

Remember this passage is not about salvation. It’s about abiding in Christ. Everyone who is “in” Christ can never lose their salvation (John 10:27-29) and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:39). Jesus assures His disciples this is the case when He tells them, “You are already clean because the word which I have spoken to you.” (Jn 13:10). Though, Jesus did tell them that “not all of you.” For, He was speaking of Judas who was about to betray Him. So, there is definitely the difference between those who are in Christ and those who are not. Jesus knows who belongs to Him and those who are not. Here, Jesus is speaking to “every branch” because they are all His disciples.

“he who abides in Me...he bears much fruit” - (v. 5) - Abiding in Christ is to cultivate an intimate relationship with Christ. All believers have saving faith in Christ, but not all cultivate an intimate relationship with Him. To cultivate this relationship is to be in continuous dependence on the “true Vine.” Believers are to have constant reliance upon Him and spiritually consume themselves in Him.

F.F. Bruce states, “a vine-branch is lifeless and useless unless it remains attached to the vine. The living sap from the stock flowing into it enables it to produce grapes; otherwise it is fruitless.” This is precisely what Jesus is saying of Himself to His relationship with His disciples. The Apostle Paul calls this, “walking by the Spirit.” When believers walk by the Spirit rather than the flesh they produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). This is abiding in Christ. Paul also states that “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20). This means that in order for a believer to abide in Christ, the believer must die to self first, for we can do nothing without Christ (Phil. 4:13). Obviously, it is impossible for a branch to bear any fruit if it has no contact with the life-giving vine.

The lack of fruit is an indication that the branch has no vital relationship to the vine. It’s not cultivating an intimate relationship with the Savior.

“If anyone does not abide in Me” - (v. 6) - Notice, Jesus did not say that the believer is thrown away and burned. He said that the believer who fails to produce fruit is like a discarded branch.

The ones that Jesus is speaking of is those believers who are in Christ, but they are like the ones that Paul speaks of when he writes:

“If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire” - (1 Cor. 3:12).

Those who abide in Christ produce “gold, silver, precious stones” but those who do not abide in Christ produce only “wood, hay, straw” (1 Cor. 3:12). Paul reminds us that every believer’s fruit will be tested and revealed with fire. The refiner’s fire of God will test the quality of each believer’s work.

How does one cultivate an intimate relationship with Christ, the “true Vine?”

“If you keep My commandments” (v. 10) - Jesus says the sure way of abiding in Him is by keeping His commandments just as He has kept the Father’s commandments and abide in His love. Jesus has already given His disciples a sure example of what this “abiding” relationship looks like. Jesus wants them to observe and follow the same pattern He set for them.

“...that your joy may be made full” - (v. 11) - We can never withdraw from the circle of God’s love by being disobedient because God never stops loving, even His disobedient children do. The only thing that is removed from the believer is the withdrawal from the enjoyment and blessings of His love. If you keep His commands, your joy will be made full. If you do not keep His commands you do not experience the fullness of His joy.

APPLICATION: How is your quiet time? How much time do you spend reading the Word of God? Not for Bible study preparation, but for conversation with God? Do you meditate on His precepts? Do you memorize His Word? Do you obey His Word? Do you walk by the Spirit or are you consumed by your lust? Do you put off the deeds of the flesh and put on the fruits of the Spirit? This is abiding in Christ. Are you a witness and making disciples as He has commanded? This is abiding in Christ. Are you stuck in religion rather than cultivating a relationship with Christ? Bearing fruit is what Christ desires from us and the only way to do that is to be connected in Him through His Word and His Spirit. One way of abiding in Christ is to love one another.

Loving One Another (15:12-17)

These verses are an expansion from John 13:34. Jesus now expounds on this love by giving His disciples more meat to it.

“Greater love has no one than this...” - (v. 13) - The greatest expression of love is when one lays down his life for another. This is putting the interest of others before yourself. This is the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:3-8). Jesus is going to show them shortly how great this love is by making the supreme sacrifice for them. After that, they would not only have His love to obey, but an example to follow. The love of Christ goes even deeper than for His friends, He even died for His enemies (Rom. 5:8-10).

“No longer do I call you slaves...but I have called you friends.” - (v. 15) - Another abiding term is friendship. Slaves did not have fellowship or friendship with their master. They just simply received orders. Just as God called Abraham His friend (Jms 2:23; 2 Chr. 20:7; Isa. 41:8), Jesus calls His disciples “friends” because He has revealed His plans to them, something a master never does for a slave. The revelation that Jesus gave through the apostles after His ascension was a continuation of that friendship (Acts 1:1-2).

“You did not choose Me, I chose you,” - (v. 16) - Jesus stresses here that He initiated the relationship between Him and His disciples. He also chose them to be His friends and appointed them to a specific task. They had a job to do and He was entrusting what the Father gave Him to them.

It could be that the “fruit” Jesus was thinking of would be their missionary work. It’s lasting effects. Just as Abraham would be a blessing to all the nations (Gen. 12:3) so would the disciples be to the ends of the world.

APPLICATION: Think about it. God had set in motion to bless Abraham with one son who will be a blessing to all the nations. Jesus, God's only Son, was about to set into motion after His death and resurrection, His commission to His disciples to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to abide in His commands (Matt. 28:18-20), and empowering them through His Holy Spirit, another part of the abiding relationship.

We as believers exists to abide in Christ to obey the appointment He has given to us to make disciples of all nations. This will continue until the Last Day when He calls His own home to be with Him.

Witnessing through Persecution (15:18-27)

Jesus now comes to a time to warn His disciples about the world He will be sending them into. Jesus tells them in verse 18 that the world will hate you because it has hates Him. It will be important for disciples to be unified together in Christ's abiding love. The world loves its own, but hates Christ. And, because it hates Christ, Jesus tells them, “the world hates you” (v. 19). All this because Jesus says, “I chose you.” The reason the worlds hates Jesus is because its deeds are evil (7:7). The disciples will draw hatred from the world because of their association with Him.

“They will persecute you” - (v. 20) - Believers are aliens in this world (1 Pet. 1:1) and because of this believers have and will always be treated as such. The world does not hate believers because they are superior, but because they are servants of Christ whom the world rejected. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus tells His disciples, “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heave is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matt. 5:11-12).

“When the Helper comes” - (v. 26) - Even though the world rejected Jesus, “the Spirit” characterized by “truth” would bear witness that Jesus is the Son of God (14:16-17, 26). Jesus is

possibly thinking of the day of Pentecost. His disciples will be empowered by the Spirit to testify the intimate knowledge of Jesus (Acts 1:21-22).

APPLICATION: Because the world hates Christ, we to will be hated by the world. I am appalled at times by how the church today desires to be more like the world and be liked by the world. Jesus calls on His disciples to live separate lives because He called us out from among the world. He set us apart as His kingdom of priest "to proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" - 1 Pet. 2:9.

1. Disciples of Christ should first seek to abide in Christ by cultivating an intimate relationship based on His Word, commands and Spirit. To walk as He walked. To love as He loved. To be His ambassadors to the world as Jesus was for the Father.
2. Disciples are called to be set apart. We are to mimic Christ, not the world. This association will bring persecution because the world considers those who follow Christ fools. They do not understand. The ways of the Lord are different than the ways of man. A true disciples cannot serve both man and the Lord. Jesus did not give any commendation to the church in Laodicea because they were lukewarm. He only had condemnation because they refused to abide in Him rather than the world. Listen here now, condemnation by the Lord is much worse than commendation from the world. Commendation from the Lord is much more sweeter than commendation by the world.
3. Disciples must rely on God's Word and the Helper, the Holy Spirit. Believers must "lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith" - Heb. 12:1-2.

LESSON SEVENTEEN: “THE HELPER”

John 16:1-33

Study Questions

1. In review of the last session: What are some ways that a believer can “abide” in Christ? What does the Father do to those who abide in Him and why?
2. In John 16:1-4 What were “these things” that Jesus was telling His disciples and why?
3. John 16:5 -15, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit, what are the three roles the Holy Spirit fulfill?
4. Jesus uses the illustration of a woman giving birth to a child in John 16:21, what was the implication of this illustration?
5. When Jesus leaves His disciples behind to whom are the disciples to pray to and in whose name? (John 16:23-28)
6. Jesus’ last words to His disciples in this discourse was meant to encourage them. How are you encouraged by Jesus’ discourse in John 14-16?

KEY THOUGHT: Jesus promises the Holy Spirit and His peace for disciples who face tribulation.

KEY TERMS:

Bible Chapter and Verse Divisions: When the books of the Bible were originally written, they did not come with chapter or verse references. The Bible was later divided into chapters and verses to aid us in locating Scriptures more efficiently. John 3:16 is easier to locate than trying to find "for God so loved the world..." In some cases, the chapter and verse breaks are not logically placed. John 16:1-4 and Ephesians 5:21 are good examples. But, for the most part the system is very helpful for all Bible readers and scholars.

The chapter divisions we use today were thought to have begun by a man named Cardinal Caro. He began to divide up God’s word from 1244 to 1248 A.D.. His editorial division occurred when he created a Latin Vulgate concordance to aid in looking up Scriptures.

The current form of chapter and verse divisions is believed to have been created by Stephen Langton, a Canterbury, England Archbishop. He began working on these divisions about 1227 A.D.. The Wycliffe Bible used these divisions in 1382 A.D..

The Hebrew Old Testament system of verse division was created by a Jewish rabbi by the name of Mordecai Nathan in 1445 A.D.. In 1448 A.D., Mordecai and Athias (a scholar) parsed Old Testament verses.

Robert Estienne (Stephanus), gave us the system we have today. He used a numbered verse system when printing the Bible in 1551 or 1555. The Geneva Bible, which preceded the King James Version, used this same numbering system. (Various sources)

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

The Promise of Persecution: (16:1-4)

First, allow me to mention that chapter and verse divisions in Scripture were not part of the original manuscripts. They were added later by editors and translators to help us locate and remember places in Scripture more easily. Sometimes the locations of these breaks make sense and are logical. This particular division between chapters 15 and 16 does not seem to be as logical. John 16:1-4 should belong to chapter 15. For more information on this see Key Terms.

"These things I have spoken" - (v. 1) - Four times Jesus uses the phrase "these things" in verses 1-4. Jesus is referring to everything He had to say about the believer's relationship to the world. This relationship would be strained at best, but hostile for the most part, and even deadly at times.

"that you may be kept from stumbling" - (v. 1) - The word "stumbling" is the Greek word "skandalizo." We get the word "scandalize" from it. The English definition is - "shock or horrify (someone) by a real or imagined violation of propriety or morality." The Greek definition means - "to put a snare or to give offense, to cause to stumble."

What Jesus is trying to say to His disciples is this: I am mentioning "these things" to you so that you may not be startled and shocked by what you experience and then cause you to stumble in your spiritual walk. Jesus warns them that the Jews will be pleased to kill you because they will be zealous to please God by doing so. You might recall Paul's zeal for the law was shown in his persecution of the church - "as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless." - (Phil. 3:6). This zeal was viewed by some militant Zealots who regarded the killing of an apostate as an acceptable sacrifice to God (F.F. Bruce citing Phinehas in Num. 25:13).

"they have not known the Father or Me" - (v. 3) - Why will the Jews persecute the disciples of Christ? Jesus tells them because, they really do not know the Father nor Himself. If they knew who the Father was, then they would receive Jesus as their true Messiah. They would not be seeking to eliminate Him, instead they would have followed and yielded their allegiance to Jesus as the promised Messiah of Israel. But, as it is, they neither knew the Father or the Son and sought to put Jesus away and His disciples.

"so that when their hour comes, you may remember..." - (v. 4) - "Their hour" refers to the persecutors who seemingly controlled the disciples' fate. The irony was that not only were the

persecutors not in control of the disciples fate, but what they would consider their greatest victory would actually become their greatest defeat.

APPLICATION: Jesus' promise of persecution is a reminder not only for His disciples then, but for us as well that things are not out of God's control when they seem to be. This forewarned promise by Jesus ought to strengthen the faith of His disciples rather than weaken it.

Remember Jesus stated in His sermon on the mount, "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me" - (Matt. 5:11) and later in this chapter He will say, "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" - (John 16:33).

The Promise of the Holy Spirit: (16:5-15)

"It is to your advantage that I go away;" - (v. 7) - Jesus tells His disciples once again He is going away (v.5) and now the disciples hearts are full of "sorrow" (v. 6) because they do not realize how good it will be for them when the "Helper," the Holy Spirit is sent to them. This would be Jesus' fourth mentioning of the Holy Spirit. As we have learned earlier, the title, "Helper" (parakletos), means, "called to come along the side of." Literally it is - "called to one's aid." The Holy Spirit will compensate the disciple's loss of Jesus' visible presence and will usher in His new covenant (Jer. 31:33-34) when at Pentecost God's Spirit will indwell His disciples (Acts 2).

The First Role of the Holy Spirit:

"He...will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement" - (v. 8) - The Spirit's coming would result in a high awareness of conviction among unbelievers concerning "sin," "righteousness," and "judgement." Don Constable notes that the tenses on the nouns here are as follows: "past sin, present righteousness, and future judgement." Before Pentecost, conviction came mainly from the Old Testament. Now it is the role of the Holy Spirit to point out sin in order to bring about repentance. This conviction as Robert A. Pyne points out, is to correct not prosecute. The Holy Spirit will "show someone their sin with a view to securing repentance" (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, F. Buchsel).

The Second Role of the Holy Spirit:

"He will guide you into all truth" - (v. 13) - Jesus tells His disciples He has many more things to say, but out of compassion does not want to overbear them at this point (v. 12). He simply wants to leave them with final words that will help encourage them during these final hours and days ahead. With that, Jesus gives another role of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will, like Jesus, "guide them into all truth." This would be Jesus' fifth and final mention of the Holy Spirit's during His final discourse with the disciples. Just as Jesus never acted on His "own initiative," the Holy Spirit too, will do the same as Jesus, reveal "the truth" that Jesus taught.

NOTE: This is very important to remember. The Holy Spirit will NOT give revelation that will conflict with what Jesus taught. This includes what is mentioned in the gospels and all that is contained in the New Testament.

The Third Role of the Holy Spirit:

“He will glorify Me” - (v. 14) - The Spirit will glorify the Son by explaining who Jesus is, just as Jesus the Son had glorified the Father by explaining who He is.

NOTE: This is also very important to remember. It is not the Holy Spirit’s role to bring attention to Himself. The role of the Spirit is very much like that of John the Baptist whose sole purpose is to make Jesus increase in prominence. Watch out for any human attempt to place more emphasis on the Spirit above the Son. This is not in harmony with the Spirit’s purpose, neither should it be ours.

APPLICATION: Since it is the loving purpose of the Holy Trinity of God to Glorify the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit - this should also be our objective when the Holy Spirit indwells us and convicts us of “sin past,” “present righteousness,” and “future judgment.”

Believers need to see this role in the Holy Spirit as they walk in Spirit and Truth. Not in the confusion and chaotic worship as some attempt by human means as they lift up the Spirit above the Son and the Father. That is not what the Holy Spirit is for. The Holy Spirit is your indwelling connection to the Father, through the Son.

The Promise of Reunion (16:16-22)

“What is this thing He is telling us?” - (v. 17) - If the disciples were not perplexed before, they are now. They are troubled in heart and full of questions. Jesus states once again that He will be leaving them very soon (v. 16), but this time He adds in, “and again a little while, and you will see me.” Jesus knows that His disciples are itching to ask Him questions because they were deliberating among themselves as to what all this means (vv. 17-19).

What Jesus is referring to is His first imminent departure by His death on the cross, and secondly to His return to the disciples shortly after His resurrection. The first “little while” was only a few hours in duration, and the second “little while” was a few days.

There is some sense that they understood Jesus’ words of returning to the Father (14:28), but what they did not understand was how then would He reappear “in a little while”?

“Whenever a woman is in labor...” - (v. 21) - Jesus uses an illustration of a woman giving birth to a child to communicate the emotions the disciples will be experiencing. Jesus’ departure would mean great sorrow and pain at first for His disciples, but later their pain will be turned into great joy. This was exactly what the disciples were beginning to experience. They were already in the process of sorrow with the news of Jesus’ departure. Yet, Jesus would return to them and there would be inexpressible joy. The joy that the reunion would kindle within them would remain in them, in spite the persecution that Jesus had predicted they would come against.

“no one will take your joy away” - (v. 22) - The application of Jesus illustration here is that they will not remember the pain of loss because the joy within them will be too great when they are reunited with the resurrection Jesus. The joy replaces the former pain just as in the birth of a child. No one, Jesus promises, can ever take this joy away from you. William Barclay mentions

that, “the joy the world gives is at the mercy of the world. The joy which Christ gives is independent of anything the world can do.”

APPLICATION: Just as a dear friend of yours goes off on a long journey, there is sorrow for a short while. When the dear friend returns there is joy in the reunion as you are reunited once again. It seems at times that the joy you experience at that moment can never be taken away. Jesus says, “I promise you when we are reunited, you will experience inexpressible joy that no one or thing will be able to take away.

The Promise of Prayer (16:23-28)

“in that day you will ask in my name” - (v. 26) - Up to this time the disciples have been asking Jesus questions. But, when the time comes (“that day”) when their joy will be made full, the disciples are exhorted by Jesus to request answers to their questions from the Father in prayer in His name (v. 23; Acts 1:14). Formerly, the disciples were taught to pray to the Father, just as Jesus had done. But, now Jesus is commanding His disciples to appeal to the Father in His (Jesus’) name. The verb “ask” is in the imperative voice. This is Jesus’ authoritative command to His disciples. The consequence of Jesus’ command is the promise of fullness of joy for them because what they request in prayer they will receive in His name (1 Jn. 5:14-15).

This way of praying to the Father in Jesus name is based on a close relationship with Jesus. This is by abiding in Christ as Christ indwells in them. To pray this way is a privilege for all those who believe upon Christ Jesus as Lord. God’s people now would have direct access to the Father, through the Son. No longer through the priest and sacrifices that are temporary. Jesus will become the only priest and sacrifice God’s people would ever need:

“we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer...But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises.” - Hebrews 8:1b-3, 6

APPLICATION: The point of this is that Jesus becomes the only access a believer needs to go before the Father in prayer. There is no need for any believer to go through another human to access the Father through prayer. That model is simply a poor imitation and one that has been eliminated when Christ offered Himself on the cross and rose again and is now seated on the right hand of the Father. Who now, as Paul says, is interceding for us at this very moment. (Romans 8:34).

You are to have full confidence that you can draw near to the Father on your own because of the abiding relationship you have with Him through Christ Jesus our Lord. You can approach His throne of mercy and grace in your time of need (Hebrews 4:14). This, Jesus says, will bring fullness of joy to His disciples.

CONCLUSION: (16:29-33)

“Do you now believe?” - (v. 31) - Jesus clarified in plain language that He came from the Father, came into this world, and now is leaving the world again and going back to the Father (v. 28). With this clarification Jesus felt He had answered their questions about where He was going. For the first time He asserts that His disciples finally get it at last.

“In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” - (v. 33) - In the Old Testament a similar transition of ministry was about to take place. Moses had led the children of Israel out of Egypt by God’s hand of redemption. After wandering in the wilderness for forty years and Moses’s death, the transition of ministry is now being handed over to Joshua. God’s message to Joshua was:

“Be strong and courageous...only be strong and very courageous...have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” - Joshua 1:6, 7, 9.

APPLICATION: Jesus’ command here, I believe, is similar. Are there giants in the land? Yes. Will they come against you? Yes. Will they cast insults at you? Yes. You will experience tribulation, but take heart, Jesus the commander of the Lord’s army has overcome the world. Take courage...be strong and courageous...be strong and very courageous. The disciples would never understand how courageous they would need to be, but they were about to. You too will or have experience tribulation...you too be strong and courageous...for Jesus has overcome the world.

LESSON EIGHTEEN: “THE HIGH PRIEST”

John 17:1-26

Study Questions

1. In review of the last session: What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s walk? Does the Holy Spirit expect to be glorified just as much as the Father and the Son? Will the Holy Spirit ever contradict anything Jesus taught us about the Father?
2. In John 17:1-5 Why does Jesus pray for Himself and why does He want to be glorified?
3. John 17:5 - What is eternal life? How does that connect with the glory of the Father and the Son?
4. In our key verse (17:9), why does Jesus pray for His own, but not the world?
5. In John 17:13-26, What are Jesus’ two prayer request for the future disciples? And why does He pray not to take them out of this world?
6. As a disciples of Christ, what encourages you about Jesus’ prayer in John 17? Be specific. How does His prayer strengthen you to be a witness?

KEY THOUGHT: Jesus prays for His own, both, then, now and future.

KEY TERMS:

Glory: The words “glory” and “glorify” are referenced six times in John 17. The secular use of the word in the first century world was used as in the high opinion of others. Thus, a person’s glory was rooted in the assessment by others of his actions or accomplishments. That has not changed much today as our culture glorifies athletes, movie stars, and other famous personalities. In Scripture, glory is not linked with human accomplishments or assessments. It is revealed in God’s majesty. The glory of God is revealed in His qualities in and of themselves. Jesus glorified God simply by doing His will and revealing what the Father is like.

We glorify the Father by first, recognizing His works and praise Him for the qualities His works reveal. Second, we glorify the Father by bearing fruit (15:8). Believers abide in a intimate relationship with the Lord. In this relationship He lives and acts in and through us, thus revealing

Himself to others (i.e. Acts 2:47). Like Jesus, we can be the conduit through which the Lord reveals His glory to others. - (Borrowed from Laurence Richards).

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

SETTING: Jesus' prayer marks the end of His discourse with the disciples. If you recall the evening began with Jesus loving His own to the end (13:1) by serving, comforting, and instructing His troubled disciples. Jesus washed their feet (13:5), declared His betrayer, Judas (13:26-27) and shared the final meal with the eleven (Matt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Jesus tells them not to be troubled because He will soon be leaving them (14:1-2) but be encouraged because of the promised Holy Spirit who will help them in a world that will be hostile towards them and that the Holy Spirit will teach and guide them in all things Jesus said to them (14:26).

Jesus' prayer in John 17 is a fervent and gracious prayer for His disciples. The prayer is commonly called the Lord's High Priestly prayer. This prayer is said to have received its title by the Lutheran theologian David Chytraeus (1530-1600). In some regards the title may be misleading because the prayer does not deal heavily with Jesus' priestly role, still, Jesus does pray for others in a distinctly mediating way, as in a priestly task. John MacArthur calls this "The Lord's Real Prayer."

The Synoptic gospels mention Jesus' prayers fairly often, yet rarely share their content. Only the "Lord's Prayer" (Mt. 6:9-13; Lk. 11:2-4) taught by Jesus, is the content reported. John's gospel records three prayers. The first was at the Tomb of Lazarus (11:41-42), the others prayers are John 12:27-28 and here in John 17.

John links chapter 16 with 17 when he writes, "Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven He said..." (17:1). This prayer could have been prayed in the Upper Room, but it also could have been prayed somewhere else in Jerusalem, some say He prayed it in the temple court. This prayer is like the ones in the Old Testament that follow farewell important farewell discourses. For instance in Genesis 49, Jacob assembled his sons to share God's future plans for them. Deuteronomy 32-33 Moses blessed the tribes of Israel. The main theme here in Jesus' prayer is the Father's glory and the disciples welfare.

This prayer in some respects is a summary of John's gospel to this point. In it we see the main themes of Jesus' obedience to his Father, the glorification of his Father through His death/exaltation, the revelation of God in Christ Jesus, the choosing of the disciples out of the world, their mission to the world, their unity modeled on the unity of the Father and the Son, and their final destiny in the presence of the Father and the Son (Dodd, IFG, pp.419-420).

I. “Jesus Prays for His Own Glorification” - (17:1-5)

“Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son...” - (v. 1b) - Jesus now turns from having communion with His disciples to having communion with His Father. In this communion with the Father, Jesus begins His prayer with a personal request for Himself. To “glorify” Himself so that He may glorify the Father. The context of glorification here means to clothe in splendor (see. v.5).

One may interpret this in being an odd and selfish request by Jesus. But, it isn’t selfish or odd at all. There is only one way for the Father to “glorify” the Son and the Son to “glorify” the Father and that was for Jesus to endure the Cross. Thus, we have here, Jesus’ personal commitment to do the Father’s will, to die on the cross. In a sense, Jesus is requesting God’s help (grace) in His sufferings, His sacrificial death, His resurrection, and His ascension. All of this would ultimately glorify the Father. It would magnify His wisdom, power, and love.

“This is eternal life...” - (v. 3) - From this glorification would come the essence of eternal life. Jesus says, that eternal life is that “they (the disciples) may know You (the Father), the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” Many religions tie eternal life to the knowledge of God or of gods. This knowledge here is not of “the divine” in some pantheistic or merely utilitarian sense. This is the knowledge of the “only true God” (cf. 5:44; 1 Thes. 1:9; 1 Jn. 5:20). This one true God has supremely revealed Himself in the person of His Son (1:18). This knowledge cannot be separated from the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

“Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself...” - (v. 5) - Jesus having already “accomplished” the work in His incarnation (v.4), He now wants to return to the condition (of heavenly glory) in which He existed “with” His Father “before” His incarnation. This request presupposes Jesus’ preexistence with the Father and His equality with the Father (10:30). Jesus is simply requesting to return to His own re-glorification, to His original status: with all the authority, powers, splendor, and privileges of deity.

APPLICATION: You and I did not exist before we came into this world. There was no pre-glorified state from which we came from. Yet, Jesus, “the Word made flesh” had a pre-incarnate existence in glory with the Father. The work that Jesus is about to complete for the Father will be our hope as the faithful Son makes a way for elect to be with Him in glory with glorified bodies so we may witness in fulness the awesome power and glory of the Father.

II. “Jesus prays for His Disciples” - (17:6-19)

“I ask on their behalf...” - (v.9) - The reason for Jesus’ request is now He is anticipating the disciple’s future. Verses 6-8, Jesus viewed His disciples as those whom the Father had given to Him “out of the world” (cf 6:37; 15:19). These did not choose to follow Him, He chose them. They belonged to the Father, thus Jesus is requesting protection for His own.

Allow me to illustrate this in a more personal way. Insert your name in the blanks of the following verses from John 17:6-9.

"I have manifested Your name to _____ whom You gave Me out of the world; _____ was Yours and You gave _____ to Me, and _____ has kept Your word.

Now _____ has come to know that everything You have given Me is from you; for the words which You gave me I have given to _____; and _____ has received them and truly understood that I came forth from you, and _____ believed that You sent Me.

I ask on _____'s behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for _____ is Yours."

"I am no longer in the world..." (v.11) - Jesus explained that He was praying for His disciples because He was about to depart from them. They needed the Father's grace because they would no longer have the Son's encouraging presence with them as they lived in the hostile world (v. 12).

"I do not ask You to take them out of the world..." - (v. 15) - Jesus anticipates as He has done before that the disciples will have tribulations (10:33). The world would be hostile towards them because of their association with Him, and because the world hates Jesus (10:18). Now, Jesus in light of this conflict prays for His own. In this request, Jesus does not pray that the Father will take them from this conflict. He does not pray that the Father would remove them from the world, but that the Father would protect them from "the evil one" (v.15). This is in reference to the devil. The ruler of this world seeks to inflict terrible damage on the Lord's followers. He is as

Peter writes:

"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

This evil devil is the ruler of this world and will be until the consummation, when the last enemy is destroyed (1 Jn. 5:19). I am reminded of Martin Luther's hymn, "A Mighty Fortress" where He poetically writes:

*"And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed,
His truth to triumph through us
The Prince of Darkness grim,
We tremble not for him
His rage we can endure,
For lo! his doom is sure
One little word shall fell him."*

The Christian should not seek to withdraw from the world, nor should it be confused by tribulation with the world. The Christian is to remain in the world and maintain a witness to the truth by the help of the Holy Spirit (15:26-27). The Father will give them protection as they absorb all that the world has to throw at them. That protection is not exclusively for life, but for

eternity. Meaning, that even if the world should take your life, they cannot destroy your soul. The Father, through Christ will protect your eternal soul because you belong to the Father.

Don Carson comments that “The followers of Jesus are permitted neither the luxury of compromise with the world, which is intrinsically evil and under the devil’s power, nor the safety of disengagement. But if the Christian pilgrimage is inherently perilous, the safety that only God himself can provide is assured, as certainly as the prayers of God’s own dear Son will be answered.”

“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth” - (v. 17) - Jesus not only prays for the disciple’s protection, but also for their sanctification. To be “sanctified” is to be “set apart.” It’s the greek word, “hagiazō.” Jesus set Himself apart to fulfill the mission of the Father. He set Himself apart to do exactly what the Father assigned Him to do. In John’s gospel, “sanctification” (to be set apart) is always for mission. Therefore, the mission of the disciples is spelled out in the next verse - “As you have sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (v. 18).

The means by which Jesus expects the Father to use to sanctify His disciples is with the “truth.” The Father will immerse Jesus’ disciples in the revelation of Himself in His Son. He will set them apart on mission to the world with the help of the Holy Spirit who will guide them in this truth for as Jesus prayed, “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth” (v.19). His disciples would function as Peter reminds us:

“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;” (1 Peter 2:9-10).

APPLICATION: The disciples of Jesus belong to the Father, chosen by Him, protected by Him, sanctified (set apart) by Him for a mission. That mission is to go into the world (mostly hostile towards Him) and declare the truth (the revelation of the Father through Christ Jesus our Lord) guided by the help of the Holy Spirit so that the Father may be glorified and they would believe in Him.

III. “Jesus Prays for Future Disciples” - (17:20-23)

“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word:” - (v. 20) - Jesus’ prayer now turns to those that would believe in Him through the witness of the Eleven disciples. For these future believers, Jesus request two things from the Father. Unity and glorification. The unity of the believers rest on the adherence to God’s truth, and it reflects the unity that exists between the Father and the Son. The Apostle Paul calls on the church in Ephesus to this same unity:

“...being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:3-6).

The purpose of this unity is so “that the world” might “believe” that the Father “sent” the Son. This mutual love among Jesus’ disciples would show that they are His disciples. Their love for one another would show that they really do follow His teachings and possess His life. Again, as the 1960’s Christian song says, “they will know that we are Christians by our love.”

APPLICATION: One of the greatest testimonies of the unity of the church was demonstrated in Acts 2 by the ingathering as it was labeled. The young church was so unified in the truth of the gospel that they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and prayer. There was a sense of awe and God was performing great signs among them. Everyone of them, together were unified and had all things in common. They were loving one another, sharing with anyone who had need. Daily they met with one mind in the temple, in each other’s house in joyful company. The result of all this...Acts 2:47... as they were praising God, those on the outside looking in had favor on them. That word “favor” is “charis.” It is where we get the word charisma. Another word we use for this is “grace” and “thanksgiving.” Imagine, the neighborhood where your church meets and gathers, if its residence expressed kindness and thanks because of the unified Spirit your church expresses in the truth and for the glory of God. That’s Christ’s intent in this prayer.

IV. “Jesus Prays that His Disciple’s will Witness the Father’s Eternal Glory” - (17:24-26)

“Father, I desire that they also, whom have given Me, be with Me where I am,...” - (v. 25) - Jesus’ prayer concludes with His final request for His eleven disciples and all the elect, their own glorification. Jesus wanted His disciples to “see” or observe the “glory” that the Father would restore to the Son following His ascension (v.5; 1 Jn. 3:2). Remember, Jesus is asking the Father to do what Moses himself asked of the Father, that he may see His face.

“Then Moses said, ‘I pray you, show me Your glory!’ And He (God) said, ‘I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you....but He said, ‘You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!’” - (Exodus 33:18-20).

But, now because of Jesus and His request on the behalf of His disciples, and because of His soon completed work on the cross, we will be able to see the full glory of not only the Son, but the Father’s as well. The glorification of believers initially begins at death or the Rapture (whichever comes first: cf. 14:2-3; 2 Cor. 5:6-8). Our glorification includes being with Jesus forever (Col. 3:4; 1 Thes. 4:17). Since Jesus’ desire was identical to that of the Father’s will (4:34; 5:30; 6:38), we can know that the Father will grant this request.

“I have made Your name known to them...” - (v. 26) - Jesus’ mission did not result in the whole world coming to know the Father experientially. What was important was that the eleven, through Jesus came to know the Father. This revelation would remain in them. It would abide because Jesus Himself would remain in them or among them.

APPLICATION: Verse 11 spoke about being kept safe in the name of the Father. This is the security of the believer. Jesus told us in John 10:29 that we were given to Him by the Father and

that no one can snatch us away from the Father's hand. Jesus uses the same language of security here. The security of the disciple of Christ is that they are kept safe and remain in the name of Father and the Son. Because of this the disciples of Christ will be able to see the glory of the Father when we are finally called away from this world in glory to be with the Father through the Son. This was Jesus' prayer for you who believe. Amen!

LESSON NINETEEN: “THE TRIALS”

John 18:1-40

Study Questions

1. In review of the last session: In John 17, Why does Jesus pray for Himself? What does He pray for His disciples? and What is His request for you today?
2. In John 18:1-3, Why did Jesus take the eleven to the garden of Gethsemane and how did Judas know how to find Him?
3. John 18:4, Did Jesus go and hide from those looking for Him? Why or why not?
4. John 18:6, What was the reaction by the Roman and Jewish officers when Jesus addressed Himself? Why did they respond the way they did? What was the key address that Jesus state?
5. John 18:28-40; 19:9, What were the four questions Pilate asked and how were they answered?
6. The Jewish leaders, Pilate, and the Crowd all had their final assessment concerning Jesus and Whom He claimed to be. Knowing what you know now, what would have been your choice, to condemn Jesus or set Him free and receive as King?

KEY THOUGHT: Jesus, the guiltless Son of God is condemned to be crucified on a cross.

KEY TERMS:

The High Priest of Israel: The High Priest was the priest in charge of the Temple worship. This was a hereditary office based on the descent of Aaron (Ex. 29:29-30; Lev. 16:32). The high priest lived with a special degree of holiness (Lev. 10:6,9; 21:10-15). This meant he had to avoid defilement by contact with the dead, even in the case of his own parents and was forbidden to show any outward sign of mourning. He could not leave the sanctuary precincts. If the high priest sinned, he brought guilt upon the whole people (Lev. 4:3). The sin offering for the high priest was identical to that required “if the whole congregation of Israel commits a sin (Lev. 4:13-21). Only the high priest was allowed into the holy of holies, and only then on the Day of Atonement.

From ca. A.D. 6-36 three served in the High Priest role.

- Annas (A.D. 6-15): Unofficial high priest with Caiaphas during Jesus' trial (Lk. 3:2; Jn. 18:13, 24). As unofficial high priest, with Caiaphas tried Peter and John (Acts 4:6).
- Eleazar (A.D. 16-17): Son of Annas whose name does not appear in the New Testament.
- Caiaphas (A.D. 18-36): Son-in-law of Annas. He was the official high priest during Jesus' earthly ministry (Lk. 3:2; Matt. 26:3, 57; Jn. 11:49-50). Tried Peter and John with Annas (Acts 4:6).

Who was the other disciple (v. 15): This other disciple is described as one who had a relationship with the high priest (v.16). Some believe it was John the writer of this gospel. John (and his brother James) was the son of Zebedee a wealthy fisherman (Mk. 1:19-20). Zebedee could have had a relationship with the high priest because we know that John's mother, Salome, was a sister of Mary (the mother of Jesus - Jn. 19:25; Mk 15:40) and would have been equally related to Elizabeth whose husband, Zechariah, was a priest (Lk. 1:36).

Pilate: Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from A.D. 26-36, while Tiberius was the Emperor of Rome. Pilate is a true historical person. Outside of the gospel he is mentioned by Tacitus, Philo, and Josephus. There was also discovered in 1961 a "Pilate stone" dated back in A.D. 30 and includes descriptions of Pontius Pilate and mentions him as the "prefect" of Judea. His main claim to fame was connected to the trial and execution of Jesus. Pilate is portrayed as being reluctant to crucify Jesus because he found no fault in him.

Pilate sought a compromise by appealing with the crowds to release one prisoner. He let the crowd decide what to do with Jesus. The Jewish leaders convinced the crowd to ask for Barabbas, a known robber to be released and crucify Jesus.

Pilate granted the request and had Jesus flogged and crucified. Pilate had the charge against Jesus posted on the cross above His head: "This is Jesus, The King of the Jews."

Pilate's brief appearance in Scripture is tragic in that he ignored his conscience, disregarded his wife's advice, and chose political expediency over public rectitude, and he failed to recognize the truth when given the opportunity to evaluate Jesus' claims.

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

SETTING: Jesus' completed His discourse with His disciples and now the focus of John's gospel is on the trial and passion ministry of the Son of God. After Jesus and His disciples leave the upper room, Jesus takes them eastward of the city over the Kidron ravine and up the other side to the Mount of Olives to a garden called "Gethsemane" (the place of the oil-press) to pray (Jn. 18:1; Mk. 14:3; Mt. 26:36). Jesus knowing His fate would make no attempt to hide from His enemies and went to this place knowing that Judas would know where to find Him (Jn. 18:2).

Here is a brief timeline of the events to take place in Jesus' passion ministry:

- Thursday at sunset: Passover meal observed, Jesus washes disciples feet, Judas leaves upper room. (Jn. 13:2-17)
- Midnight: Judas betrays Jesus and Jesus arrested (Jn. 18:1-12)

- Friday 3 a.m.: Jesus is taken to Annas and then to Caiphas. (Jn. 18:13-24)
- Friday at sunrise: Jesus is condemned to death by Sanhedrin, sent to Pilate, to Herod, back to Pilate. (Jn. 18:28-38)
- Friday 9 a.m.: Jesus is on the cross. (Jn. 19:16-24)

I. “The Betrayal and Arrest” - (18:1-11)

“Whom do you seek?” - (v.4, 7) - As stated above in the setting, Jesus led His disciples over the Kidron ravine which was a “wadi a intermittent stream that is dry most of the year but becomes a torrent river during the winter run off and seasonal rains. Jesus is taking His disciples to the garden of Gethsemane (v.1) because this would be the place where Judas would know to find Jesus and betray Him (v.2). In verse 3, Judas comes to Jesus in the garden bringing with him the Roman cohort (a battalion of 600 men, possibly 200) accompanied with the Jewish temple police. These came with “lanterns and torches and weapons” (v. 3). The night would have been illuminated by a full moon, yet they brought the lanterns and torches to find Jesus incase He tried to hide from them. The weapons were brought to restrain anyone who might oppose their plan to arrest Jesus. Judas served as their guide and had no authority over them.

Jesus *“knowing all the things that were coming”* (v.4) went to meet them. Jesus set this up. He knew the place to be so that Judas would lead Jesus’ arresters to Himself. Jesus did not hide, instead He went to meet them and asked them, “Whom do you seek?” This scene presumes that the authorities came to arrest Jesus, but as Kent Hughes states, “Who arrested whom?”

“I AM He” - (v.5, 6) - When Jesus asked the question concerning “Whom they seek?” They said “Jesus of Nazarene” (v.5), when Jesus identified Himself by saying, “I Am He” their reaction was to fall to the ground as one would bow before a king (v. 6). We must remember here, that outside of the disciples and Judas, the Romans soldiers knew nothing of Jesus and had no reason to fear Him. These men were not easily frightened. Kent Hughes once again states that “Jesus answered in the style of deity, using the divine title, I AM, going back to the burning bush of Exodus 3 when God said, “I am who I am” (Ex. 3:14). So, again the question is, who arrested whom?

“...let these go their way,” - (v. 8) - As Jesus speaks these words, John points out for us that Jesus’ words were prophetic and fulfilled what He had said to the Father before in His prayer, “...and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that Scripture would be fulfilled” (17:12).

This statement protects the disciples from being subject to the same condemnation as Jesus would be in the coming hours under the hands of the High Priest, Pilate, Herod, and the people. By this statement we see again who really is in charge of the arrest. Jesus’ words are authoritative and they were obeyed. I would add here that both Jews and gentiles had a part in Jesus’ arrest (Romans / Jews).

Sadly to say that as Jesus is negotiating protection for His own, Peter steps in and struck a High Priest's slave and cut his ear off (v. 11). John and the synoptic gospels then tell us that Jesus rebuked Peter, only Luke shares with us in his gospel that Jesus touch the ear of the servant and healed it (Lk. 26:51).

APPLICATION: There are times when things seem to be out of control from the believer's perspective. The same could be said of non-believers who consider that he or she is control of their own destiny. Jesus shows everyone that He is in control of all things, even in the darkest of times. Some are bold in thinking they have the upper hand to arrest Jesus and His people. Some believe they are seeking for Jesus and others believe it's their right to defend Jesus. But, has it really occurred to us all that Jesus is in control of all these situations? Even in the darkest of times, Jesus does not hide, does not need to be sought out, or does not need protecting. Jesus was and is sovereignly in control of all things. He lovingly protects His own and with authority will confront those who do not believe.

II. "The Religious Trial" - (18:12-14, 19-24)

"...arrested Jesus and bound Him" - (v. 12) - The narrative here continues on with the Roman and Jewish officers arresting Jesus. Again, note that Jesus is not surrendering, He is volunteering Himself to fulfill the Father's plan. Jesus is then taken to the home of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Annas was not the official High Priest, but was the former High Priest whom the Jews still regarded as the legitimate high priest, since the role under the Mosaic Law was for life. He was the power behind the throne. John is the only gospel writer to report Jesus' pre-interrogation before Annas. This was a preliminary trial before Caiaphas and then sent to the Sanhedrin (v.24).

"The high priest (Annas) then questioned Jesus..." - (v. 19) - John's account of Jesus' religious trial shows us the deliberation between Annas and Jesus. Annas questions Jesus concerning His disciples and His teaching.

- Concerning Jesus' disciples, probably to ascertain the size of His following, since one of leader's chief concerns was the power of Jesus' popularity.
- Concerning Jesus' teaching, Annas had interest in the claims that Jesus made about Himself (7:12, 47; 19:4).

These subjects were significant in their eyes because many of the Jews suspected Jesus of being a political insurrectionist. Jesus affirmed that He had always taught openly and promoted nothing in secret. Jesus invites them to questions those who have heard what He spoke. "They know what I said" (v. 21).

"...one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus..." - (v. 22) - Jesus did not mean anything discourteous towards Annas, but an officer (a Jewish Police Officer) nearby took it that way and struck Jesus. In the greek the word "strike" means a sharp blow with the palm of the hand. Jesus' response was logical rather than emotional, in that, He simply appealed for a fair trial (v. 23).

Because they could not produce anything for which the Sanhedrin could condemn Him for, Annas has Jesus sent to Caiaphas, the official high priest (v. 24).

John does not detail for us the deliberations that led to the Sanhedrin's verdict since the synoptic gospels already had recorded that information and was not needed in John's gospel. You can find that information in the table of Jesus' religious trial below:

JESUS' RELIGIOUS TRIAL				
	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Before Annas				18:12-14, 19-24
Before Caiaphas	26:57-68	14:53-65	22:54, 63-65	
Before the Sanhedrin	27:1	15:1	22:66-71	

APPLICATION: The witness of the works, teachings and claims of Jesus are still on trial in the human court of life. This is the purpose for John's gospel, so that "you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name" (Jn. 20:31). Jesus never asks us to be on trial for Him, but simply to proclaim this truth. Though, we might be interrogated and/or persecuted, but, we are never the one's on trial. The truth and claims of Jesus are on trial. Our goal in life is to proclaim this truth. For as the Apostle Paul states:

"For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5).

III. "The Denials" - (Jn. 18:15-18, 25-27)

"Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed" - (v. 27) - As Jesus is arrested and taken into custody, Peter and another disciple (possibly John himself) followed the arresting party back into Jerusalem from Gethsemane to the high priest's court (v.15). Who was this other disciple that went with Peter? (See side bar for more information). John records that while Peter was waiting outside the courtyard, the other disciple who knew the high priest was able to gain them access to the inner courtyard (v.16). As Peter was walking in through the gate a slave girl recognized Peter and said that Peter was one of Jesus' disciples. It is at this point Peter denies Jesus the first time with an definite, "I am not!" (v. 17).

The next denials are quick. The evening must have been cold because the slaves and officers were warming themselves by a charcoal fire (v. 18). As Peter was warming himself with them another asked him the same question and Peter denied it a second time (v.25). Then, John tells us that the relative of the slave whose ear was cut off by Peter clearly knew who he was because this servant recognized Peter in the garden. Peter once and finally for the third time denied ever knowing Jesus (v.27) just as Jesus prophetically told him he would just hours before, "I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times" (13:38).

It is interesting that in the garden, Peter was willing to take up the sword and take on the Roman cohort and Jewish police officers. Yet, here Peter was threatened and in his fear and disowned his Lord.

APPLICATION: Who has not failed the Lord? Every one of us at one time another in our walk with the Savior have failed Him. That’s why if we are going to war with the world we need to put on the Lord’s armor as Paul recommends. The battle we face is not fought “against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). Therefore, never go out into the world without the armor of God on (Eph. 6:13-17).

But, in the case you find yourself that you have failed Christ, there is forgiveness and grace. We will learn later in the gospel that Jesus restores Peter and commissions him with the care of shepherding His church (Jn. 21:15-17).

IV. “The Civil Trial” - (Jn. 18:28-38a)

JESUS' CIVIL TRIAL				
Before Pilate	27:2, 11-14	15:1-5	23:1-5	18:28-38
Before Herod Antipas			23:6-12	
Before Pilate	27:15-26	15:6-15	23:13-25	18:39—19:16

“*What accusation do you bring against this Man?*”- (v. 29) - John chose to omit the deliberations between Jesus and Caiaphas and Jesus’ appearance before Herod. John assumes his readers have been informed of these deliberations. What John is attempting to do here is present the civil trial which the synoptic writers wrote less about. John presents this conversation between Jesus and Pilate more like an interview rather than an interrogation. In this interview, Pilate asked four questions:

1. What accusations do you bring against this man? (v.29)
2. Are you the King of the Jews? (v. 33)
3. Do you want me to release the King of the Jews? (v.39)
4. Where are You from? (19:9)

Jesus is condemned to death by the Sanhedrin on the basis of blasphemy. Yet, the Sanhedrin could not pass the death sentence without Roman agreement. This they new Pilate would not warrant putting a man to death for religious reasons, so they presented Jesus to Pilate with the charge of sedition (inciting people) against Rome. Even here, John tells us that Jesus controls the kind of death that awaited him. The Jews could have, like Stephen in Acts, stoned Jesus for blasphemy, but Caiaphas wanted Jesus crucified. Kent Hughes says that “Caiaphas wanted Jesus to be displayed to the people as a cursed. Deuteronomy 21:23 says, ‘Anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse.’ Caiaphas thought if Jesus was crucified, the Jews would look at him and say, ‘He cannot be the Blessed One, he’s a curse imposter.’”

Yet, Jesus had already prophesied his mode of death when He said to Nicodemus in John 3:14, “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up.” This never played into Caiaphas’ mind. Again, Jesus is in control. Not Pilate, nor the Sanhedrin. Jesus was holding court and rendering his own sentence and making sure it would come true.

“Are you the King of the Jews?” - (v. 33) - Jesus explained that He was a king, but His “kingdom” was not the type of kingdom that would compete with Caesar’s kingdom by waging war. Jesus’ kingdom was not a present threat to Rome only because God had postponed the messianic kingdom - due to Israel’s unbelief. Jesus did not explain that to Pilate, but only that this spiritual and earthly kingdom would not compete with Caesar’s because His kingdom was “not of this world” (v. 36). - (see side bar for “Kingdom of God”)

APPLICATION: Who really killed the Messiah? Every minute detail of Jesus hour of passion comes to this point of Him being sentenced to death on the cross. The Jewish leaders could say that they were vigilant in making sure Jesus becomes a curse. The Romans had no reason to quarrel with the Son of God, they did not know him. The disciples hid in fear and shame. Pilate is counseled not to have anything to do with this man, yet goes against his conscience, rule of law, and truth. The crowd who once shouted “Hail Hosanna!” will cry out “crucify Him.” So, who really killed Jesus? The Father.

This does not excuse the individual decisions made by the Jews, Pilate, the crowd and even us. They and we were confronted with the truth concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, they and we had rejected Him at some time. Thus we could say:

- The Sanhedrin killed Jesus by condemning Him to death for blasphemy.
- The Romans did by torturing and nailing Him to the cross.
- The crowd did by listening to the Jewish leaders and crying out crucify Him.
- We could say we did when Christ Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24).

But, it was also the Father’s plan. It was Jesus who volunteered for the plan and to make sure that plan was precisely executed to it fulness and time.

Isaiah 53 states, “But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering,” (Isa. 53:10). As Jesus is in control of His fate, He is rendering Himself as the guilt offering who would die for the sins of the world, just as John the Baptist preached (1:29).

V. “The Condemnation” - (Jn. 18:38b-40)

“I find no guilt in Him” - (v. 38b) - Pilate returned to the Jews that had assembled outside his headquarters to announce his verdict. His claim, Jesus simply has not done anything worthy of punishment by Rome (Lk. 23:14). Ignoring the truth and lack of commitment to justice, Pilate lacked the courage of his own convictions and chose a compromise to avoid dealing with the difficult circumstance.

“Do you wish I release...the King of the Jews?” - (v. 39) - Pilate did not understand about Jesus kingdom, but he did understand that Jesus said He was a king and that Jesus had come as the King who testifies to the truth. Pilate’s response whether sarcastic or not, responds by saying, “What is truth?” (v. 38a). (see side bar for “Kingdom of God”)

Thus, Pilate leaned on a custom (v.39) by releasing a criminal from prison for passover. What Pilate did not know was that the Jewish leaders had already incited the crowd to reject Jesus and ask for Barabbas, a known robber. So, the crowd cried out - “Not this Man, but Barabbas” (v.40).

APPLICATION: What would you have done with Jesus. If you were the Jewish leaders, Pilate, Herod, or the crowd? Would you have rested in your own conscience after hearing all the facts and deliberations and be convinced that Jesus was who He said He was. Obviously this is an hypothetical question because really in the end, the only way for anyone to be convinced that Jesus is the Son of God is by God. Recall the beginning of this gospel - it was the Father who revealed and gives the right for anyone to know who the Son is (Jn 1:12-13; 29, 34, 41, 45, 49). Jesus Himself says that the Father is the One who gives us to Him (10:27-29; 17:6).

As much as the Jews wanted Jesus to be accursed, that sentence fell upon them when they rejected Jesus as the true King and Messiah of Israel. But, not so for those who received and believed on His name, they are given the right to become the children of God, by God (Jn. 1:12-13).

LESSON TWENTY: “THE CRUCIFIXION”

John 19:1-42

Study Questions

1. In review of the last session: In John 18:4, Jesus asked the question, “Whom do you seek?” Why do you seek Jesus? What ultimately caused you to be broken over your sin and consider Christ and eternal things?
2. In John 19:1-16 - Why was Pilate so persistent in trying to release Jesus?
3. John 19:10-11 - Who has authority over Christ? Where does that authority come from?
4. What is the significance of vv. 14-15? By their own testimony, what were the Jews saying to God?
5. In John 19 list all the fulfilled prophecies noted by John and how Jesus fulfilled them? Read Isaiah 53:1-9 and John 19, then list and compare the two chapters.
6. Read John 19:30 carefully, who took Jesus’ life? Why is this so significant. How does this compare to John 10:18? How does this give you confidence in Christ?

KEY THOUGHT: Because Jesus died and rose again, we have life eternal in His name.

KEY TERMS:

Scourging: Scourging or flogging was a method of punishment where a offender is whipped or beaten with rods. Flogging is not assigned to punished specific crimes in the pentateuchal law (Deut. 25:1-3) it does refer to judges having guilty parties flogged and limits the number of lashes to forty. Romans used flogging as a precursor to crucifixion, but their method often involved the use of whips with two or three leather ropes connected to a handled. The leather ropes were knotted with a number of small pieces of metal, usually zinc and iron, attached at various intervals scourging would quickly remove the skin. History records that the punishment of a slave was particularly dreadful. The leather was knotted with bones, or heavy indented pieces of bronze. There was sometimes a hook at the end of the scourge. It was given the name, “scorpion.”

The criminal was made to stoop while being tied to a pole. This would make the lashes deeper into the flesh.

The Roman punishment had no legal number of lashes like the Jews did. Death sometimes resulted from this form of punishment. The centurion in charge would order the “lictors” to stop the flogging just short of the criminals death. - (sources: Bible-History / Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

SETTING: This is the conclusion of Jesus’ trial before Pilate at his residence at the Praetorium, which was the official governors residence (18:28). Jesus was brought there by the Jews because even though they sentenced Jesus to death, they themselves could not carry out the death sentence without Roman approval. Also, knowing that Pilate would not sentence Jesus to death because of their own religious reasons of blasphemy, they accuse Jesus before Pilate as being an “evildoer” (18:30).

Pilate then begins to question Jesus himself and “finds no guilt” in Him (18:38) and suggests the custom of releasing a prisoner for passover, thinking that he had found his way out of this predicament, but the crowd incited by the Jewish leaders cried out against Jesus for the release of the known robber, Barabbas (18:40).

In the next scene Pilate is backed into a corner by the Jews who wanted Jesus to be crucified(19:16). Pilate then having no other choice has Jesus flogged, mocked and nailed to a cross with the sentenced posted above His head, “Jesus the Nazarene, The King of the Jews” (19:19).

I. THE FINAL VERDICT (19:1-15)

The Coronation of the King (vv. 1-7)

“Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him” - (v.1) - We sense Pilate’s disappointment in not being able to please the Jews, for Herod’s refusal to take jurisdictional responsibility for Jesus, and for the crowd’s call for the release of Barabbas over Jesus. Thus, Pilate has Jesus scourged and mockingly crowned as the King of the Jews to see if that would settle the Jews quest in having Jesus punished (vv. 1-4).

There were three kinds of flogging administered by the Romans. The lightest was fustigatio, which was a light whipping that hooligans received. The second was the flagellatio, which was a severe flogging that criminals guilty of more serious crimes received. The third was the verberatio. This was the worst one administered and the most brutal.

Sherwin & White suggest that between Luke’s gospel and John’s gospel there were two different floggings Jesus received. In John’s account Jesus received the least severe form partly intended to appease the Jews and to teach Jesus a lesson in being a trouble maker. Then, when Pilate handed Jesus over for crucifixion, Luke’s account tells us that Jesus received the wretched

verberatio to hasten Jesus' death because the nearness of the special Sabbath and would be a guarantee to the Jewish officials that Jesus' death would not go on for day and not permitted to run on too long. This would explain why Jesus was too weak to carry his own cross (Matt. 27:32; Mk 15:21; Lk 23:26-31). Typically, flogging would not have proceeded crucifixion because the goal of the execution was to die a slow death (See side bar on previous page for scourging).

"Behold, the Man" - (v. 5) - During Jesus flogging, John records that the Roman soldiers made a crown of thorns and placed it on Jesus' head and adorned Him with a purple robe and began mocking Jesus by slapping His face and saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (v.2-3). Then Pilate came before the crowd and once more proclaiming that he found no fault in Jesus but presented Jesus wearing the mocking kingly attire. Jesus would have been a sorry sight, swollen, bruised, bleeding from the cruel thorns. Pilate presents Jesus as a beaten, harmless and pathetic ruler of the Jews. The words of Pilate here is dripping with irony, because, this Jesus that the Jews found dangerous and threatening is now ridiculously harmless.

"Crucify, crucify!" - (v. 6) - Despite Pilate's mockery, the chief priests were not satisfied until Jesus became a curse on the tree, so they cried out saying, "crucify!" Pilate then replies back with, "crucify Him yourselves" because he found no guilt in Jesus. The Jews came back with their own verdict that Jesus claimed to be God and that their law requires Him to be punished unto death (v.7).

The Fear of a King (vv. 8-12)

"You would have no authority over Me..." - (v. 11) - When Pilate heard from the Jews about Jesus claiming to be God, John records that Pilate became afraid (v.8). Pilate then takes Jesus back into the Praetorium and asks his fourth and final question, "Where are You from?" Jesus did not respond (v.9). Then, Pilate being irritated with Jesus silence, much like the modern crime of contempt of court, exerted his earthly authority by stating he had the power to release or execute Jesus (v.10). Jesus' replies to Pilate that His authority is limited and only given to Him by from above. Pilate was God's tool and serving under His delegated authority.

"he who delivered me to you has the greater sin" - (v.11b) - There has been much debate concerning Jesus' statement here. Who was Jesus speaking of and was Pilate's sin less or was it exonerated? Some say that Jesus was speaking of either Caiphas or Judas. Because the person is unknown here, the point of the matter is that Pilate, Caiphas and Judas were all worked and acted under God's sovereignty. All we know is that the one who took the initiative to bring Jesus down, is guilty of the greater sin.

The Rejection of the King (vv. 13-15)

"We have no king but Caesar" - (v. 15) - The madness was only getting out of hand. Pilate was confronted by the Jewish officials with yet another complex problem, in that, if he releases Jesus they would make sure he would have trouble with Rome, because they would make him out to be no friend of Caesar. Why? Because not only does Jesus claim to be God, but a king too.

So, Pilate sat down on the judgement (bema) seat and pronounced his judgement and said to the Jews, “Behold, your King!” (v. 14). Pilate made this pronouncement at the precise time of the day of preparation for Passover. It was the sixth hour (noon) when the Passover Lamb was to be prepared for slaughter. Here the “Lamb of God”(1:29), the long-awaited king of the Jews stood before them, and they did not recognize Him (1:11). Instead of receiving Jesus as the true King of Israel, they rejected Him and announced that they had no king but Caesar. They disown the only begotten of God. They disowned and rejected Jesus’ messianic claims. By choosing Caesar as their king, they rejected any allegiance to Jesus’ Kingship and Lordship over them as a nation. Thus, Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified (v.16).

APPLICATION: Jesus came to His own, but His own received Him not (1:11). This announcement made in the prologue of John’s gospel tells us of the terrible blindness depicted in (12:37ff). These are like those that the Apostle Paul speaks of in Romans 1:18-19:

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.”

The Lord has given His people and the world all they need to know about who He is and His Son, Christ Jesus our Lord. Yet, the world professes to be wise, they are fools (Rom. 1:22).

If the Lord has at this time revealed to you the truth concerning Christ Jesus our Lord. Do not be slow to believe. Believe on the testimony of His Word and His Spirit working in your life and trust in Him alone for salvation and eternal life.

II. THE CRUCIFIXION - (19:17-37)

The Cross of Jesus - (vv. 17-22)

Allow me to share with you recent hymn I wrote entitled, “The Cross of Jesus.”

*The cross of Jesus the emblem of;
God’s own love for sinners slain.
Redeeming grace through His own blood.
Endured the suffering, endured the pain.*

*The cross of Jesus despised by all.
To the world it’s foolishness.
But to the called it’s God’s own power.
His own redemption, His righteousness.*

(refrain)

*O the cross of Jesus
The anthem of the redeemed saved by His blood.
Purchased by god, sealed by His love.
Worthy is He, the Lamb of God.*

*The cross of Jesus God's wisest choice.
By His grace to save His own.
Let the redeemed lift up their voice.
To Christ our Savior, to Christ alone.*

*The cross of Jesus is ours to bear.
Unashamed we count the cost.
A witness to the world we share.
For God's own glory, for Christ great cause.*

"There they crucified Him..." - (v. 18) - John records in his account that after the final judgement, Jesus was taken to a place called the skull which he identifies as being in Hebrew "Golgotha." It was the practice that the guilty carry his own cross. Jesus carried His cross partial the way, but because of the flogging He received Jesus was too weak to carry it all the way to Golgotha. John omits the detail that Simon carried Jesus' cross part of the way (Mat. 27:32; Mk. 15:21; Lk. 23:26). We are not told why that it is. What we are told is that when Jesus arrived at Golgotha and was positioned between two known criminals (vv. 17-18).

Pilate had written an inscription in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek that read, "Jesus the Nazarene, The King of the Jews." (vv. 19-20). The Jews wanted it slightly changed but Pilate was done. It is what it is (vv. 21-22). F.F. Bruce states that the crucifixion was the cruelest and foulest of punishments and was carried out in various ways. The most common was to fasten the victim's arms or hands to the cross-beam and then hoist it on to the upright post, to which his feet were then fastened; a piece of wood attached to the upright might serve as a sort of seat - not so much for the victim's relief as to prolong his life and his agony. Then, the feet were fastened to the wood with thongs or nails that were turned so that the feet could not be extricated without some wood still attached to it. Nails were used in Jesus' crucifixion (20:25).

D.A. Carson adds, "It was so brutal a death that no Roman citizen could be crucified without sanction of the Emperor. Stripped naked and beaten to pulpy weakness...the victim could hang in the hot sun for hours, even days. To breathe, it was necessary to push with the legs and pull with the arms to keep the chest cavity open and functioning. Terrible muscle spasms wracked the entire body; but since collapse meant asphyxiation, the strain went on and on. This is also why the piece of wood that served as a small seat...prolonged life and agony. It partially supported the body's weight, and therefore encouraged the victim to fight on." (The Gospel of John p. 610)

The Clothes of Jesus - (vv. 23-25)

"Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it..." - (v.24) - While our Savior is brutally suffering on the cross, His executioners, the Roman soldiers were dividing up His clothes and began to gamble for them. John noted this as a fulfillment to the prophecy found in Psalm 22:18.

"They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."

All the garments included Jesus' robe, sandals, belt, and head covering. Each soldier would get an item, but the tunic they gambled for because it was sown as one piece.

NOTE: That Jesus died naked on the cross was part of the shame which He bore for our sins. At the same time He is the last Adam who provides clothes of righteousness for sinners.

The Concern of Jesus - (vv. 26-27)

“Woman behold your son...” - (v. 26) - Only one disciple witness the death of Jesus on the cross (John, the writer of this Gospel). Along with John were, Jesus’ Mother, His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene (v. 25). Jesus’ addresses His mother affectionally and compassionately making provision for her by handing her off to John. Jesus being the eldest son, He was responsible for the welfare of His mother. We are to assume that Joseph had already died and Jesus’ act places Mary under John’s authority. Even under great distressed and pain, Jesus had the care and compassion on the cross for His own.

The Cry of Jesus - (vv. 28-30)

“It is finished” - (v. 30) - As the final moments of Jesus’ death draw near, John finding it necessary once again to mention prophetic fulfillment records the human side of Jesus words when says, “I am thirsty (v. 28; Ps. 69:21). Even though Jesus was fully God on the cross, He still was fully man. Something the Gnostics and Docetists (those who believed that Jesus bodily existence was a mere semblance without any true reality) later would deny. Jesus receiving the “sour wine” did not relieve His suffering, though it moistened His parched throat so He could speak His final words: “It is finished!”

“He bowed His head and gave up His spirit” - (v. 30) - With His final words Jesus cried out loud that the work has been completed and accomplished. Nothing more needed to be done to satisfy the Father’s demands for sin. Sacrifice was required because:

“the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.” (Lev. 17:11)

“....all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (Heb. 9:22).

“whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness...” (Rom. 3:25).

Thus, Jesus handed over His spirit to His Father (Lk. 23:46) and “bowed His head” in peaceful death.

APPLICATION: It must be pointed out that no one took Jesus life. Though others on the cross died eventually because the cross slowly brings them to death, Jesus volunteered and in harmony with the Father’s will (8:29; 14:31) surrendered His spirit to the Father.

Some say that the Jews killed Christ. The Jews only rejected Jesus, but they did not take His life. Neither did the Romans. The Lord offered His spirit because only He can lay down His life and take it up again (Jn. 10:18).

This offers us great hope. Because in our sin, we have rejected the only begotten Son of the Father. He, Christ Jesus, laid down His life to become atonement for our sin. To bring us at peace

with the Father. Romans 5:1 says:

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Make peace with God the Father, believe upon the name of Christ Jesus our Lord and you will be forgiven of your sin and enjoy eternal life in His name.

The Care of Jesus’ Body - (vv. 31-42)

“For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture” - (v. 36) - When Jesus gave up His spirit on the cross and because it was the day of preparation for the passover, the bodies were not to remain on the cross for passover, so the Jews had asked Pilate that the legs of those on the cross might be broken and that they be taken away. So the soldiers went to the two terrorist who were being crucified with Jesus and broke their legs to speed up their deaths, but when they came to Jesus they saw He was dead already. This was to fulfill in what was written in Psalm 34:20:

“He keeps all His bones, not one of them is broken.”

One of the soldiers took his own spear and stab Jesus in the side. When he did a sudden flow of blood and water flowed from Jesus side. This was to fulfill in what was written in Zechariah 12:10:

“so they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like a bitter weeping over a firstborn.”

“So they took the body of Jesus...” - (v. 40) - Finally, we are told that after it was certain that Jesus had died, John records that a secret disciple, Joseph of Arimathea had asked Pilate if he might take Jesus body away. Pilate granted permission for him to do so. Nicodemus, who came to Jesus in the middle of the night came with the mixture and myrrh and aloes to prepare Jesus’ body for burial. (v. 38-39) They wrapped Jesus body in linen wrapping with the spices as was custom and they placed Jesus body in a new tomb in a garden near Golgotha (vv. 40-42).

APPLICATION: Joseph and Nicodemus who had been secret disciples of Christ have now come out of the darkness and into the light unashamed to give Jesus a proper burial. These men whose belief in Jesus was in secret because they feared the Jews, no longer feared them as witnessed in this act of mercy and love for Jesus.

There could be many reasons why believers would want to be secret disciples. But, eventually believers need come out from the cover of darkness and be counted as one of His own. Let Joseph and Nicodemus, two prominent men in their community be a testimony of courage for you today who believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

CLOSING: I close this lesson with these words from Isaiah:

“Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows he carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.

But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has cause the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.

By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?

His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth.” - Isaiah 53:1-9

LESSON TWENTY ONE: “THE RESURRECTION”

John 20:1-21:25

Study Questions

1. In review of the last session: read John 19:38-42, besides caring for Jesus’ body, how did Joseph of Arimathea display that he was a true disciple of Christ?

2. In John 20:8, what does this verse reveal about John’s belief concerning Jesus?

3. John 20:11-18, describe the emotional change that Mary went through and how she became an obedient disciple for Christ?

4. In John 20 & 21, how many times did Jesus manifest Himself to His disciples? Observe and list the change in the disciples each time Jesus met with them.

5. In John 20:24-29, Thomas would not believe until he saw Jesus in person: When he finally saw Jesus what was his confession? What did Jesus say about those who did not see, but believe?

6. In reading these two chapters (20-21) and the gospel itself, how are you motivated to not only love the Lord, but to serve Him (21:15-17)? What evidence do you of works display your faith in Christ (Jms. 2:14-26)?

KEY THOUGHT: Only Jesus, being God, has the power to rise up from the dead.

KEY TERMS:

Burying Jesus: Jesus died on the cross on Friday around 3:00 p.m.. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were granted permission by Pilate to take Jesus’ body away and give Him a proper burial in a tomb in a garden near Golgotha (19:38). This needed to be done before sunset for the Jewish day of preparation for passover and the sabbath was at hand and all work would have needed to cease (19:42). The tomb that Jesus was taken to was new and unoccupied (19:41). Placing Jesus’ body in a new unoccupied tomb serve two purposes. One, it would have been less offensive to the Jewish authorities to bury a crucified sinner in an occupied tomb and because Jesus rose up on the third day, only His body was missing from the tomb. Thomas Constable shares an interesting bit of information concerning Jesus’ burial:

“Normally, the Romans placed the bodies of crucified offenders, whose body they did not leave to rot on their crosses, in a cemetery for criminals outside the city. Family members could not claim the bodies of people who had undergone crucifixion as punishment for sedition. Thus Jesus’ corpse would normally have ended up in the grave of a common criminal, but for Joseph’s intervention. Pilate probably “granted” his request for Jesus’ body, because he realized that Joseph wanted to give Jesus an honorable burial. That would have humiliated the Jews further. Joseph’s courageous act doubtless alienated him from many of his fellow Sanhedrin members. We do not know what the ultimate consequences of his action were for him. Evidently it was Jesus’ death that caused Joseph to face up to his responsibility to take a stand for Jesus.”

SURVEY OF THE TEXT

THE NON-CONTRADICTION IN THE GOSPELS: One should not be concerned about what seems to be contradicting details in the four gospel accounts concerning Jesus’ resurrection. Think of each gospel as individual witnesses to a dramatic scene. It is better for those who are doing the investigation to receive personal testimonies that are slightly different than ones that are the same verbatim. Let’s take for instance a police officer who is investigating a crime scene. If all the eyewitnesses shared the same story verbatim, the authorities would become suspicious of either foul play or tampering with the truth. What makes the four gospels authentic is that, yes, there are some common threads that are the same in the story, but each one is told slightly different coming from their point of view. Oh, by the way, lest we forget, these accounts come to us under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Even though they are written with human hands, from human memories or collected accounts, they are divinely inspired to share what the Lord desired us to know about the glorious resurrection of Christ Jesus our Lord.

What are the common threads of Jesus’ resurrection accounts?:

(Matt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:1-14; Lk. 24:1-44; Jn. 20:1-29)

- Mary Magdalene is mentioned in all four gospels.
- It was early before sunrise on Sunday, the first day of the week.
- The stone had been rolled away from the tomb.
- The tomb was empty.
- The women reported the empty tomb to the disciples.
- Jesus arose from the dead.

The final statement is clearly the most crucial one because it was Jesus Himself who had stated that He would die and three days later rise again (Jn. 2:22).

I. THE EMPTY TOMB (20:1-18)

“...and he saw and believed.” - (v. 8) - In most dramatic novels, this story would have more likely ended with Jesus’ death on the cross. If it was a movie the ending music and credits would have begun. Fortunately for us all, the Gospel concerning Jesus, the Son of the living God did not end with His death on the cross. This chapter is actually the beginning. It’s the dawn of a new era. Hope has risen. In the words of the Apostle Paul:

“Now I make known to you brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which you also received in which you stand (v.1). For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (vv. 3-4). But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep (v. 20). For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death (vv. 25-26). Death is swallowed up in victory (54b). The sting of death in sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 56-57).

This victory would become known to the disciples and the followers of Jesus as the Holy Spirit brings into remembrance Jesus’ words and the witness of His resurrection (Jn. 14:26).

John begins his account of Jesus resurrection very much like the other synoptic gospels by stating that it was Sunday, the first day of the week early in the morning. John also mentions Mary Magdalene (Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1; Lk. 24:10), but chooses to only focus on her rather than the other women. Later in verse two, we learn that someone else was with her because in her explanation of what she saw, she mentions “we” in her statement of not knowing where Jesus’ body was laid, only that it had been taken away (vv. 1-2). This would have been consistent with the other gospel accounts and also noting that women in those days would not have traveled outside the home in the dark by themselves.

John notes that Mary did not enter the tomb, but ran and came to Peter and John (v.2). Her initial response is one of astonishment, fear, trembling, and joy. We know this because of the synoptics account (Matt. 28:8; Mk. 16:8). I do not think John intends for us to think that Mary believes grave robbers broke into His tomb and took Jesus’ body away. She’s just simply reporting to Peter and John that someone has taken the Lord away and I do not know where.

Imagine if you will, if you came upon a friends grave a couple of days after the funeral and came upon the grim sight of an open grave and casket. What would your initial feelings be? Possibly disgust, anger, fear, astonishment, or a number of emotions. What would first come to your mind? Did someone intentionally do this? If so, upon whose authority? Where did they take my love one? Why did they not warn me?

When hearing this news from Mary, Peter and John (the other disciples as John describes himself here) ran together to see this for themselves. John indicates that he arrived at the tomb first but only stopped to look into the tomb. He did not go inside. He only looked in and saw the burial linens lying there in the empty tomb (vv.3-5). When Peter arrived, he went inside the tomb and saw the linen wrappings and the facecloth which was rolled up in a place by itself (v. 6-8).

There is nothing here to be taken as allegory. John is simply testifying what he and Peter saw that early Sunday morning. The linens and facecloth were the common burial clothes. If Jesus’ body had been robbed, grave robbers would not have taken time to unwrap Jesus body. They would have simply just carried Him away still wrapped up. Also, grave robbers would not have been

respectful enough to properly take the time to fold the face cloth. They would have hurried quickly away from the tomb as fast as they could.

One more thing about grave robbing, it would have been a capital offense to destroy tombs, remove bodies, or displace the sealing stone or other stones. A decree made by Emperor Claudius. Another item to consider is that the tomb was sealed and guarded. This was because the chief priest remembered Jesus words that after three days he (Jesus) would rise again. So they requested that the grave be made secured with guards and Pilate granted them permission to make the tomb as secured and guarded as needed. So the chief priests made the tomb secured and set a seal on the stone (Matt. 27:62-66).

There is a bit of irony here in that Mary Magdalene did not seem to remember Jesus' words about rising again as we saw in her reaction. Meanwhile, the chief priests gave indication they did not understand what Jesus was talking about when he prophesy His own resurrection (2:19). In Matthew's account, he writes that they seem to indicate with concern that Jesus' disciples would come to steal His body away and say that He had risen based upon His words.

When John finally stepped into the tomb with Peter, John testifies of himself that "he saw and believed" (v.8). I believe it is important for us to camp here for a moment and to consider John's belief. Swindoll states that when John entered the tomb he "perceived with understanding and believed." In other words, John had a aha moment. It finally clicked. The lights came on. John had finally connected all the dots of what Jesus had been telling them and that Jesus had risen from the dead.

"For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead." - (v. 9) - Without the help of the Holy Spirit, anyone would be slow to receive the news about Jesus' death and resurrection. John is simply indicating here, that up to this time, they had not yet accepted the reality and significance of Jesus' resurrection until then. This should not surprise us, because we need the Holy Spirit to help us understand what the Scriptures reveal about the person and work of Jesus.

"Jesus said to her, 'Mary'" - (v. 16) - John shifts the attention from Peter and himself back to Mary. In verse 11, we find Mary at the tomb weeping as she takes a look for herself inside. Inside she saw two angels sitting in the tomb and they asked her, "Why are you weeping?" (v. 13). Her response was the same as to Peter and John in verse 2. After this, Jesus appeared and addressed her as the same as the angels by saying, "woman" (v. 15). This would be a respectful way to address a woman in Jesus' day. The resurrected Savior asked Mary the same question as the Angel as to why she was weeping. She, not seeing clearly yet, supposes Jesus to be one of the gardeners, asked Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away" (v. 15b). Jesus once again addresses her and calls her by name, "Mary," and when she turns to see Him she recognizes Him and cling on to Him (v.16-17).

When Mary saw that it was Jesus she addressed Him by calling Him as she probably has done numerous times, “Rabboni” (v. 16) which means teacher in Aramaic. Though this title did not reflect insight into Jesus’ true identity, it does express joy of a restored relationship that she had concluded had ended.

“*Stop clinging to Me...*” - (v. 17) - Mary probably in total exuberant joy and adoration began clinging to Jesus’ legs and feet. Jesus in return tells her to “stop clinging” to Him because He had not yet ascended to the Father (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9). Why would Jesus command Mary to refrain from clinging to Him? There are several debates on this and like most situations like this, it is probably better not to super impose our own thoughts on this especially since we do not have an explanation from the Lord nor the writers. The only thing we can take from this is that Jesus had a mission for her to perform - go tell the disciples that He will ascend to His Father and their Father. His God and their God (v. 17). As an obedient disciple, Mary went and shared the good news to the eleven that she had in fact had seen the Lord and that He said these things to her (v. 18).

APPLICATION: There are several points of application that can be taken from this passage.

1. We can have full trust and assurance in the authority and promises of God’s Word. Jesus died and rose again according to Scripture (1 Cor. 15:1-4).
2. We can have full trust and assurance that the Holy Spirit will be our helper and guide to reveal, bring to remembrance all the things said concerning Christ (Jn. 14:26).
3. Death is no longer a dread for those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord, because He has overcome (Jn. 16:33; Rom. 8:37-38; Rev. 3:21).
4. There is more to worship than just clinging on to Jesus, we are to “proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (Jn. 20:17; 1 Pet. 2:9b).

II. THE APPEARANCE (20:19-29)

“*Peace be with you*” - (v. 19) - If you have ever wanted to be a fly on a wall during a closed room conversation, John invites us into this discourse between the resurrected Jesus and His remaining eleven disciples. John began the chapter by giving us the day of the week and time, “Now on the first day of the week...early...when it was still dark” (v. 1). He now gives us another statement of time in this next section, “So when it was evening on the day, the first day of the week” (v. 19). John tells us that even though he and Peter had already gone out to see if Mary’s report was true (v.2) and saw for themselves and believed (v.8), and we assume that Mary has already reported what Jesus told her to say to the disciples (v. 18), the disciples, minus Thomas, were secured behind shut doors out of fear of the Jews.

John tells us then Jesus miraculously appeared in the room before the ten disciples present that first Lord’s evening and greeted them with, “Peace be with you” (Shalom) and once again He states in verse 21, “Peace be with you.” This greeting of peace echoes back to Jesus’ discourse

with the disciples, possibly in the same room hours before His trials and crucifixion, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you” (14:27). Jesus here is imparting peace on the disciples rather than just wishing them peace. This seems clear because Jesus repeated the greeting. This greeting of peace (shalom) also summarizes the fullness of God’s blessing, not just the cessation of hostility (Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7). Beasley - Murray state:

“Never had that ‘common word’ [Shalom] been so filled with meaning as when Jesus uttered it on Easter evening...His ‘Shalom!’ on Easter evening is the complement of ‘it is finished’ on the cross, for the peace of reconciliation and life from God is now imparted. ‘Shalom’ accordingly is supremely the Easter greeting.”

“Receive the Holy Spirit” - (v. 22) - Peace would not be enough for the disciples as Jesus prepares to commission them to go out into the world to be His witnesses. The disciples would need supernatural spiritual power to carry out such a task. Jesus now breathes on them His Holy Spirit. Once again we embark upon a doctrinal discussion that has had many debates. The conversation is centered around how is this Spirit filling different than that of Pentecost. Was this a temporary infusion of His Spirit? Was this John’s account of Pentecost? Was this a symbolic and graphic introduction to the Spirit? Again, we do not know why...all we know is that Jesus did this based upon John’s account. I personally like Charles Swindoll’s take on this:

“Jesus is about to recommission His disciples to fulfill God’s great plan of redemption (17:18). Jesus then reaffirmed His earlier promise of the Holy Spirit (14:26; 15:26; 16:13; also, Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 37:14; Joel 2:28-32).” Swindoll goes on to say that Jesus “illustrated His promise of the coming Holy Spirit by breathing on the disciples, recalling the image of creation (Gen. 2:7) and Old Testament prophecy (Ezek. 37). This was either a temporary foretaste of Pentecost (Acts 2) or merely a symbolic gesture.”

“If you forgive the sins of any...” - (v. 23) - What will be needed to carry out this great commission is not only supernatural power, but also the forgiveness of sins (Jef. 31:31-34; Matt. 26:28). Jesus appears to be saying that there will be reactions towards their ministry concerning the message of salvation. People’s reaction to them would be the same as it was to Him. The message of the gospel is the forgiveness of sins. Especially if these they were going to were ones who took part of asking for Jesus to be crucified. These new believers would need to know that God had forgiven them of their sin. If they do not believe, God would not forgive them of their sin.

This also has sacrificial implications, because as John the baptist proclaimed, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” - (1:29). The message of the gospel is that Jesus died for our sin once for all (Heb. 7:27). Thus, God no longer desires individual and repeated sacrifices for the temporary forgiveness of sin. Now, because of Christ sacrificial atonement work on the cross, one can now have their sin forgiven for all time.

“My Lord and My God” - (v. 28) - The last one to witness Jesus’ resurrection among the disciples is Thomas (also known as Didymus). Only John records this post-resurrection appearance.

Thomas's confession becomes John's climatic argument for belief in Jesus as the divine Messiah, the Christ.

First, notice that Thomas had not been with the other ten when Jesus appeared to them earlier. Thomas was on his own. It had been a week since Jesus' resurrection and appearances on the Easter day (v. 26). The others told Thomas about Jesus, but Thomas (being dubbed... 'doubting Thomas') would not believe unless he himself saw where the nails pierced Jesus' hands and feet and could put his hand into His side where the spear pierced Jesus (v. 25).

Like He did before, Jesus suddenly appears and greets Thomas with the other disciples in a room that was securely shut and greets him with ('Shalom') "Peace be with you!" (v. 26). Jesus then instructs Thomas to inspect the wounds still visible for Him to see and place his hand into His side. Then Jesus commands Him to "be not unbelieving, but believing" (v. 27). Then Thomas utters one of the most profound declarations of saving faith in Scripture, "My Lord and My God." (v.28) For a Jew to call another human being this was blasphemy under normal circumstances (10:33). But, this is who Thomas believed Jesus to be. It is also who John presents Jesus to be throughout His Gospel.

"Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed" - (v. 29) - Most since that time believed on Jesus because of sufficient evidence because of the witness to the Gospel of Christ. You and I come to Jesus without the physical confirmation that Thomas required. There have been many other appearances of Jesus before He ascended into Heaven. The Apostle Paul notes for us that Jesus had appeared to over 500 people before His ascension (1 Cor. 15:1-8).

Below is a chart showing when and who Jesus appeared to (chart credited to Thomas Constable):

Jesus' Post-resurrection Appearances	
Easter morning	
	to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9-11; John 20:10-18)
	to other women (Matt. 28:9-10)
	to Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5)
Easter afternoon	
	to two disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:13-32)
Easter evening	
	to about 12 disciples excluding Thomas (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-23)
The following Sunday	
	to 11 disciples including Thomas (John 20:26-28)
The following 32 days	
	to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-23)
	to 500 people including the Eleven at a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20; 1 Cor. 15:6)
	to His half brother James (1 Cor. 15:7)
	to His disciples in Jerusalem (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:3-8; 1 Cor. 15:7)
	to His disciples on Mount Olivet (Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12)

APPLICATION: When you and I enter into a personal saving relationship with Christ Jesus our Lord, the first evidence of that is ‘peace.’ We now have peace with God through Christ (Rom. 5:1). The other evidence is having the indwelling of His Holy Spirit living within us. I like how John in the opening chapter says that Jesus came and ‘pitched’ His tent among us. He tabernacled with us. Now, Jesus ‘pitched’ His Spirit in us who believe that He died and rose again. The third evidence of one who has a personal saving relationship with Christ is serving Him by fulfilling His mission within us. He now entrust to us what was entrusted to Him - to glorify the Father by proclaiming this gospel to those who would believe. Finally, a fourth evidence is how you view Christ. Who is He to you? Is He Lord and God? One of the missing links in believers walks with Christ in this world is that they do not claim Him as Lord and some even do not claim Jesus as God. You can not be a child of God unless you see the Son of God as fully God divine.

III. THE GOSPEL STATEMENT (20:30-31)

“But these have been written that you may believe” - (v. 31) - The climatic proof of John’s case concerning Jesus being the Son of the Living God has come to a conclusion. All one can do is present the facts. We do not have the power to save anyone. No preacher or evangelists can save anyone. That is why John 1:12-13 is so important to state: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Only God can do this, we are only to be His ambassadors of grace. His chosen race, His royal priesthood, to proclaim the good news concerning Jesus Christ.

IV. THE EPILOGUE (John 21:1-25)

“After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples” - (v. 1) - John’s gospel concludes with a final reunion between Jesus and some of His disciples by the sea of Galilee. This would be Jesus’ third post resurrection manifestation before the disciples (v. 14). The disciples present here were Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John and two others. Jesus met with them and even had breakfast ready for them while they were out fishing (v. 9, 12) and invites them to eat with Him after He had blessed the food.

“Do you love me” - (v. 15, 16, 17) - After the meal Jesus speaks with Peter (possibly still feeling dejected for denying Jesus) and helps Peter to deal with his deepest wound. Jesus’ questions concerning Peter’s love for Him was not to be taken as cruel, but to allow Peter to publicly state to Jesus Himself his unmistakable loyalty to Christ as he once did in the Upper Room (13:37). This was to be for Peter’s healing and restoration. Peter had denied Jesus three times, so Jesus gives Peter the opportunity three times with three affirmations of his love for Christ. Thus, Jesus commissions Peter with “Tend My lambs/sheep’ (v. 15, 16, 17).

“And there are also so many other things which Jesus did” - (v. 25) - After Jesus affirmed and commissioned Peter to watch over Jesus’ flock, Jesus prepares Peter in regards to the type of martyr’s death would come to him (v. 18). Peter then asked about John’s death (v.20-21), but Jesus as gentle as He could basically tells Peter that John’s future is none of your business (v. 22-23).

Finally, John concludes His gospel that if He were to write about everything thing Jesus did or said, and if written in detail, “I suppose even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written” (v. 25). That is to say, what he wrote, and what everyone else could write, would be only a small part of what could be written to bring honor to Jesus Christ. Amen!

APPLICATION: Several points of application can be made concerning this final chapter.

1. It is important to Jesus that we know that we have been forgiven and loved by Christ, but what even more important is that we examine our love for Him and not brood over our sin and remain in-effective in ministry. Jesus wants us to be restored so that we may be useful to Him in this world to spread the gospel of His saving grace.
2. None of know the day or the hour when Christ would call us home. Some of us will die of old age, some will die to persecution, some by disease. The when and how we die is not what is important as much as what and how we serve Christ with the remaining days He chooses to keep us in this world.
3. What could you write about Christ? How big of a book or journal could you fill? Paul speaks of believers as being living letters. “You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” - 2 Cor. 3:2-3

Oh that we would all be living letters of Christ that would fill the entire world with the knowledge of His gospel so all would know and believe that Jesus is the Christ and that by believing in Him, would have life in His name.