

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Of the four Gospels, only two were written by those who were witnesses of the life of Christ: Matthew and John. Matthew and John were written by two of the disciples who were with Jesus during his 3 ½ year ministry.

Luke clearly indicates that his account of the life of Christ was based on the interviews he had with people who had been witnesses of the events and words he recorded.

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, ²just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, ³it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; (Luke 1:1-3)

All of the early church writings that address the issue state that Mark received his information from Peter.¹

The Gospel of John doesn't explicitly name its author. He probably was the apostle who leaned back against Jesus' breast at the last supper, and therefore chose to use language related to that event as a self-identification, *the apostle whom Jesus loved* (John. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20). Perhaps he was seeking to avoid focusing on himself and so he used this acronym, rather than his name.

The critical scholarship that arose in Germany in the 19th Century denied that the Biblical documents are Holy Spirit inspired. They viewed them as being of human origin, without Divine inspiration. This movement began with K.G. Bretschneider in the 1820s and became full blown with the Tübingen School, led by Walter Bauer, which began in the final years of the 19th Century. Bauer presented his critical argument in *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum (Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity)*.

These critical scholars held various views on the authorship and the dating of John – most of them considered the document to have been written in the early Second Century.

Many of the establishment seminaries in the U.S. began taking the German liberal theological views in the 1920's, causing some churches to adopt their liberal theological views. This resulted in the formation of some new denominations, when some churches accepted the liberal theology, and some did not.

¹ Papias (c 140 AD) wrote, "Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter" (*Against Heresies* 3.1.1); in Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 39, (Grand Rapids, Baker Bookhouse) 1994 :page 127: Tertullian (c. 155-c. 240) claimed, "That which Mark published may be affirmed to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was" (*Against Marcion* 4.5). Clement of Alexandria (150-218 AD) as quoted in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (6.14.5–7) and Origen (AD 184-253) in his *Commentary on Matthew* (1.1) affirm the same view. Justin's reference to Peter's "memoirs" claims it as the source of the record of Jesus' nickname "Boanerges"—something recorded only in Mark 3:17.

In addition to the internal clues that assist us in identifying the author, the early church uniformly affirmed the authorship of John: Papius,² Irenaeus,³ Tatian,⁴ Clement,⁵ and Tertullian⁶ attributed the fourth Gospel to John. Eusebius, without question attributed the Gospel to John.⁷

John's Gospel is more theological than the other three, because he sought to address the theological issues faced by the newer generation of Christians who had not heard the apostles and their teaching. All of the apostles except John had died. The relationship with Judaism, and the surrounding culture threatened to influence the theology of the Church.

False teachers had sprung up, questioning many of the core beliefs of Christianity, such as Jesus' humanity (I John 1:1ff).⁸ As a counter, John began his Gospel by introducing the Word **who was God who became flesh (John 1:1, 14)**.

John spent his final years in the Greek city, Ephesus. The usual date ascribed to the authorship of his Gospel is 85-90 AD. It clearly was written after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. A few scholars date the authorship to 100 AD.

The fact that John used the Greek term, *Logos*, in his preamble, is an indication of his anticipated audience. In normal use, the term, *logos*, when referring to speech, means, *word*. When referring to the mind, the word usually means, *reason*.⁹

In ancient Greek philosophy, the term, *Logos*, began to be used for the divine reason that permeated the cosmos, ordering it and giving it form and meaning. This concept first was introduced by the 6th Century B.C. Greek philosopher Heraclitus. Later the Greek Stoics and Platonists continued using this term as the name of the mysterious and undefined force that controlled the operation of the universe.

Therefore, since John saw his audience as being of the Greek culture, he used their term to introduce to his readers the identity of the true *Logos*, rendered in English versions as, *Word*.

JOHN'S PROLOGUE 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² *He was in the beginning with God.*

³ *All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*

⁴ *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

⁵ *And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

² Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 39, page 125

³ Irenaeus *Adversus haereses* 1.9, 2; 3.11 cited in Eusebius Book 5, chapter 8, page 188

⁴ Tatian's *Diatessaron*, a harmony of the four Gospels

⁵ Clement, *hypotyposes*, Chapter XIV, paragraph 7
<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iii.xi.xiv.html>

⁶ Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, Chapter 1

⁷ Eusebius Book 3, Chapter 14, page 108

⁸ One version of Gnosticism stated that spirit is good and physical is evil. Therefore, Jesus could not have had a body. He was a hologram – the appearance of a physical being, but in reality, he was a spirit.

⁹ Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, Mass. Hendrickson Publishers) 2000, Pages 880-881

These verses contain some of the deepest theological statements and insights that are to be found anywhere in the Bible.

The Gospel begins with the exact same words that begin the Genesis account of the creation – *in the beginning*.

- John's terms ἐν ἀρχῇ (*en archay*) *in beginning*
- Genesis 1:1 terms ἐν ἀρχῇ (Greek version of the Old Testament – the Septuagint)¹⁰

John clearly stated that the Logos was present when the universe was created. In the following verses, he confirmed the Logos' participation in the creation.

NOTE: In the Greek text, there is a definite article attached to the *Word*, and a definite article attached to the *God*.

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν
 In beginning was the Word and the word was unto the God

There is importance in the fact that the definite article, *the*, is used, indicating a specific Logos and a specific Theos. The Logos was not relating to a god, which could have been one of the many gods of the Greek pantheon. He was relating to the one true God – *the God*.

Another term used in verse 1b gives us a special understanding of the relationship between the Logos and the God.

- The Greek preposition, μετά (*metah*), when used with the genitive case of a noun, means, *with*.
- The Greek preposition, παρά, (*parah*) when used with the dative of a noun, means, *beside*, i.e., *in the presence of*. When used with the accusative of a noun, this preposition means, *alongside of*.

Of signal interest is the fact that in both verses 1a and 2, John did not use either of these terms to describe the relationship between the Logos and God. Instead, he used the preposition, πρὸς (*pros*), which when used with the accusative of a noun (which is used here) means, *to*, *unto*, or *toward*.

Here is verse 1b which in our English versions is rendered as, *and the Word was with God*.

καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν
 and the word was toward the God

The use of this term gives us the picture of the Logos and the Theos facing one another, observing one another's countenance.

Marcus Dodds has written, “πρὸς implies not merely existence alongside of but personal intercourse.”¹¹

John was stating that not only were the Logos and the God with each other, but that they were involved with one another.

¹⁰ The Hebrew also begins with the same words תְּחִלָּתָא i.e. *in beginning*

¹¹ Marcus Dodds D.D., professor of exegetical theology new college, Edinburgh, *The Expositor's Greek Testament, The Gospel of St. John* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Printing Company) 1976, page 684

Verse 1c *and the Word was God*, presents another important detail in both the syntax and the use of the definite article. Here is the Greek of 1c

καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος
and God was the Word

Two things are important: both the syntax (the sequence of terms) and the use of the definite article.

- The absence of the definite article before the term, θεὸς but including it before the term, λόγος, in this statement, indicates that John was using the term to describe the identity of the λόγος, rather than stating that the God was only one being who manifested Himself as the λόγος.¹²
- In Greek, one way to emphasize a particular concept is to arrange the syntax so that the terms that emphasize that point that the author wants to emphasize, are placed first in the declaration. Placing the term, θεὸς, first in the declaration, indicates that it was John's intention to emphasize the Divinity of the *Logos*. Paul cited The Divinity of the *Logos* when he exhorted the Philippians to model Christ's humility.

Have this attitude in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus,⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and being made in the likeness of men.
(Philippians 2:5-7)

Verse 3 presents a truth that is quite significant: *All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*

The Word was not only with God in the beginning, but the Word was the source of all activity and life.

In I Corinthians 8:6, Paul distinguished between God the Father, as the primal source of all things, and implies that the Son was the actual creator.

yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him. (1 Corinthians 8:6)

The Genesis account of creation does not mention the Son, but only God and the Spirit.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.² And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

¹² One of the heresies that has arisen from time to time is, modalism. This heresy states that there is only one Divine Being, who has manifested Himself sometimes as the Father, sometimes, as the Son, and sometimes as the Holy Spirit. This position is held by the United Pentecostal Church and the United Apostolic Church. It also was promoted by some (not all) of the apostles of the Latter Rain Movement who founded churches in New England and in other states just south of the Canadian/American border. If modalism were the correct understanding of the Trinity, then Jesus was just a play-actor, when He said such things as, *Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.* (Luke 23:46)

The Hebrew term rendered as God in this statement is אֱלֹהִים (*Elohim*).

This is the plural form of the Hebrew noun. In Hebrew, plurality is indicated by the suffix, **im**, which performs the same function that the suffix **S** performs in English.

Therefore, we speculate – since the term has a plural ending, does the term refer to the Trinity? It is possible, and if so, this would fit the fuller picture of the Godhead that is presented in the New Testament.

This possibility is heightened by the use of a plural verb and a plural adjective are used with this noun in Genesis 1:26.

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in **Our image**, according to **Our likeness**; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."* (Genesis 1:26)

The traditional version of the Apostles Creed, recited in many churches for several centuries is at odds with the statement *All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being*. The traditional version of the Apostles Creed does not describe the Son as a participant in creation.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

The Apostles Creed has undergone recent revision. The revision acknowledges the Son's role in Creation.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages. God from God, light from light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father. **Through him all things were made.**
For us men and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit, was
incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.
For our sake, he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered death and was buried and rose again on the third day in accordance with the
Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men., is an important statement. It relates both to the creation described in Genesis and to the new birth, described in the New Testament.

The life which was the light of men in the creation would have had special importance. The term rendered, *men*, is ἄνθρωπος (*anthropos*), referring to the human race¹³ – animals are not included. A spiritual and intellectual impartation was given to mankind, but not to the animals.

In the new birth available through the Gospel, the spiritual illumination dispels the darkness of sin and unbelief.

¹³ Had the statement meant that *life was the light of males*, the Greek term would have been, ἄνῆρ (*anayer*)

Relevant to this issue is the term rendered as *comprehend* in verse 5 *And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it*. The verb is καταλαμβάνω (*katalambanoh*).

This verb, in its various forms can imply, *overpower, gain control over, grasp with force, comprehend, understand*.¹⁴

As a result, the term is rendered in a variety of ways in English versions: *comprehend* (KJV, NKJV, NAS), *understand*, (NIV), *perceive* (YLT), *mastered* (NEB), *overcome* (ESV, NRS).

In my opinion (JWG) the concept of the darkness not overcoming the light is a preferred understanding. I take this position for the following reasons.

The first reason is the form of the Greek verb, which in this instance is κατέλαβεν (*katelaben*).

In Greek, there are three voices,

- active, in which the subject acts – I kick the man
- passive, in which an action is taken upon the subject – the man kicks me
- middle, in which the subject takes an action involving himself – I kick myself.

The middle voice implies an action involving something the speaker does to himself or within himself. The action does not have any effect on anyone other than the speaker. Only in the middle voice does the verb, καταλαμβάνω mean, *comprehend, understand, perceive*, etc.¹⁵

In John 1:5, the verb is not in the middle voice. The form of the verb in this verse is, κατέλαβεν (*katalaben*) which is the indicative, aorist, active voice, third person, singular form of the verb. The fact that the verb is in the active voice, rather than the middle voice, makes it improper to translate the verb in this passage as, *comprehend, understand*, etc.¹⁶

The active voice, of this verb simply means, *mastered, overcome*, etc., which is how it should be translated, regardless of how many English versions render it otherwise.

The second reason is the fact that the subject of the statement is darkness, an inanimate object. How could darkness comprehend anything! The term, *darkness*, refers to the absence of light in an area.

¹⁴ Timothy Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*, (Grand Rapids, Baker Books) 2000, entry 15167

¹⁵ All Greek Lexicons present this understanding of the voices of this term. For example:

Friberg - *ibid*

Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume IV (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing) 1967, page 9

William F. Arndt & F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press) 1958, page 412-413

¹⁶ The middle voice would have been, καταλαβόμενοι (*katalabomenoi*). This is the form of the verb in Acts 4:13, where it is rendered as, *understood* (NAS), *perceived* (KJV, ESV), *realized* (NIV). *Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and **understood** that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.* (NAS)

The figure presented in this passage resembles what happens when one lights a candle in a dark room. Regardless of the size of the candle, when it is lighted, the darkness is dispelled, and light now owns the space.

Although the darkness may be dense, the light is not overcome. Wherever light is activated, the darkness is removed.

John wrote in his First Epistle, *On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.* (1 John 2:8)

In the Genesis account of the creation, it is stated,

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. (Genesis 1:1-3)

As the creation was covered by darkness until God spoke, so the spiritual world of mankind is shrouded in darkness, until the Gospel has entered that darkness. In the New Creation, spiritual darkness is displaced by the light which shines in the Logos.

Throughout the centuries, Satan has done all that he can do to destroy the light. Christians have been executed, church buildings burned, and individual Christians have paid a severe price for their faithfulness, but the light, even though dim in some places, continues to shine.

Jesus stated, *upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.* (Matthew 16:18)

Clearly, Satan has won some battles, but he will not win the war. The light will not be extinguished.

Ultimately, in God's time, all darkness will end, and the light will be victorious.

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE LOGOS AND ITS RESULTS 1:6-13

There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light.

⁹ *There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.*

¹⁰ *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.*

¹¹ *He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.*

¹² *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, ¹³ who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Matthew 3:1-17 and Luke 3:1-18 describe the arrival of the God-initiated, and anointed ministry of Jesus' cousin John.¹⁷ John clearly understood that his role was to prepare the people for the coming Messiah. John's anointed ministry was so powerful that the people began to wonder whether or not he was the promised Messiah (Luke 3:15). John's reply was that he was not the Messiah but that he was sent to prepare the way for the Messiah (Matthew 3:11ff; Luke 3:16-17).

¹⁷ Elizabeth, John's mother, is described as an older relative of Mary (Luke 1:36). Traditionally, Elizabeth has been considered to be Mary's older aunt.

Because the Jews had been anticipating the arrival of the foretold Messiah, when Jesus, the Messiah, did arrive, one would expect the priests and leaders of the nation to rejoice and receive Him with thanksgiving. Such was not the case. Even though thousands flocked to Him because of His miracles (Matthew 4:23ff), the Jewish establishment saw Him as a threat. It was through their machinations that Jesus, the Messiah, was crucified.

Yet, the many who did receive Him, received the *right to become children of God*. This promise and how it is implemented was clarified on the Day of Pentecost, when His New Covenant was born (Acts 2:38-39).

One's race or social status is not relevant. What blood heritage one might have, one's racial or social status, these are not relevant to becoming a child of God. All who *believe in His name*, who are born, *not of the will of man, but of God*.

Those who believe on His name will take the steps that He has ordained for those believers to enter into that relationship.

When Jesus commissioned His disciples, just a few days before His ascension, He gave a clear command as to how they were to make and disciple converts.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

In obedience to Jesus' command, Peter exhorted his audience,

And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

There are nine records of conversions in Acts and all nine follow the pattern displayed in the Pentecostal declaration.¹⁸

THE INCARNATION AND THE BEGINNING OF THE AGE OF GRACE 1:14-18

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ *John bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"*

¹⁶ *For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace.¹⁷ For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.*

¹⁸ *No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

The Gospel of John does not contain a birth narrative of Jesus, as does Matthew (1:18-25) and Luke (1:28-38; 2:1-20).

John summarized the event by the statement, *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us*.

The terms rendered, *dwelt among us*, are ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν (*eskaynohsen en haymin*), which states literally, *tented among us*. This is a rather intimate picture, i.e. Jesus joined our campsite.

This was the beginning of John's revelation of the identity of the true Logos – Jesus, the Messiah.

¹⁸ Acts 2:37-41; 8:12-13, 24-39; 9:17-18; 22:10-16; 10:44-48; 16:11-15; 16:29-33; 18:8; 19:1-5

The statement, *we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth*, previews what Jesus said in His final discourse.

- As Jesus drew close to the time of his arrest, he spent considerable time with the apostles preparing them for His departure.
- John 14 records Jesus' farewell discourse. In response to Jesus' statement that He was going to prepare a place for them, Philip said, *Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us*, Jesus replied, *He who has seen Me has seen the Father* (John 14:8-10)

The implication is that whatever glory attended the Father, that same glory was seen in the Son.

The statement, *full of grace and truth*, is of immeasurable importance. We must never, under the guise of grace, compromise the truth. Paul wrote to Timothy, *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.* (II Timothy 2:15)

At the same time, it is important for us to manifest the gracious and kind spirit of Our Lord.

How fortunate we are to live under the New Covenant, the Covenant of Grace. *For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace.*¹⁷ *For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.*

Under the Law, through good deeds and compliance with the rules and regulations of that Law, a Jew earned his right to claim the promises found in that Law.

Under the New Covenant, the Covenant of Grace, salvation is a gift to be received, not one to be earned. There are degrees of reward associated with how one lives out the Covenant of Grace, but the access to that grace is gracious: belief, confession of faith, repentance, immersion into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When this simple initiatory rite is followed, the new believer receives the gracious gift of the Holy Spirit and is enabled to live a grace-filled life.

NOTE: The Bible mentions rewards in heaven multiple times (Matthew 5:12; Luke 6:23, 35; I Corinthians 3:14; 9:18, etc./). This is in addition to our salvation, because our salvation rests on Christ's righteousness, not our own (Romans 3:21-16). God will give rewards in heaven at the $\beta\eta\mu\alpha$ (*bayma*), the judgment seat of Christ, based on a the degree of a Christian's faithfulness in service to Him (II Corinthians 5:10). The rewards will show the reality of our sonship (Galatians 4:7) and the justice of God (Hebrews 6:10). God will give rewards in heaven in order to fulfill the law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-9) and make good on His promise that our labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58).

The statement, *No man has seen God at any time*, brings to mind Exodus 33:1-20,

*Then Moses said, "I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!"*¹⁹ *And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."*²⁰ *But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"*

the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him, reinforces the truth, *he who has seen me, has seen the Father.*

If we want to know what God the Father is like, the answer is to be found in studying the words and deeds of the Son.

JOHN AND THE DEPUTATION FROM JERUSALEM 1:19-28¹⁹

And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

²⁰ *And he confessed, and did not deny, and he confessed, "I am not the Christ."*

²¹ *And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not."*

"Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."

²² *They said then to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"*

²³ *He said, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."*

²⁴ *Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.* ²⁵ *And they asked him, and said to him, "Why then, are you immersing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"*

²⁶ *John answered them saying, "I immerse in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know.* ²⁷ *"It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."*

²⁸ *These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was immersing.*²⁰

NOTE: What John was doing was totally different from anything the Jews had seen before. In every Jewish community there were *Mikva*, rituals pools in which Jews immersed themselves to achieve ritual purity. After extensive preparation of the individual's body had taken place, the individual would proceed into the Mikva and immerse himself/herself. There never was an immerser, who immersed those seeking purification. Everyone immersed himself/herself.²¹

For examples of Mikva, see ADDENDUM H

So, what John was doing was something totally new to the Jewish people whom he called to come to the river and submit his immersing them, as a sign of repentance.

John's anointed preaching brought crowds to the river to repent, and to express that repentance by being immersed in the river. His preaching was so Spirit-anointed that it was obvious that God was using John. At this time there was a widespread expectancy among pious Jews who were *looking for the redemption of Israel* (Luke 2:38). They also were aware of the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Was John the fulfillment of these expectations?

To fully understand the effectiveness of John's preaching, we must be aware of his birth, the statements made about him at the time of his birth, and his unusual lifestyle before he began his ministry.

Here is Luke's account of John's birth.

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ *And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.*

⁷ *And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years.*

⁸ *Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division,* ⁹ *according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter*

¹⁹ (John's ministry, is described in more detail in Matthew 3:1ff, Mark 1:4ff; Luke 3:2ff; John 3:23ff.)

²⁰ See ADDENDUM A for the location of John's ministry

²¹ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/mikve>

the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering.

¹¹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. ¹² And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. ¹⁴ "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb. ¹⁶ "And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ "And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

¹⁸ And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹ And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news.

²⁰ "And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their proper time." ²¹ And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple.

²² But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute.

²³ And it came about, when the days of his priestly service were ended, that he went back home. ²⁴ And after these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant; (Luke 1:5-24a)

Several important things in these verses are important for our understanding of John's anointed ministry.

- His miraculous birth - His father and mother were advanced in age. Elizabeth would have been past menopause and Zechariah would have been of an age that copulation would have been difficult.²²
- He was to be filled with the Holy Spirit, even while in his mother's womb.
- He functioned in the spirit of Elijah, turning many in straying Israel back to God.
- When he functioned in the spirit and power of Elijah, he would be preparing a people who would be ready to receive the coming Messiah.

As John grew into manhood, he became strong in spirit and lived away from the general population. In this "live off the land" hermit life, God prepared him for his important role in bringing forth the Christ.

And the child continued to grow, and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel. (Luke 1:80)

When he emerged from his hermit lifestyle, he was a striking figure.

Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying,

²² There are three miraculous births in Scripture: Isaac (Genesis 17:15ff), John (Luke 1:5-25, 37ff), Jesus (Luke 1:26-38; 2:1ff)

² *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* ³ *For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!'"*

⁴ *Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt about his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. (Matthew 3:1-4)*

As would be expected, the religious establishment in Jerusalem felt that it was important for them to know the identity of this charismatic preacher who was immersing people in the Jordan River. So, they sent a deputation to visit John and determine his identity.

Knowing what they were going to ask him, John immediately stated that he was not the Christ.

Their next question, *are you Elijah*, was motivated by the promise that Jehovah had given to the people of Israel through the post-exilic prophet Malachi,

Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. (Malachi 4:5)

John's appearance certainly bore some of the marks of Elijah. His dress would have reminded the people of the description of Elijah in II Kings 1:8. When messengers returned to the king of Samaria with a message from Elijah, the king asked them,

And he said to them, "What kind of man was he who came up to meet you and spoke these words to you?" And they answered him, "He was a hairy man with a leather girdle bound about his loins." And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite." (II Kings 1:7-8)

It is not surprising, therefore, that the delegation immediately asked John if he were Elijah. John immediately replied, *I am not!*

Interestingly, Jesus later stated that John was the man chosen to fulfill the role of Elijah that was prophesied in Malachi.

And as these were going away, Jesus began to speak to the multitudes about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?" ⁸ "But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces. ⁹ "But why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet. ... And if you care to accept it, he himself is Elijah, who was to come. (Matthew 11:7-9, 14)

When John stated emphatically that he was not claiming to be Elijah, their next question related to another prophet whose arrival the Israelites were anticipating.

Their next question, *are you the prophet*, John did not need to ask them, *which prophet?* He knew the prophet to which they referred.

In his farewell speech to the people of Israel, Moses told them that when they needed to know God's will, they should not turn to divination and necromancy as their pagan neighbors did. He said that when God wanted to communicate to them, He would raise up a prophet like Moses and speak through him. When that took place, the voice of that prophet was to be treated as the voice of God.

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. ¹⁶ "This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, lest I die.' ¹⁷ "And the LORD said to me, 'They have spoken well. ¹⁸ 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will

*put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.*¹⁹ *'And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.* (Deuteronomy 18:15-19)

In the obituary appreciation of Moses at the end of the Pentateuch, it is stated, *Since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,* (Deuteronomy 34:10)

The more devout among the Jews believed that the prophet like Moses would not be raised up until the end of the age. If John were that prophet, then that would mean that they were living in the end of the age, whatever that might be.

Once again, John strongly stated that he was not that prophet.

Since he was not Elijah, nor the prophet like Moses, then by what authority was John immersing people – was he committing a sin by doing so?

His reply, *I immerse in water*, prepares John's readers for later mention of someone who will not only will immerse in water, but also in a different medium. At this point, John does not speak of the different immersion, but he does speak of the one who will administer it. He is the one for whom John is the forerunner.

The point that John sought to emphasize was his own relative unimportance in comparison to the Coming One. John stated that he was not worthy to perform the lowly service of un-tying the sandal strap of the Coming One for whom John was the advance man.

JOHN IDENTIFIED JESUS AS THE COMING ONE 1:29-34

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

³⁰ *"This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'*³¹ *"And I did not recognize Him, but in order that He might be manifested to Israel, I came immersing in water."*

³² *And John bore witness saying, "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.*³³ *"And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to immerse in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who immerses in the Holy Spirit.'*

³⁴ *"And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."*

Approximately six weeks before the episode described in these verses, Jesus had come to the Jordan River to be immersed by John. This event is described in Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22.

Here is Matthew's account of that event.

Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be immersed by him.

¹⁴ *But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be immersed by You, and do You come to me?"*

¹⁵ *But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.*

¹⁶ *And after being immersed, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him,¹⁷ and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."* (Matthew 3:13-17)

After being immersed by John, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to undergo testing by Satan.

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

² *And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."*

⁴ *But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"*

⁵ *Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,*

⁶ *and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning You'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, Lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'"*

⁷ *Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"*

⁸ *Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; ⁹ and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me."*

¹⁰ *Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"*

¹¹ *Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him. (Matt. 4:1-11)*

The day after the delegation from Jerusalem had left John, Jesus returned from the wilderness to be with John at Bethany beyond the Jordan.

NOTE: F. F. Bruce has made an interesting and important observation.

“The care with which the successive days are enumerated in this part of the narrative (1:29. 35, 43; 2:1) suggests that is based on the recollection of a participant in the events described, who bore imprinted on his memory ever afterwards the detailed sequence of his first acquaintance with Jesus. There would, in fact, be nothing against the supposition that this participant was one of the two disciples whom John mentions here, the one whose name is not given.”²³

When John first saw Jesus, after his return from the wilderness, he declared to those nearby, *Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.* John stated that he knew this to be true because several weeks earlier, he had witnessed the Holy Spirit’s descending upon Jesus and hearing the voice from heaven declaring, *This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.*

The expression, *Lamb of God*, was based on the sacrificial lamb that was a part of God’s elements of the Mosaic Covenant. The first instance of the role of a sacrificial lamb was when the death angel passed over Egypt and killed the firstborn of every household, except those where the blood of a sacrificial lamb had been smeared on the door post (Exodus 12:3-21). When the rituals of the Mosaic Covenant were installed, a sacrificial lamb was an important part of the ritual of atonement (Exodus 29:39ff; Leviticus 22:19ff; Numbers 28:3ff; Deuteronomy 15:21; etc.)

²³ F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel & Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1983, page 55

The fact that John made the declaration that Jesus was/is the *Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*, indicates that even though he may not have known the details about the crucifixion of Jesus, that would take place 3 ½ years later, he did know that in some manner this was the purpose for Jesus' existence.

Several individuals attached themselves to John. They became his disciples – desiring to draw closer to God through following John's example. John's disciples are mentioned in Matthew 9:14-15; John 1:35; 3:26-30. In the Matthew passage, John's disciples indicate that they were following the ascetic lifestyle that John modeled.

IN RESPONSE TO JOHN'S DECLARATION OF JESUS' IDENTITY, JOHN'S DISCIPLES BEGAN TO FOLLOW JESUS AND BECOME HIS DISCIPLES 1:35-42

Again, the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"³⁷ And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

³⁸ *And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" And they said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?"*

³⁹ *He said to them, "Come, and you will see." They came therefore and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.*

⁴⁰ *One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.*

⁴¹ *He found first his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah " (which translated means Christ).*

⁴² *He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas " (which is translated, Stone).*

The day after John had stated to those with him that Jesus was the *Lamb of God*, John and two of his disciples were standing together when Jesus walked by. John quickly said to his disciples, the same thing that he had said the day before, *Behold the Lamb of God*. When John said this, the two disciples immediately set off to catch up with Jesus.

Jesus sensed that someone was following Him. He turned around and seeing the two approaching, He asked them what they wanted. Struggling to come up with an answer, they said that they wanted to know where Jesus was staying. Jesus invited them to accompany Him to where He was staying in Bethany. It was about 10 AM when they arrived at their destination, and they spent the entire day with Jesus. We can only imagine what topics were a part of their day-long conversation.

One of the two, Andrew, went to find his brother, Simon. Andrew told Simon that they had found the Messiah and then Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at Simon, son of John, and told him that he was giving him a new name, *Κηφῶς (kayphas)*. This is the Aramaic word for *stone* (Jesus spoke Aramaic). For the benefit of his Greek readers, John translated the Aramaic into Greek. The Greek word for stone is *Πετρός (Petros)* which has been Anglicized as *Peter*.

Jesus repeated this statement during his first Galilean ministry, when Peter made his good confession (Matthew 16:13-20)

NOTE: Aramaic was the language of the Jews in the First Century A.D. Aramaic was the language spoken by Jesus. There is only one word for stone/rock in Aramaic (*κηφῶς*). In Greek, there are two, *πέτρος (petros)* referring to a rock or stone, and *πέτρα (petra)* referring to a rock on which could be used as the foundation of a building. Matthew witnessed the scene he

described in Matthew 16. In that scene, Jesus looked at Simon and said you will be called κηφᾶς and then, pointing to Himself, said *on this κηφᾶς I will build my church*. Matthew ne, he had to make a distinction between what Jesus said, when He looked at Simon, and what Jesus said when He pointed to Himself. Fortunately, the Greek allowed him to do this. He did this by using the Greek word for stone, πέτρος, in Jesus' statement to Simon, and then used the Greek word for rock πέτρα, for the statement that Jesus made concerning Himself.

NOTE: It is difficult to harmonize the chronology of John with the synoptics. Matthew combines both chronology and a topical approach in his Gospel. Luke is a narrative that has less theological depth but is more chronological. Mark is abbreviated, omitting several details. John has more theological depth, for the reasons cited earlier.²⁴

John presents significant episodes that emphasize the doctrinal and theological elements. He does not present an overall chronological pattern. The episodes that he does describe are episodes that he witnessed, and he goes into detail with these.

Here is a summary of the early ministry of Jesus, constructed from all sources:

As Jesus began to gather more and more disciples, He ministered in several places. Six disciples²⁵ accompanied Jesus from Jordan to Cana, to Capernaum, to Jerusalem, through his Judean ministry and then to Galilee.

Evidently, when they arrived in Galilee, they scattered to their homes for a brief rest. Both Matthew and Luke describe Jesus as walking along the Sea of Galilee where Peter and Andrew were casting their nets into the sea, and then, further along, where James and John were in their boat mending their nets.

Jesus gave a call to these four men who had followed Him in his previous travels, *Come after Me and I will make you fishers of men*.

John does not record this series of events. They are recorded in Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11.

JESUS CONTINUED TO ENLIST DISCIPLES 1:43-51

*The next day He purposed to go forth into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me."*⁴⁴ *Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.*

⁴⁵ *Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."*⁴⁶ *And Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."*

⁴⁷ *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"*⁴⁸ *Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."*

⁴⁹ *Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."*

⁵⁰ *Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these."*

⁵¹ *And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."*

²⁴ For a chronological harmony of the Gospels, see James Garrett, *Sundry Studies in the Life of Christ* (www.tulsachristianfellowship.com/doulos-press.html)

²⁵ John, James, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael

For a few days, Jesus remained at Bethany beyond the Jordan where John was immersing. The day following His encounter with Simon, Jesus intended to leave Bethany Beyond the Jordan and cross the river into Galilee, possibly planning to go to His hometown of Nazareth. Bethany beyond the Jordan was a short distance north of the Dead Sea. The province of Galilee was across the river, west of the Jordan River. Nazareth, Jesus' hometown, was in southwestern Galilee (see ADDENDUM A).

As He began his journey, or just before He began it, Jesus encountered Philip and called Philip to follow Him.

Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew, Peter, and Philip was just north of the Sea of Galilee. The location of Bethsaida was 35-40 miles north of Bethany Beyond the Jordan, the site of John's ministry (compare the maps of ADDENDUM A and ADDENDUM B).

Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Simon.²⁶ Andrew and Simon probably had spoken to Philip and prepared him for his meeting with Jesus.

The Greek term that John used to quote Jesus' statement to Philip is, ἀκολουθεῖ (*akolouthei*). This is the imperative, present, active, 2nd person, singular of the verb, ἀκολουθέω (*akoloutheoh*). This form of the verb is best rendered, *be following me*.

This was not just a simple invitation to accompany Jesus. This is the terminology that all of the Gospel writers used to describe someone's being called to become a disciple of Jesus. (Luke 9:59; Matthew 19:21, etc.)

Philip not only accepted the call, but quickly went to find his friend Nathanael and give him the exciting news, *We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*

Nathanael's somewhat sarcastic response, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth*, could have been the result of his being from Cana (John 21:2), only a few miles from Nazareth. Nazareth was a very insignificant village. Nathanael had not heard a thing about this amazing young man from his neighboring hometown.

Whatever might have prompted Nathanael's response, Philip's response was exactly what it should have been, *come and see*.

The result was just what Philip had hoped for. Jesus, seeing Nathanael, declared, *Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!*

Jesus' knowledge of Nathanael's being under a fig tree some distance away from Jesus' ability to see him, convinced Nathanael of Jesus identity.

Jesus' knowledge of Nathanael's being a *Hebrew in whom is no guile*, when He had never met Nathanael, is evidence of the fact that God knows all of us intimately.

The Psalmist wrote,

*Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up;
Thou dost understand my thought from afar.*

³ *Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down, And art intimately acquainted with all my ways.*

⁴ *Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, Thou dost know it all.*

²⁶ Bethsaida means, Fisher-Home

⁵ *Thou hast enclosed me behind and before, And laid Thy hand upon me.*

⁶ *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.* (Psalm 139:2-6)

Jesus said, *Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* (Matthew 10:29-30; Luke 12:7)

God knows all of us intimately, even our inward thoughts. We cannot hide from God. This brings to mind the hymn, *You Cannot Hide from God.*

You cannot hide from God,
No matter what you do,
He meets you at life's every turn,
He knows your thoughts that blight and burn,
He weeps when His own Son you spurn,
You cannot hide from God.²⁷

There is no record of Nathanael's seeing, during his lifetime, a literal fulfillment of *the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.*

The language of Jesus' statement has as its background, Jacob's dream which he experienced at Bethel.

And he came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place.

¹² *And he had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.*

¹³ *And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants.* (Genesis 28:11-13)

Marcus Dodds has written,

"What Jacob had dreamt, was in Christ realized. ...What Nathanael under his fig tree had been longing for and unconsciously preparing for, an open communication with heaven, a ladder reaching from the deepest abyss of an earth submerged in sin to the highest heaven of purity, Jesus tells him is actually accomplished in His Person."²⁸

Mark records two other times when Jesus made similar statements:

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken.²⁶ "And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. (Mark 13:24-26)

But He kept silent, and made no answer. Again, the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"⁶² And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." (Mark 14:61-62)

²⁷ Second verse of the hymn, *You Cannot Hide From God* – A. H. Ackley and Bently D. Ackley

²⁸ Marcus Dodds, page 702

JESUS FIRST MIRACLE AND THE BEGINNING OF HIS MINISTRY 2:1-11

And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there;² and Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the wedding.

³*And when the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."⁴ And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come."*

⁵*His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."*

⁶*Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each.⁷ Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim.⁸ And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the headwaiter."*

And they took it to him.⁹ And when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom,¹⁰ and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is poorer; you have kept the good wine until now."

¹¹*This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.*

Once again, the account begins with evidence that the author was witness to the events – *on the third day*. The custom of both the Greeks and Jews was to reckon days as inclusive. i.e. the first day was the day of the event, then the next day would have been the second day, and then the next day referred to as the third day. We would say, *two days from now row*, or *the day after tomorrow*, whereas, they would say, *three days from now*.

The reference probably is to the third day after the encounter with Nathanael.

Jesus' first stop in Galilee was the village of Cana. Cana of Galile was the hometown of Nathanael (John 21:2). It would have been two days walk from Bethany beyond the Jordan to the site of the wedding in Cana, thus agreeing with the statement, *on the third day*. Perhaps Jesus, having foreknowledge of the upcoming wedding and what was going to happen during the wedding, settled on Cana as their Galilean destination.

The mother of Jesus appears only two times in John's Gospel – Here and at the foot of the cross (John 19:25ff). She is alluded to in 6:42, but she always is referred to as Jesus' mother. She never is referred in John's Gospel by her personal name, Maria – which has been Anglicized as, Mary.

It was the Jewish custom for a wedding to include a week-long prewedding celebration. For a host to run out of wine before the close of the celebration would have been quite embarrassing. Mary seems to have been close to the family, perhaps participating as a hostess during the event. To find some means of avoiding the possible embarrassment that awaited the host family, Mary turned to her son.

Thus far, Jesus had not performed any miracles and so it is possible that Mary, knowing that Jesus was a good and responsible man, turned to her son to see if he might have any means of helping to resolve the problem.

However, Jesus' reply, *Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come*, indicated that He understood her to be asking Him to do something that would be consistent with His Divinity.

Jesus was not being disrespectful in addressing his mother as, *woman*. He used the same terminology when speaking to Mary when He was dying on the cross.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own household. (John 19:26-27)

Perhaps in English we might convey the sense of Jesus' statement by rendering the term²⁹ as *lady* or *madam*.

In spite of Jesus' reply, His mother approached the servants and told them to do what Jesus told them to do, whatever that might be.

Much of the water in the ceremonial water pots would have been depleted, because it had been used in the ceremonial cleansing that had preceded the feast.³⁰ Therefore, Jesus told the servants fill the water pots to the brim. After that had been done, Jesus told them to take some water from a waterpot to the headwaiter for him to taste.

John does not tell us when the water was changed into wine. The statement, *when the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew)*, implies that the servant drew water from the waterpot, not wine. The changing of water into wine probably happened when the goblet of water was presented to the headwaiter. If that is the case, we can only imagine the trepidation the servant felt when in obedience to Jesus' instruction he took a goblet of water to the headwaiter and told him to taste it.

When the headwaiter tasted the wine, he realized that he was sipping wine that was of higher quality than that which had been consumed in the previous days of the celebration. Not knowing the source of the wine, he assumed that the host had kept back a stash of excellent wine for the latter part of the feast.

When John wrote of this incident, the probable reason for giving the amount of water in the waterpots (twenty or thirty gallons each), was to indicate that the entire contents of the waterpots was changed into wine. Marcus Dodds wrote,

"It is difficult to assign any reason for giving the number and capacity of these jars, except that the writer wished to convey the idea that their entire contents were changed into wine. ... Also, it would furnish proof, after the marriage was over, that the transformation had been actual. The wedding guests had not dreamt it. There was the wine. It was no mesmeric trick."³¹

This was Jesus' first miracle, which was the beginning of a 3 ½ year ministry filled with miracles. This first miracle secured the faith in Jesus for the disciples that had accompanied him to Cana.

²⁹ The Greek term is γυνή (*gunay*) which simply means *woman* or *female*.

³⁰ See ADDENDUM C for a photo of a waterpot of the type that was used in this miracle.

³¹ Marcus Dodds, page 704

JESUS' RESIDENCE AT CAPERNAUM 2:12

After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother, and His brothers, and His disciples; and there they stayed a few days.

Capernaum was located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee (see ADDENDUM D). It was below sea level, whereas Cana was located on higher ground. Therefore, Jesus and His entourage *went down to Capernaum*. Once again, the author gives a detail indicating that he was present and a participant in the event recorded.

Capernaum became the headquarters of Jesus later ministry in Galilee.

Evidently Joseph had died by this time, and so Mary had begun traveling with her son. The statement that His brothers accompanied Him conveys important information.

- The first of these is that Jesus had biological brothers. When the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary began to develop, several explanations for the presence of these men were offered. Some stated that they were Jesus' half-brothers, the sons of Joseph by a previous marriage. Some argued that they were Jesus' cousins. All of these and other attempts were motivated by the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity, a view that has no biblical basis. The term is ἄδελφος (*adelphos*), which means, *brother*.³² The Greek term for relative, cousin, kinsman, is συγγενής (*sungenays*).³³
- Jesus did use the term, brother, for those who were devoted to Him (Matthew 12:50; Mark 3:35; Matthew 28:10), but that use of the term does not fit the context of what is being stated here. Those who were accompanying Jesus were described as disciples, and a distinction was made between His disciples and His brothers - *He and His mother, and His brothers, and His disciples*.
- The second of these is that even though Jesus' brothers had seen the miracle, and accompanied him to Capernaum, according to John 7:5, they did not believe that He was the Messiah.

The Perpetual Virginity of Mary

The perpetual virginity of Mary does not align with the statement in Matthew 1:24-25, *And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took her as his wife,*²⁵ *and kept her a virgin until* (Greek: ἕως) *she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.* (Matthew 1:24-25 NAS)

The Greek text states, Οὐ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτὴν ἕως οὗ ἔτεκεν υἱόν - *did not know her till she brought forth her son.*

The expression, *to know one's wife*, is a biblical euphemism for sexual intercourse in marriage. For example:

- Adam and Eve - *Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD."* (Genesis 4:1)
- Mary's response to the angel who told her that she would conceive - *Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* (Luke 1:45)

³² Thayer, pages 10-11;

Walter Bauer, William Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press) 1979, page 16

Lou-Nida *Lexicon of the New Testament*, (New York, United Bible Societies) 1989 entry 8868

³³ Thayer, page 592 entry 4773

NOTE: in each of these instances, contemporary versions have taken the liberty to interpret rather than translate Luke 1:45, by using the terms, *I am a virgin*, or *I have not had intercourse*, etc.

If Joseph and Mary never had sexual intercourse, the text would have read, *and he did not know his wife*, or, *he never know his wife*, rather than, *did not know his wife until*, implying that after the birth of Jesus, they did copulate.

JESUS' FIRST CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE 2:13-22

And the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated. ¹⁵ And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables; ¹⁶ and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a house of merchandise."

¹⁷ *His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Thy house will consume me."*

¹⁸ *The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?"*

¹⁹ *Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."²⁰ The Jews therefore said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"*

²¹ *But He was speaking of the temple of His body. ²² When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken*

Jerusalem was 2500 feet above sea level; therefore, the statement, *Jesus went up to Jerusalem*, once again, an indication that the author was a witness of the event.

The Gospels record three Passovers that occurred during Jesus' ministry.³⁴ This fact establishes that Jesus' ministry encompassed approximately 3 ½ years.

Jesus cleansed the Temple twice. The second time was at the close of His triumphal entry, a few days before His arrest and crucifixion.³⁵

When Jesus entered the outer court of the Temple, He found himself in the middle of a marketplace (See ADDENDUM E for the floor plan of the Temple).

The priests and other members of the Temple establishment allowed the sale of animals and money changers in the outer court of the Temple (also known as The Court of the Women). Certainly, this would have been a convenient arrangement for those who came to worship and sacrifice, but the Temple authorities probably received some monetary benefit from this arrangement. The sheep that were presented for sacrifice had to be approved by the priests and it is assumed that they only approved sheep from their herds – which were sold in the outer court.

The Temple poll tax that every Jewish male had to pay was a sacred half-shekel.³⁶ The half-shekel was not commonly used in merchandise transactions in the time of Jesus. This would especially would have been true of Jews of the diaspora who had come to Jerusalem to pay their

³⁴ John mentions the first in John 2, the second Passover in 6:4 and the third one in 11:55; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; and 19:14.

³⁵ Matthew 2:12-17; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48

³⁶ This was the tax that is referred to in Matthew 17:54ff

required poll tax into the treasury. The money changers made a significant profit by selling these sacred coins and some of their profit would have been passed on to the Temple authorities.

The statement, *And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen*, clearly indicates that Jesus used the scourge on the salesmen, i.e. *drove them out, with the sheep and the oxen*.

Marcus Dodds has written,

“We cannot evacuate of forcible meaning of these plain terms. It was a scene of violence: the traders trying to protect their property, cattle rushing hither and thither, men shouting and cursing, the money changes trying to hold their tables as Jesus went from one to another upsetting them. It was indeed so violent a scene that the disciples felt somewhat scandalized until they remembered then and there, not afterwards, that it was written, *Zeal for Thy house will consume me.*”³³

The statement, *Zeal for Thy house will consume me* is a quote from Psalm 69:9.

It is not surprising that the Jewish authorities asked him, *What sign do You show to us, seeing that You do these things?*

It is somewhat surprising that they did not call the Temple guards to arrest Jesus for disrupting and destroying their business, as they did when Peter and John caused an uproar when they healed the lame man in the Temple.³⁷

Jesus’ reply, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*, seemed odd to the authorities and they made the most obvious response to His statement, *It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?*

Jesus’ response referred to his crucifixion and resurrection, which neither the Jews nor his disciples could have understood.

This somewhat enigmatic response was not unusual for Jesus which, of course could not have been understood by the Jewish leaders.

As we will see in John 5:21ff, when Jesus enigmatically spoke of the Lord’s Supper that He would institute on the night prior to His arrest, the Jews thought that Jesus was telling them to become cannibals, and eat His body, when He said, *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.* (John 6:53)

ALTHOUGH MANY BELIEVED ON JESUS BECAUSE OF THE SIGNS DONE WHILE IN JERUSALEM, HE KNEW THAT HUMANS ARE BY NATURE UNRELIABLE AND WHEN TESTED, OFTEN FALL AWAY 2:23-25

*Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing.*²⁴ *But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,*²⁵ *and because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man.*

John does not relate any of the miracles that Jesus did on this occasion. However, they must have been impressive, since they caused many to believe in His name.

Even so, Jesus realized that human beings are often unreliable and when the time of testing comes, many abandon their beliefs.

³⁷ Acts 4:1ff

THE ENCOUNTER WITH NICODEMAS 3:1-21

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews;² this man came to Him by night, and said to Him, "

³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"

⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.⁶ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

⁷ "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'⁸ "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

⁹ Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?¹¹ "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and you do not receive our witness.

¹² "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?¹³ "And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man.

¹⁴ "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;¹⁵ that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.¹⁷ "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.

¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

¹⁹ "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.²⁰ "For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

²¹ "But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.

Three different parties/sects sought control of Israel, during Jesus' era.

Pharisees

Pharisees believed in the strict observances of all of the laws and traditions. Their main distinguishing characteristic was a belief in an Oral Law that God gave to Moses at Sinai along with the Torah. The Torah, or Written Law, was akin to the U.S. Constitution in the sense that it set down a series of laws that were open to interpretation. The Pharisees believed that God gave Moses the knowledge of what these laws meant and how they should be applied. According to the Pharisees, Moses orally transmitted this knowledge to the Jewish religious leaders before his death and approximately three centuries after Moses' death, this oral tradition was codified and written down. This written record of the oral tradition is known as the Talmud.

The Pharisees believed that an after-life existed, and that God punished the wicked and rewarded the righteous in the world to come.

They also believed in a messiah who would herald an era of world peace.

The synagogues that came into existence during the Babylonian captivity and continued to be an important part of Judaism after the return to Canaan, were under the oversight of the Pharisees.

Sadducees

The Sadducees were elitists who wanted to maintain the priestly caste. They controlled the Temple and oversaw all of the sacrifices and activities associated with the Temple. The rituals associated with the Temple were the focus of Sadducee life. They were liberal in their theology and were willing to incorporate Hellenism into their lives, something the Pharisees strongly opposed. The Sadducees rejected the idea of the Oral Law and insisted on a literal interpretation of the Written Law; consequently, they did not believe in an afterlife, since it is not mentioned in the Torah.

These two groups (Pharisees and Sadducees) served in the Great Sanhedrin, which was the Jewish Supreme Court made up of 71 members. The Sanhedrin was responsible for interpreting the civil and religious laws that were enforced in Israel.

Herodians

The Herodians were a unique group. They were not distinguished for their religious beliefs but for their political alignment. Herod the Great had been appointed king of the Jews by the Roman emperor. Herod died in 4 BC, but a political party had arisen that sought to restore the Herod dynasty, through their support of Herod Antipas, who ruled Israel as Rome's representative from 4 BC to 39 AD. Their allegiance to Herod meant they backed Roman rule over Israel, which gave them influence and power in Judea.

The Herodians' alignment with Herod and Rome put them at odds with other Jewish sects, particularly the Pharisees. Despite their differences, both groups found a reason to unite: their mutual opposition to Jesus.

Jesus posed a significant political threat to the Herodians. His teachings about the kingdom of God directly challenged the established order and undermined the authority of Rome, which the Herodians loyally supported.

Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews, initiated a nighttime clandestine rendezvous with Jesus, so that his visit with Jesus would not be seen by other Pharisees. The fact that he is described as a *ruler of the Jews*, implies that he was a member of the Great Sanhedrin. This also is indicated by John 7:50, which describes an episode involving the chief priests and Pharisees. Nicodemus is described as, *one of their number*. Nicodemus was not just a Pharisee but an influential leader in Israel.

If the Jewish political/religious establishment had seen Nicodemus having a friendly conversation with Jesus, Nicodemus' political future would have been jeopardized. Even so, Nicodemus could not deny that only someone sent from God could perform the miracles that Jesus had been displaying. Nicodemus felt compelled to seek some answers concerning Jesus' identity.

Although Jesus did not belong to one of the acknowledged schools of sacred learning, Nicodemus, a leading teacher in Israel, saluted Jesus as an equal by addressing him as, *Rabbi*.

NOTE: The fact that this very elaborate conversation is presented in detail, indicates that John must have been with Jesus during Nicodemus' visit and heard every word spoken.

Jesus' response to Nicodemus' salutation seemed to have had no connection to what Nicodemus had stated.

"Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

³ *Jesus answered and said to him, Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

Jesus was moving the discussion to the important subject of why He was in the world.

In quoting Jesus' statement, *unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*, John used the Greek terms, γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν (*gennaythay anoththen*) which states literally, *born from above*. It is not surprising that Nicodemus was perplexed by Jesus' response to his greeting and asked if that meant that he, in some way, had to return to being an embryo in his mother's womb.

Once again, as He often did, Jesus referred to something that was not a reality at the time that He spoke of it. When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, the only immersion that was being practiced was John's immersion of repentance.³⁸ The immersion associated with the new birth, wherein one is born of the water and of the Spirit, would begin three years later, on Pentecost.³⁹

This *born from above* rebirth is necessary for one to leave behind the sinful creature that came into existence when he/she was born physically from the mother's womb. When one is born from above, he/she begins an existence as a totally new being.⁴⁰

Peter compared the new birth received in immersion with the ark that saved Noah and his family in the great flood.

when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.²¹ And corresponding to that, immersion now saves you-- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 3:20-21)

An essential element in this new birth is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Those who had been immersed by John, had to receive Christian immersion, so that they would receive the Holy Spirit. Paul's first visit to Ephesus is a case in point.

Paul, having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found some disciples,² and he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

³ *And he said, "Into what then were you immersed?" And they said, "Into John's immersion"*

⁴ *And Paul said, "John immersed with the immersion of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus."*

⁵ *And when they heard this, they were immersed in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 19:1-5)*

When a convert with a believing and repentant heart is immersed into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20), as Peter promised on Pentecost, he/she receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, and his/her body becomes a temple in which dwells the Holy Spirit.

Writing to the Corinthian Christians, Paul stated,

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

³⁸ Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3; Acts 13:24; Acts 19:4

³⁹ Acts 2:28ff

⁴⁰ Romans 6:1ff; II Corinthians 5:17; I Peter 1:23; Titus 3:3-5

The Gospel of John was written more than thirty years after Paul's visit to Ephesus recorded in Acts 19. John's audience in Ephesus consisted of Christians, who, from the time of Paul's visit had been immersed into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. When they read John's account of Jesus' statement, the Ephesians would have understood Jesus' words as foretelling that which would begin on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38).

Sadly, we live in an age in which many evangelicals ignore the role of immersion in salvation. Instead of calling people to repentance, confession, and immersion, they tell people to "pray the sinners' prayer," or "pray to receive Jesus," etc. and end the process there. They cite Romans 10:9-10 as their authority for following this practice.

that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;¹⁰ for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

To cite a single statement from Scripture and ignore the rest of the consistent teaching on a subject is irresponsible exegesis. The background to Romans 10 is Romans 6:1-11, which assumes that the Roman Christians to whom Paul was writing had been immersed into Christ.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?² May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been immersed into Christ Jesus have been immersed into His death?⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through immersion into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.⁵ For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection,⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; ...

An illustrative example is that of the Philippian jailor, recorded in Acts 16. When the jailor became convinced of the presence of God in the earthquake that opened the prison doors, having heard the preaching of the apostles, he asked, *what must I do to be saved?*

And he called for lights and rushed in and, trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas,³⁰ and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"³¹ And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household."³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house.³³ And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was immersed, he and all his household. (Acts 16:29-33i)

Jesus commanded His disciples to make disciples from all nations. He commanded them to do this in the following manner: *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)*

Following the birth of the Gospel age on Pentecost (Acts 2), all of the conversions recorded in Scripture conform to the pattern displayed on Pentecost.⁴¹ To choose some other pattern is to say to God, "I know what you commanded, but I have a better idea, and my way is easier." The tragic example of Nadab and Abihu should cause any serious follower of Christ to abstain from such substitutes for what God commanded.⁴²

⁴¹ Acts 2:1-41; 8:4-24; 8:26-40; 9:1-18 (22:1-16); 10:1-48; 16:12-15; 16:25-34; 18:8; 19:1-5

⁴² Leviticus 10:1ff; Numbers 26:61

Jesus' monologue with Nicodemus transitioned into the knowledge of realms that no mere human could have possessed. Jesus' knowledge of these realms was based on His experiential knowledge.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and you do not receive our witness.

¹² *"If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"* ¹³ *"And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man.*

Then, Jesus predicted his death by crucifixion, which would occur three years later. Prior to that time, all that was done during Jesus' earthly sojourn was in preparation for that event.

¹⁴ *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;* ¹⁵ *that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.*

The song, *Lift Jesus Higher*, which became very popular in the closing years of the Jesus Movement (c.1990), misapplied the statement of Jesus. The song presents the words of Jesus as if He were encouraging us to elevate Him in some manner, as a means of drawing people to Him.

Lift Jesus Higher, Lift Jesus Higher,
Lift Him Up For The World To See.
He Said, 'If I Be Lifted Up From The Earth
I Will Draw All Men Unto Me.'

Lift Jesus Higher (Higher, Higher)
A Little Higher (Higher, Higher)
From This Earth To Eternity,
He Said If I Be Lifted Up From This Earth
I Will Draw All Men Unto Me.⁴³

Based on Jesus' words, this song exuberantly urges us-

Let's crucify Jesus, Let's crucify Jesus
Let's crucify Jesus for all the world to see,
He Said If I Be Lifted Up From This Earth
I Will Draw All Men Unto Me.⁴⁴

John 3:16 is one of the best-known verses in the Bible.⁴⁵

¹⁶ *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.* ¹⁷ *"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.*

In order to fully grasp the meaning of the verse we must be aware of the terminology.

There are four Greek words that we render as *love*.

⁴³ www.divinehymns.com Although composed by an American composer, the identity of the composer is unknown.

⁴⁴ John 12:32-34 makes clear the fact that Jesus was referring to His crucifixion

⁴⁵ Several conservative theologians are of the opinion that the words of Jesus end with verse 15, and that 16-21 are John's addition to Jesus' monologue. Marcus Dodds, page 516-517; Bruce, page 89ff

- σποργή (*storegay*), which refers to familial love, even including the love that a person might have for a pet.
- Φίλος (*philos*), which refers to the relationship between friends and associates.
- ἔρός (*eros*), referring to romantic and sexual love
- ἀγάπη (*agapay*), is a volitional word, describing a decision made because of some positive motivation.

The word in John 3:16 is ἀγάπή. Thus, a literal rendering of John 3:16 is, *God loved the world in this manner, He gave.....*

A reading of the Scripture, from creation onward, makes it clear that God's motivation for creating male and female in His Image was to have creatures made in His Image who would be with Him for eternity. The giving of the sinless only begotten Son as an atonement for humanity's sin, was the final act in accomplishing this end. *"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.*

Jesus then told Nicodemus that because He, Jesus, had come from above, He knew things that no mere mortal could have known.

The conclusion of this monologue stated the truth that has been true from that time forward.

- Unsing the figure of light and darkness, even as John had done to introduce this Gospel, Jesus indicated that fallen human nature loved the darkness,
- but those who came to the light and lived lives that reflected that light, on God's terms, were those who would be accepted by God.

JESUS JOINED JOHN IN PRACTICING IMMERSION FOR REPENTANCE 3:22-30

After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and immersing.

²³ *And John also was immersing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there; and they were coming and were being immersed.* ²⁴ *For John had not yet been thrown into prison.*

²⁵ *There arose therefore a discussion on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification.* ²⁶ *And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have borne witness, behold, He is immersing, and all are coming to Him."*

²⁷ *John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing, unless it has been given him from heaven.* ²⁸ *"You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.'*

²⁹ *"He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. And so this joy of mine has been made full.* ³⁰ *"He must increase, but I must decrease.*

Leaving Jerusalem, Jesus and His disciples went into the Judean countryside. Jesus then began doing something that he had not done before. He began participating in the ministry of John and began immersing people in response to their repentance.

We are not told of the exact location, but it would have been somewhere that immersions could take place – either in a pond, a river, or some sort of a pool. It would not have been at the Jordan River – if that were the case, then the episode with the Samaritan woman (Chapter 4) would not have taken place.

John had changed his location to Aenon near Salim. The term, *Aenon*, refers to a spring, indicating the presence of springs in the area. This fits with the description, *John also was*

immersing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. (see ADDENDUM F for the geographical location of Aenon near Salim).

The stretch of land on which Aenon was located was just outside of the borders of Samaria.

Jesus' miracles and anointed preaching, as well as location being closer to Jerusalem, began drawing more people to Him for immersion than were coming to be immersed by John at Aenon.

When a Jew approached John's disciples about the subject of purification, perhaps questioning why Jesus was immersing, John's disciples seemed to feel somewhat outclassed by Jesus and the crowds coming to Him, instead of their coming to their mentor, John. They approached John and expressed their concerns.

John's response to his disciples was in keeping with the attitude that he had manifested since he first encountered Jesus, at the time of Jesus' immersion.⁴⁶

Using the figure of a bridegroom and a friend of the bridegroom, John indicated that his role was that of the friend who rejoiced at the sound of the voice of the approaching bridegroom.

John's response was consistent with the view of his ministry that he had stated from the very first enquiries about his own identity – that he was the forerunner who was not worthy to loosen the sandal straps of the one for whom he was the forerunner (John 1:27). His concluding statement is a perfect summary of what John desired and expected, *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF JESUS' IDENTITY 3:31-36

"He who comes from above is above all, he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

³² *"What He has seen and heard, of that He bears witness; and no man receives His witness.*

³³ *"He who has received His witness has set his seal to this, that God is true.*

³⁴ *"For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure.*

³⁵ *"The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.*

³⁶ *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

Again, John is clear in his view of Jesus. How John came to such a full knowledge of Jesus, we are not told.

- Certainly, the descent of the Holy Spirit and the voice out of heaven when Jesus was immersed confirmed Jesus' identity.
- Concerning Jesus' virgin birth, we assume that his mother, Elizabeth, told him about the angel's appearing to Mary and the virgin birth.
- No doubt she also told John about how he had leaped in her womb when the pregnant Mary came to visit.

All of these things would have informed John about Jesus' identity, but some of his statements go beyond these things of which he had been informed.

- *He gives the Spirit without measure*
- *The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand,*

⁴⁶ Matthew 3:13-16; Mark 1:9-10; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32

These are matters that had become apparent to John, as his experiences with Jesus had developed a fuller understanding of Jesus' identity.

JESUS' ENCOUNTER WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN 4:1-26

When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and immersing more disciples than John² (although Jesus Himself was not immersing, but His disciples were),³ He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

⁴ *And He had to pass through Samaria.*

⁵ *So He came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph;⁶ and Jacob's well was there.*

Jesus, therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷ *There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."⁸ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.*

⁹ *The Samaritan woman therefore said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)*

¹⁰ *Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."*

¹¹ *She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?"¹² "You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?"*

¹³ *Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again;¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."*

¹⁵ *The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw."*

¹⁶ *He said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."¹⁷ The woman answered and said, "I have no husband."*

"Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband';¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."

¹⁹ *The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet."*

²⁰ *"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."*

²¹ *Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father."²² "You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews."*

²³ *"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers."*

²⁴ *"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

²⁵ *The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us."*

²⁶ *Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."*

NOTE: In verse 1, some manuscripts have the term, *Lord*, whereas others have the term, *Jesus*. The different English versions have disagreed on which term has the strongest evidence. Thus, the KJV, NKJ, NAS, NAU, and the YLT, have the term, *Lord*. The ESV, NIT, NIV have the term, *Jesus*. The text in our notes is the NAS.

Genesis 33:19 informs us that Jacob bought land in this area and lived there for a considerable amount of time. He would have dug the well in order to provide water while living at that location. Therefore, the well at Sychar was known as Jacob's well.

To fully understand this episode, it is important to understand the relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans.

Originally, Samaria was the northern portion of the Jewish nation, occupied by ten of the twelve Jewish tribes. The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin occupied the southern portion of the kingdom.

Following the death of Solomon, the kingdom became divided. The account of the events involved are recorded in I Kings 11-12. (see ADDENDUM I for a discussion of Solomon's apostasy and the division of the kingdom)

Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was the obvious heir to the throne. One of Solomon's officials was an Ephraimite named Jeroboam.

While Solomon was still alive and Jeroboam was working for him, a prophet named Ahijah told Jeroboam that God would take ten of the twelve tribes of Israel away from Rehoboam and give them to Jeroboam (I Kings 11:29–33). This judgment against Solomon's house came because under Solomon, the nation had forsaken God and worshiped idols.

God gave Jeroboam a conditional promise: *If you do whatever I command you and walk in obedience to me and do what is right in my eyes by obeying my decrees and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you* (verse 38).

When Solomon heard that God had chosen Jeroboam to rule, the king tried to kill Jeroboam. In fear for his life, Jeroboam fled to Egypt (verse 40).

After Solomon died, Rehoboam became king, and Jeroboam returned from Egypt (I Kings 12:1–2). Rehoboam was a vain and foolish man. Jeroboam warned Rehoboam not to make the same mistake his father had made by taxing the people heavily in order to finance a luxurious lifestyle (verses 3–4). Rehoboam defied the advice to lighten the yoke of oppression: *My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions!* (I Kings 12:14).

The people responded by rebelling against the new king. The ten northern tribes made Jeroboam king over their territory (I Kings 12:16–20). Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin followed Rehoboam. The new kingdom led by Jeroboam became known as, *Israel*, whereas the kingdom led by Rehoboam became the kingdom of *Judah*.

Thus, the Jewish nation consisted of Judea in the south, Galilee in the north, and Israel (later known as Samaria) between them.

For the geographical location of Judea, Samaria, Galilee and Sychar, see ADDENDUM G

At one point, Rehoboam gathered 180,000 warriors in an attempt to take back the ten tribes, but God prevented it, saying, *This is my doing* (I Kings 12:24). Even so, *There was continual warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam* (2 Chronicles 12:15) and for centuries afterward.

Jeroboam realized that his kingdom was threatened by the fact that his people had to travel to Jerusalem to worship in the Temple in Jerusalem. Therefore, in order to preserve his kingdom, Jeroboam established two worship centers in Israel. In doing so, he committed the same sin that Solomon had committed: he set up two golden calves to be worshipped as gods. Here is the biblical account.

"If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will return to their lord, even to Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah."

²⁸ *So the king consulted, and made two golden calves, and he said to them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt."*

²⁹ *And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.* ³⁰ *Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan.*

³¹ *And he made houses on high places, and made priests from among all the people who were not of the sons of Levi.* ³² *And Jeroboam instituted a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast which is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; thus he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves which he had made.*

And he stationed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. ³³ *Then he went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised in his own heart; and he instituted a feast for the sons of Israel, and went up to the altar to burn incense. (1 Kings 12:27-33)*

From that time onward, the Judeans and Galileans considered Israel to be spiritually polluted because the people of Israel were openly idol worshippers.

When the Assyrians, led first by Tiglath-Pileser III, and then by Shalmaneser V, conquered the northern nation of Israel, they removed the Israelis and settled them in various countries. They then settled people from various nations in what had been Israel.

When the enforced exile came to an end and Israelis began to return to their homeland, they had to blend in with the Gentiles that had been transplanted there by the Assyrians. In time, the intermarriage between these groups produced a nation populated by half-breed Jews.

The capital of Israel had been the city of Samaria. After Israel's inhabitants returned from exile, the name of its capital became the name of the nation - Samaria.

To the orthodox Jew of Jesus' day, Samaria was spiritually adrift and when possible, should be avoided.

When traveling from Judea north to Galilee, devout Jews would travel east to the Jordan River and follow the Jordan road north until they were passed Samaria, then turn west into Galilee (see ADDENDUM G). When traveling from Galilee to Judea, they traveled south by the same route. Only if he had no choice would a devout Jew travel through Samaria to reach his destination.

When Jesus realized that his immersing so many people was generating conflict with the Pharisees, He left Judea and proceeded to Galilee. Note that Jesus Himself was not doing the immersing, but his disciples, at Jesus' direction, were immersing those who came to Jesus in repentance.

Jesus ignored the orthodox custom (described above) of avoiding travel through Samaria. He and his disciples took the direct route, through Samaria.

The description of Jesus as, *therefore, being wearied from His journey*, demonstrates the true humanity of Jesus – *the Word became flesh* (1:14). The *sixth hour*, reckoned from sunrise, indicates that it was near noontime, which would have been in the heat of the day.

The disciples had gone into the village to buy food and so Jesus was sitting alone by the well. The intimation of this statement is that if the disciples had been present, they would have drawn water for Jesus to drink., or they would have been the ones who asked the Samaritan woman to give Jesus a drink.

The custom of the women of the village would have been to come as a group in the evening, to obtain the water for the next day. The fact that this woman came alone and in the heat of the day, hints at the probability that the other women of the village did not want anything to do with her, or that she wanted to avoid their company. Such a social discrimination could have been the result of the woman's being viewed as an immoral presence in the village – which would be consistent with Jesus' statement concerning her marital and extra-marital experiences.

When Jesus, being a Jew, asked her for a drink of water, the woman was quite surprised. Jews that were strictly observant of the Jewish religious standards would have considered a drink provided by a Samaritan to be defiled. Furthermore, strictly observant Jews considered all Samaritan women to be perpetually ceremonially unclean.

Another interesting aspect of the verbal exchange is John's use of the Greek term συγγράομαι (*sungcraomai*) to translate the Samaritan woman's Aramaic. Primarily, the Greek term means, *to use with anyone, use jointly* (Polybius, Diodorus (Philo)); with the dative of a person it can mean, *to associate with, to have dealings with*.⁴⁷

John's use of this term implies that Jesus assumed that she would give Him a drink from the same vessel from which she drank, since He did not have a vessel from which to drink. Such a request given to a Samaritan from a Jew would be shocking to a Samaritan woman.

So, the woman asked, *How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?*

How did she know that Jesus was a Jew? Probably because there were slight differences in dress, facial feature, and accent.

NOTE: The fact that the disciples had gone into the village to buy food, indicates that some such exchanges were not unusual – or, that the Jesus and the disciples understood such distinctions to be spiritually ungrounded and were ignoring them.

Jesus did not respond to the Jew/Samaritan cleavage but lifted the topic of the conversation to another plane, which the Samaritan woman could not have understood.

She had no idea that she was in the presence of Deity and so her response continued to be the only way that she could have understood it. When Jesus spoke of living water, she thought of a spring, from whence the well before them was replenished. She was puzzled because Jesus did not have a bucket to use to draw any water from any source.

Jesus' response further confused her – she still thought in terms of physical water and physical thirst - *Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."*

⁴⁷ Thayer, entry 4968

¹⁵ *The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw."*

Jesus' response was a ploy that enabled Him to reveal to the woman that she was speaking to someone who was more than just a Jew passing through Samaria... *if you want some of this living water, go get your husband.*

¹⁷ *The woman answered and said, "I have no husband.*

" Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband';¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."

¹⁹ *The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.*

Because Jesus was able to tell her things about her and her life, things that He could not have known if He were a mere human, she assumed Him to be a prophet – one who had supernatural insight. Based on that assumption, she immediately sought an answer to a question that must have been an ongoing concern to her.

The background of that question involved the experience of the Jews as they were beginning the Exodus. Early in the Exodus, as Jehovah was commissioning the Jews to occupy the promised land, He said to them,

"But you shall seek the Lord at the place which the LORD your God shall choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come.⁶ "And there you shall bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution of your hand, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the first-born of your herd and of your flock. (Deuteronomy 12:5-6)

When the Jews crossed the Jordan, near the close of the Exodus, they were told to stand on Mount Gerizim and receive the pronouncement of blessings (Deuteronomy 27:12). All of the blessings recorded in Deuteronomy 28 were pronounced upon Israel on that occasion. The Samaritans, therefore, considered Mount Gerizim to be the holy place of worship in their land.

The Jews, on the other hand, considered the place of worship to be the Jerusalem Temple, which Solomon had erected at God's direction (later rebuilt when the Jews returned to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity).

Jacob's well was located at the foot of Mount Gerizim, Therefore, possibly looking to Mount Gerizim, the woman made a statement, which, no doubt by the tone of her voice, was a question, *Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.*

The woman's question was a legitimate question, given the history of the nation.

The answer the woman received was quite different from anything she could have expected.

The time had come when any argument about the claims of Gerizim verses the claims of Jerusalem were at an end. The location was no longer going to be important. The question no longer was *where* people worship, but *how* they worship. Jesus stated,

"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

²⁴ *"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

First, we note that worship is directed toward the Father. Jesus habitually spoke of God as His Father and taught His followers to do the same (John 2:16; 11:41; 12:27ff; 17:1; etc.).

In the early Church, prayers customarily closed with the invocation, *Abba* (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6), following the example of Jesus (Mark 14:36).

NOTE: Occasionally, a teacher will declare that *Abba* means, *Daddy* – a more intimate term than *Father*. This is incorrect. The Aramaic word for Father is *Abba*. Since the New Testament is written in Greek, each time the term *Abba* occurs in the New Testament, the writer translated it parenthetically for his readers, as *πάτηρ* (*pater*), the Greek term for father.⁴⁸

The importance of worshipping in *sprit and in truth*, cannot be over-emphasized. Genuine Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship. As stated earlier, Jesus commanded his apostles to immerse people *into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* (Matthew 28:18-20). The Greek preposition *εις* (*eis*) is used in this passage. This preposition means, *into*, thus referring to entering into a relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In practicing religion, a person may *say* a prayer. In true Christianity, the disciple of Jesus does not *say* prayers, he/she *prays* prayers. There is a significant difference. In praying, the inner being of the prayer has a sense of communicating with another being – The only true God.

Realizing that she was in the presence of a person far different than anyone she had seen before, the woman stated, *"I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us."*

To her surprise, Jesus replied, *I who speak to you am He*. We can only imagine what must have gone through the woman's mind when Jesus declared this truth.

THE DISCIPLES RETURN 4:27

And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He had been speaking with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why do You speak with her?"

The disciples were surprised to see Jesus speaking to the woman for two reasons:

- She was a woman
- She was a Samaritan

For a rabbi to engage in conversation with any woman, was regarded as a waste of time, and could even put his soul in jeopardy. Yose ben Yohanah, a rabbi who was the chief justice of the Sanhedrin in the mid-second century, wrote,

“The wise have said, each time that the man prolongs converse with the woman that is to say even his own wife, how much more with a neighbor's wife, he causes evil to himself, and desists from the words of the Torah and in the end inherits Gehenna (i.e. hell).”⁴⁹

In addition, for the reasons already stated, the fact that she was a Samaritan would increase their surprise to see Jesus engaged in this conversation.

THE WOMAN RUSHED INTO TOWN TO REPORT HER CONVERSATION WITH JESUS, RESULTING IN MANY SAMARITANS BECOMING BELIEVERS 4:28-42

So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city, and said to the men,²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?"

³⁰ *They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.*

⁴⁸ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/factchecker-does-abba-mean-daddy/>
<https://himpublications.com/blog/meaning-abba/>

⁴⁹ Marcus Dodds, page 729; Bruce, page 112

³¹ *In the meanwhile the disciples were requesting Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."*³² *But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about."*³³ *The disciples therefore were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?"*

³⁴ *Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work."*³⁵ *"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'?"* *Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.*³⁶ *"Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.*

³⁷ *"For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows, and another reaps.'*³⁸ *"I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."*

³⁹ *And from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done."*⁴⁰ *So when the Samaritans came to Him, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.*

⁴¹ *And many more believed because of His word;*⁴² *and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."*

The arrival of the disciples ended the conversation between Jesus and the woman. She excitedly rushed into town to tell people about the remarkable man that she had met.

Note that she did not go to the women in town, probably indicating something about her relationship with them, but went to the men, who because it was the heat of the day, probably would have been lounging in groups rather than engaged in labor.

The woman is so excited that she is oblivious of the shame concerning her life that Jesus had exposed. She does not declare Jesus to be the Christ, but poses the question, *this is not the Christ, is it?*

The woman's excited announcement caused the men to whom she spoke to immediately leave their leisure and hurry to the well to see this man of whom the woman spoke.

Before the men of the town arrive, the disciples displayed their concern for their leader – they had brought food for Him and urged Him to eat some of what they had brought to Him.

Once again, Jesus made enigmatic statements concerning values – physical food versus spiritual food, which is obedience to God's purpose for one's existence.

My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.

As noted earlier, Jesus came into the world for two reasons

- to redeem lost mankind (John 3:16, etc.)
- to reveal the father to fallen humanity (John 1:18; 14:9, etc.)

Seeing the crowds coming out of the town toward them, Jesus recited a proverb, *Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'?*

Then, pointing to the crowd coming out of the town, He excitedly declared,

*lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.*³⁶ *"Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.*

³⁷ *"For in this case the saying is true, 'One sows, and another reaps.'*³⁸ *"I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."*

When the Samaritans came out of the town and met Jesus, they were so impressed that they asked Him to stay with them, and he did so for two days.

While he was there, many more came to believe, not because of the woman's testimony, but because of their personal experience with Jesus.

"It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

These Samaritans proved themselves to be spiritually superior to the Jewish establishment, who had seen Jesus' perform miracles and had heard His teaching, yet they rejected Him and crucified Him.

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES PROCEED TO GALILEE WHERE JESUS PERFORMED ANOTHER NOTEWORTHY MIRACLE 4:43-54

And after the two days He went forth from there into Galilee.

⁴⁴ *For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.*

⁴⁵ *So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast.*

⁴⁶ *He came therefore again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain royal official, whose son was sick at Capernaum.* ⁴⁷ *When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him, and was requesting Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.*

⁴⁸ *Jesus therefore said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe."* ⁴⁹ *The royal official said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies."* ⁵⁰ *Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he started off.*

⁵¹ *And as he was now going down, his slaves met him, saying that his son was living.* ⁵² *So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. They said therefore to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."*

⁵³ *So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives"; and he himself believed, and his whole household.*

⁵⁴ *This is again a second sign that Jesus performed, when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.*

When Jesus returned to Galilee, he itinerated among the villages, but He did not go to His hometown of Nazareth, for the reason stated by John, *For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.*

As He visited the various villages of the Galileans, He was received because many Galileans had been at the feast in Jerusalem and had witnessed His performing miracles and cleansing the Temple. (2:23-25).

Shortly after arriving in Galilee He went to Cana, where He had turned the water into wine. The account of Jesus' turning the water into wine had become well known throughout Galilee. Therefore, when the royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum, heard that Jesus had

returned to Cana, he made the 20–30-mile uphill trip to Cana and pled with Jesus to come to Capernaum and heal his son. (Capernaum is 695 feet below Mediterranean Sea level).⁵⁰

Jesus did not go to Capernaum. His Divinity was made evident by His healing the boy, without being in the boy's physical presence. The father demonstrated his faith in Jesus by starting the trek back home when Jesus stated that the son was healed. As he was traveling down to Capernaum, some of his slaves, who had rushed uphill to find their master, excitedly reported that the boy's fever had left him. When the father asked the time of the healing, the servants said at the seventh hour (1 PM), the exact time that Jesus had pronounced the healing.

This was the second *sign* that Jesus had performed in Galilee, the first being the changing of the water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana.

NOTE: Later during His ministry in Galilee, Jesus did go to Capernaum and a similar healing miracle occurred at that time. The individual who was sick was a slave of a centurion. When the centurion heard that Jesus was in the area, he sent some Jewish elders to ask Jesus to come and heal his slave. As Jesus approached the house, the centurion sent friends to Jesus with the message that he was not worthy to have Jesus enter his house, but that since he, the centurion, knew what it was to command people and have them obey, that he believed that Jesus had the authority to issued commands. Jesus did heal the slave without entering the house. The record of this miracle is recorded in Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10)

Here is Luke's account of that miracle.

When He had completed all His discourse in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.² And a certain centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die.³ And when he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave.⁴ And when they had come to Jesus, they earnestly entreated Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him;⁵ for he loves our nation, and it was he who built us our synagogue."⁶ Now Jesus started on His way with them; and when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof;⁷ for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.⁸ "For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."⁹ Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith."¹⁰ And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA AND THE RESULTING CONTROVERSY 5:1-18

After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

² *Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes.*

⁵⁰ The exact location of the biblical Cana is uncertain, because as various nations ruled the area the names of towns changed. Three sites, are probabilities and all are about 20-30 miles from Capernaum. <https://bibleatlas.org/cana.htm>

³ *In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters; ⁴ for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.]*¹

⁵ *And a certain man was there, who had been thirty-eight years in his sickness.*

⁶ *When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, "Do you wish to get well?"⁷ The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me."*

⁸ *Jesus said to him, "Arise, take up your pallet, and walk."⁹ And immediately the man became well, and took up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day.*

¹⁰ *Therefore the Jews were saying to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet."*

¹¹ *But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, "Take up your pallet and walk.""*

¹² *They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, "Take up your pallet, and walk?"¹³ But he who was healed did not know who it was; for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place.*

¹⁴ *Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse may befall you."*

¹⁵ *The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.¹⁶ And for this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."*

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

The text does not identify the feast that drew Jesus to Jerusalem. There are several possibilities: Purim, in March; Passover in April; Pentecost in May; Tabernacles in October; Dedication in December.

Although various scholars argue about which of these is the feast that motivated Jesus to go to Jerusalem, it really makes no difference. The point is that Jesus left Galilee and went to Jerusalem to observe the religious observance associated with the feast.

The sheepgate pool has been identified. The sheepgate is mentioned three times in Nehemiah (3:1, 32: 12:39). It was an opening on the north wall of the city, near the northwest corner of the wall surrounding Jerusalem.

Excavations in the area have found that there were two adjacent pools with five arcades joining them. The infirm lay in the arcades while waiting to plunge into the pool.

The Bethesda pool was part of the reservoir system of Jerusalem, being fed by the reservoirs called *Solomon's pools*, southwest of Bethlehem. Underground pipes supplying the sheepgate pools with water from the Solomon's pools have been found in the Bethesda pool vicinity.

Judging from ancient references to the redness of the water in the pools, they probably also were fed by what is known as a *chalybeate* spring.^{51 52}

Chalybeate spring water is water that contains iron salts and has a slightly red color. From ancient times, and even today, chalybeate was/is considered to have healing qualities.⁵³

The name of the pool, Bethesda, in Hebrew means *House of Mercy*.

Note: The close of verse 3 and verse 4 are not in the earliest manuscripts. *waiting for the moving of the waters; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.*

The first appearance of this statement was in the Western and Caesarean recensions of the Greek text.

- Western text type, originated sometime in the Fifth Century
- Caesarean text type originated sometime in the Ninth Century

It also is absent in the true Vulgate version. Later, when it did begin to appear in manuscripts, it was preceded by an asterisk, indicating that it was not certain that it was in the original. The verse also contains words or expressions that are not found in the rest of John's writings.⁵⁴

- This verse occurs in the King James, New King James, , and the New American Standard (1977, 1995). Note that the NAS brackets this verse and contains the side note, "Many manuscripts do not contain the remainder of verse 3 nor verse 4."
- It is omitted in the American Standard Version (1901), English Standard Version, New English Translation, New International Version, and the New Revised Standard Version.

This explanation of the troubling of the water probably was added by a scribe, at a later date, in his attempt to explain the phenomenon. Such additions and even paraphrases are characteristic of the Western text type.

Therefore, we discount the statement contained in closing clause of verse three and verse 4.

Since the chalybeate spring was one of its sources of water in the pool, the disturbance could have been the result of the spring's intermittent spurting forth of water, which is a common attribute of springs. Perhaps it was a small version of a geyser, similar to Old Faithful in Wyoming.

Even though John did not write that an angel came down and troubled the waters and that the first one who stepped in when the water was troubled was healed, the lame man's statement indicates the popular belief i.e., that whatever caused the disturbance of the water, the first person into the water when it was disturbed, was healed.

⁵¹ Bruce, page 125

⁵² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chalybeate>

⁵³ <https://thepantiles.com/centre-information/the-chalybeate-spring/>

<https://insearchofholywellsandhealingsprings.wordpress.com/2019/11/19/spring-among-the-tombstones-st-jamess-chalybeate-spring-liverpool/>

⁵⁴ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (United Bible Societies) 1971, page 209

Kurt Alland, Matthew Andrew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, Allan Wikren, *The Greek New Testament*, Second Edition (United Bible Societies) 1966, 1968, pages 337-338

One after another, people plunged into the pool when the water was disturbed and all came out without being healed, except perhaps for one person.

When Jesus approached the pool, no doubt doing so with the intent of performing the miracle, He picked out one man from the mass of people lingering on bedrolls around the pool. This man had been a cripple for thirty-eight years and was hoping to be healed by the miracle of the regurgitating waters.

Jesus asked the man a question to which the answer would be obvious, *do you wish to get well?*

The man explained his dilemma – he did not have anyone to put him into the pool when the water was disturbed and by the time he got into the water, others had preceded him and so he failed, time and time again, yet he kept trying.

Without any further ado, Jesus said to him, *arise take up your pallet and walk.* No doubt to the man's surprise, he was able to do so.

Since this was the Sabbath, trouble loomed for both the man and Jesus.

The holiness of the Seventh Day of the week, the Sabbath (Saturday) began at the time of the creation.

And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.³ Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.
(Genesis 2:2-3)

When God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, which were to be revered by God's Chosen People, the fifth commandment clearly made the seventh day a holy day that was to be a day of rest and probably, a day of meditation. The explanation for this commandment clearly is based on God's sanctifying it at the time of the creation.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

⁹ *"Six days you shall labor and do all your work,¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.*

¹¹ *"For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)*

During the Exodus, God provided manna each morning so that the Israelites would have something to eat. Each morning, they were to gather only enough to get them through the day. God said that if they gathered enough for two days, it would spoil. However, on Friday, they were to gather enough for two days, and then, on the Sabbath day, to gather none, since the Sabbath was a holy day. God kept the manna from spoiling when on Friday morning they gathered enough for two days. This was another episode indicating that the Sabbath was/is a holy day. (Exodus 16:22-23)

The rabbinical law, which was in effect during Jesus' earthly sojourn stated,

“Whosoever on the Sabbath bringeth anything in, or taketh anything out from a public place to a private one, if he had done this inadvertently, he shall sacrifice for his sin; but if willfully, he shall be cut off and shall be stoned.”⁵⁵

Therefore, when the Jews saw this man carrying his bedroll on the Sabbath, he was in trouble – and it could have been very serious trouble.

When accused by the Jews, the man defended himself, by stating that the man who healed him had told him to pick up his bed and walk. However, he did not know who Jesus was and was not able to identify his healer.

Jesus, knowing that trouble was afoot, had disappeared in the crowd, but he later confronted the man in the temple with a warning, *do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse may befall you*. The warning presents the possibility that the thirty-eight-year affliction had been the result of sin.

Once he knew the identity of his healer, the man told the Jews who had healed him and given him the command to carry his bed on the Sabbath. From this time onward, the Jews heightened their efforts to persecute Jesus.

The subject of keeping the Sabbath requires some serious attention.

- Jesus was a part of the Godhead and had been involved in sanctifying the Sabbath as a conclusion to the creation. (John 1:3)
- Also, being a part of the Godhead, He would have been involved in giving the fifth commandment.

Yet, He instructed the man, on the Sabbath, to take up his bedroll and walk. The simple act of carrying his bedroll would not seem to violate the original command – but it was defined as work by the rabbinical interpretation cited above.

In essence, Jesus, by giving the command, was challenging the authority of the rabbinical law.

Are Christians obligated to keep the Sabbath? Paul addressed that question in Romans 14:3-6

Let not him who eats regard with contempt him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted him. ⁴ Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand. ⁵ One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. (Romans 14:3-6)

In keeping with Paul’s declaration, some followers of Jesus are diligent to keep the Sabbath because they believe that from the time of creation onward, the Sabbath has been, is now, and always will be, a holy day unto the Lord.

Other believers believe that with the institution of the New Covenant, through the crucifixion, resurrection, and bestowal of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, there is a new order of things. To these followers of Jesus, it is important that they follow Paul’s injunction to live for the Lord on that day, whether observed as a holy day or just another day.

It is important for every Christian to be convinced in his mind one way or the other, on this issue, and to live accordingly, unto the Lord.

⁵⁵Marcus Dodds, page 737

When Jesus spoke of God as His Father, this further infuriated the Jews because they saw this as if He were making Himself equal to God.

IN RESPONSE TO THE JEWS' COMPLAINT, JESUS BEGAN A DISSERTATION ON HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER 5:19-29

Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

²⁰ *"For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may marvel.*

²¹ *"For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.*

²² *"For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,²³ in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.*

²⁴ *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.*

²⁵ *"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live.²⁶ "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;²⁷ and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.*

²⁸ *"Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice,²⁹ and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.*

The controversy which arose out of the healing of the cripple on the Sabbath, produced an extended monologue in which Jesus expanded on His comments in verse 17: *My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.*

NOTE: It is somewhat impressive that John wrote this very complicated monologue sixty years after he witnessed it. He was a white-headed old man, living in exile in Ephesus, when he wrote his account of the life of Christ. Clearly, the Holy Spirit guided him and called to mind the complicated statements made by Jesus in each of the situations that John described.

Jesus stated that He had no thought of any independent action on His part. Even though Jesus is the Son of God in a unique sense, as the Son, He maintained an attitude of perfect submission to the Father. It is for the Father to initiate, and it is for the Son to obey. The Father will show the Son what to do and the Son will follow the example.

This attitude of Jesus is a model as to how all of us should conduct ourselves in ministry. It is important to prayerfully ask the Father for a revelation of His will and reveal to us what He is doing, and then for us to act accordingly.

Jesus was given authority by the Father to do things that the Son knew were within the Father's will, yet they were things that the Son wanted to do (verse 21).

Therefore, the Father gave authority to the Son, but the Son exercised that authority in a manner that was consistent with the heart of the Father.

The Jews of Jesus' day believed in the power of God to raise the dead. They cited Old Testament passages such as:

- *'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal; And there is no one who can deliver from My hand. (Deuteronomy 32:39)*
- *"The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. (1 Samuel 2:6)*
- *Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits. (Isaiah 26:19)*

Jesus had been given the authority to raise people from the dead.

The Father also had given to the Son the authority to be the judge of everyone.

Anyone who did not honor the Son, did not honor the Father. That is as true today as it was when Jesus walked upon the earth.

After these statements, Jesus spoke of the Second Coming and the Great Judgment Day.

When John wrote, *He gave Him authority to execute judgment* (verse 27) he used the word, ἐξουσία (*eggsousia*). This term refers to delegated authority. It is the same term that Matthew used in recording Jesus' giving the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18. When this term is used it indicates that the person of whom the statement is being made would have no authority unless it had been given to him/her.

There are two interesting pictures of the judgment day. One is the great white throne judgment, described in Revelation.

And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; 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.¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.¹⁴ And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.¹⁵ 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 other throne of judgment is the βῆμα (*bayma*) judgment throne. Paul, writing to Christians, wrote,

- *But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat (βῆμα) of God.⁵⁶ (Romans 14:10)*
- *For we must all appear before the judgment seat (βῆμα) of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (II Corinthians 5:10)*

Based on this statement in Revelation, concerning those whose names are in the Book of Life and those who are not, it would seem that those whose names are in the Book of Life will not face a judgment concerning whether they will spend eternity in hell or an eternity in heaven.

⁵⁶ Some MS state judgment seat of Christ, which is reflected in the KJV and NKJV

Those whose names are in the Book of Life are guaranteed a place in heaven, but they will appear before the βῆμα of Christ, to determine their reward.

The βῆμα was a raised platform on which a judge sat. It is the term used for where the judges sat in the Isthmian games to observe the games. The winner of each game received his crown (στέφανος [*stephanos*] a laurel wreath on his head) when he was judged the winner. This is the term used for the *crown of life*, etc. that will be given to those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Phil. 4:1; I Thess. 2:19; II Tim. 4:8; Jas. 1:12; I Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10; 3:11; 12:1)

On Judgment Day, the Son, not the Father, will execute judgement and those whose are His, whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life, will be judged to determine their reward in heaven. Who can fathom what that day will be like and what the degree of rewards might be!

Jesus then concluded by referring to His Second coming when all will be resurrected, some to life in heaven and some to eternity in hell (I Corinthians 15:12ff).

JESUS ASSERTED THAT HIS CREDENTIALS DID NOT COME FROM ANY MAN, NOT EVEN JOHN THE BAPTIST, BUT FROM THE FATHER 5:30-47

"I can do nothing on My own initiative.

As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

³¹*"If I alone bear witness of Myself, My testimony is not true. ³²"There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the testimony which He bears of Me is true.*

³³*"You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. ³⁴"But the witness which I receive is not from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. ³⁵"He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. ³⁶"But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.*

³⁷*"And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. ³⁸"And you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.*

³⁹*"You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; ⁴⁰and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. ⁴¹"I do not receive glory from men; ⁴²but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.*

⁴³*"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another shall come in his own name, you will receive him.*

⁴⁴*"How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?"*

⁴⁵*"Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. ⁴⁶"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. ⁴⁷"But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"*

Little comment is needed on these verses, except to point out that Jesus said that evidence of His identity did not come from the testimony of John the Baptist, or any other human advocate, but from God. This was demonstrated in the miracles that He worked.

Since they searched the writings of Moses to find the important truths concerning eternal life, they should have seen that Jesus fulfilled all of the prophesied traits of the coming Messiah, but they did not believe the words of Moses. Therefore, Jesus said that it is no surprise that they did not believe him- *if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?*

THE MIRACULOUS FEEDING OF FIVE THOUSAND 6:1-13

After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called, the Sea of Tiberias.

² *And a great multitude was following Him, because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.*

³ *And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.*

⁴ *Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.*

⁵ *Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?"*

⁶ *And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do.*

⁷ *Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little."*

⁸ *One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him,⁹ "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?"*

¹⁰ *Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.*

¹¹ *Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted.*

¹² *And when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost."*

¹³ *And so they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten.*

The synoptic Gospels have considerable material describing the activities of Jesus after He left Jerusalem. The feeding of the 5000 occurred at the close of a lengthy ministry in Galilee.

Herod Antipas and the Romans recently had named the Sea of Galilee, the Sea of Tiberias. The gave the sea this name because of the city of Tiberias that Antipas had established on the shores of the sea about 20 years before the birth of Christ. Herid Antipas, as Rome's puppet ruler, named the city after the Roman emperor, Tiberius and made the city the capitol of his realm in Galilee. The city of Tiberias is on the lower western shore of the sea (see ADDENDA B and K)

This is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels: Matthew 14; Mark 6; Luke 9; John 6. (see ADDENDUM J for a harmony of those accounts).

John states that Jesus *went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee*. Luke 9:10 states that Jesus and his disciples withdrew to a place near the city of Bethsaida. Scholars have argued over whether the reference is to Bethsaida Julius or Bethsaida Galilee (see ADDENDUM K).

Near Bethsaida of Galilee there is a spot known as Tabgha. From the Byzantine Era, Tabgha has been considered to be the site where the 5000 were fed . During the Byzantine Era, an elaborate church building was erected on this site, with the floor containing a bread and fish mosaic.

Those who contend for this site argue that the expression, *other side*, refers to a north/south direction, rather than an east/west. They state that if Jesus and His disciples had been ministering near the north shores of the sea, then this understanding of *other side* could describe a trip several miles south along the shore to Bethsaida Galilee.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ <https://messiah-study.net/Feeding5000.htm>

Other scholars argue just as strongly that the expression, *other side*, clearly speaks of a location on the eastern shore, and therefore the Bethsaida referenced in Luke has to be, Bethsaida Julius. This is in spite of the Byzantine Christians choosing Bethsaida Galilee. To them, the area now known as the Golan Heights was the location of this miracle.⁵⁸

In my opinion (JWG) the arguments presented in favor of Bethsaida Julius are much more convincing. For one thing, since they were in Galilee, on the western side of the sea, *other side*, normally would be understood as referring to a location on the other side of the sea – near Bethsaida Julius. Bethsaida Julius was the hometown of Philip, Andrew, and Peter. (John 1:44)

It really doesn't matter which site is the correct location. The important thing is the miracle that Jesus performed.

Jesus had sent the disciples out in teams of two to minister in Galilee. He gave these two-man teams the power to cast out demons. (Mark 6:7ff). The disciples had returned from their exhausting schedule of ministering throughout Galilee. They reported to Jesus all that they had done and Jesus had them get into a boat and they traveled the short distance to this rather remote location to get a rest. (Mark 6:30ff; Luke 9:10ff)

They did not get to rest. Obviously, Jesus and the disciples stayed close to the shoreline while boating to their destination. Five thousand men, plus women and children, followed along the shoreline and were on shore waiting for Jesus and His disciples when they disembarked. (Matthew 14:13-14; Mark 6:32-34; Luke 9:11)

Jesus went upon on the mountain overlooking the sea and sat down with His disciples. Jesus had compassion on the crowd. He taught the multitude many truths concerning the Kingdom of God and He healed many who were victims of various illnesses. (Matthew 14:14; Mark 6:34; Luke 9:11).

As it grew late in the day, the disciples urged Jesus to dismiss the crowd so that they could go to nearby villages and get something to eat. Jesus said that there was no need for them to do that. He said, *You give them something to eat.* (Matthew 14:15-16; Mark 6:35-37; Luke 9:12-13).

Since He knew/knows all things, He knew what was going to happen i.e., Philip's response to his comment and Andrew's information about the boy with loaves and fishes.

Jesus asked Philip where they could go to buy food for the crowd. Since Philip was from nearby Bethsaida, it was natural to ask him where there might be a location nearby where they could buy food. Here is another example of Jesus' asking a question or making a statement to prompt some sort of comment, as a lead-in to what Jesus planned to do.

Philip's response was obvious - *Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little.*

Andrew, overhearing the exchange between Jesus and Philip, entered the conversation with the information, *There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?*

Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down on the grassy plain in front of the mountain. They sat down in groups of fifty and one hundred. (Mark 6:40; Luke 9:14).

⁵⁸ <https://www.holylandsite.com/feeding-the-5-000>
Bruce, page 142-143

Jesus looked up to heaven, blessed the loaves and fishes, broke them in to portions, and then had the disciples distribute them to the people seated on the grass.

Everyone ate until their bellies were full and then the leftover scraps were gathered up and the leftovers filled twelve baskets.

JESUS REFUSES THE CROWN AND WALKS ON WATER 6:14-21

¹⁴ *When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world."* ¹⁵ *Jesus therefore perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone.*

Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. And it had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.

¹⁸ *And the sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing.*

¹⁹ *When therefore they had rowed about three or four miles, they beheld Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened.*

²⁰ *But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."* ²¹ *They were willing therefore to receive Him into the boat; and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.*

The amazing miracle of feeding a huge crowd with but five barley loaves and two fishes, brought forth the statement from the people, *This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world.*

The people of both Judea and Galilee were looking for that second Moses to come into the world and deliver them from all of their enemies. Jesus read their minds and realized that they were intending to take Him by force and make Him their new king.

To escape this problem, he quickly sent the apostles back across the lake and then He left the crowd and went back upon the mountain alone.

After making the disciples get into their boat and begin rowing toward Capernaum, on the northwest shore of the sea, Jesus successfully dismissed the crowd, and returned to the mountain to pray, (Matthew 14:22-23; Mark 6:45-46).

It was about six miles from Bethsaida Julius to Capernaum. The disciples began rowing the boat toward Capernaum, when they were beset by a strong wind and rough sea. They were struggling to proceed. When they had rowed about three miles, to their surprise they saw Jesus coming toward them, walking on the sea.

Matthew adds several details to this experience.

And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶ *But when the* *And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea.* ²⁶ *And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were frightened, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.* ²⁷ *But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."* ²⁸ *And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."* ²⁹ *And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.* ³⁰ *But seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"* ³¹ *And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"* ³² *And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped.*

And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!" ³⁴ *And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. (Matthew 14:25-34)*

The fourth watch of the night was between 3 AM and 6 AM, when Jesus, approached the boat.

When Jesus got into the boat, the storm ceased. They had been blown off course. They had intended to go the Capernaum, but they ended up several miles south of their planned destination. After Jesus got into the boat, they reached the shore near Gennesaret. (see ADDENDUM K)

Based on the statement in verses 24 and 29, after landing at Gennesaret, Jesus and the disciples rowed back to Capernaum.

THE MULTITUDE FOLLOWED THE DISCIPLES, HOPING TO FIND JESUS 6:22-25

The next day the multitude that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other small boat there, except one, and that Jesus had not entered with His disciples into the boat, but that His disciples had gone away alone.

²³ *There came other small boats from Tiberias near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks.* ²⁴ *When the multitude therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.*

²⁵ *And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You get here?"*

Little comment is needed on these verses. What happened is obvious. The crowd was obsessed by the fact that Jesus had fed the multitude with the five loaves and two fish. They no doubt were looking to him for more miraculous provision.

Although they did not proceed the same day that all of these events took place, the next day, they began to seek Jesus. They had not seen Him enter the boat with the disciples, but the only thing that they could think to do, in their desire to find Jesus, was to follow the disciples to Capernaum, on the west side of the sea.

JESUS ADDRESSED THE MOTIVE THAT CAUSED THE MULTITUDE TO FOLLOW HIM 6:26

²⁶ *Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled.*

Jesus did not address their question, but instead, exposed their motive for seeking Him.

Jesus addressed what is a common flaw in many people's relationship with God. Many people do not worship God because He is God, but they do so with the motive of using Him to get the things that they want. Indeed, God is a very generous God but following Him only to use Him to make us prosperous, is the wrong motive. God is not our Divine Bell Hop.

JESUS BEGAN A DISCOURSE ON THE TRUE MANNA 6:27-34

²⁷ *"Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal."*

²⁸ *They said therefore to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"*

²⁹ *Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."*

³⁰ *They said therefore to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?"* ³¹ *"Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.'"*

³² *Jesus therefore said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven."* ³³ *"For the*

*bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."*³⁴ *They said therefore to Him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread."*

Jesus had entered the Capernaum synagogue (verse 59). This was the synagogue that had been built by the Centurion whose slave Jesus had healed (Luke 7:4-5). All of this discourse took place in the synagogue.

Jesus' comments concerning the contrast between spiritual and physical food is similar to the statements He made to the woman at the well. The water at Jacob's well could not provide soul-refreshment, which living water provided. In the same sense, physical food which perishes with the using (Colossians 2:22) might sustain physical life, but it cannot impart life eternal.

As Jesus was/is the giver of the living water that imparts eternal life to those that receive it, so here He is the giver of spiritual food which *endures to eternal life*.

Jesus avoided using the term, *Messiah*, to describe Himself, probably to avoid stirring up their intention to make Him their king.

Instead, He used the term, *Son of Man*. This term was not a part of their political or religious vocabulary and therefore, it could bear any meaning that Jesus chose to put on the term.

Jesus then stated that He was the one whom God had *sealed*. When someone wanted to make clear that a document was from that person, he placed his seal on the document. When an authority wanted to indicate that someone was his/her representative and carried the same authority that he/she would have had in that situation, he/she placed his/her seal upon that person. Sometimes this was done by giving the one who was sealed a document bearing that seal. Jesus stated that God had certified Him as God's life-giving agent. If we need to find a time when that happened in the life of Christ, his immersion fills the bill.

- *And after being immersed Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him,¹⁷ and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." (Matthew 3:16-17)*
- *And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him;¹¹ and a voice came out of the heavens: "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased." (Mark 1:10-11)*
- *Now it came about when all the people were immersed, that Jesus also was immersed, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased." (Luke 3:21-22)*
- *And John bore witness saying, "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him."³³ "And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to immerse in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who immerses in the Holy Spirit.'³⁴ "And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." (John 1:32-34)*

Jesus had told them to work for the food that is imperishable. Their immediate response was an inquiry what sort of work they might undertake to achieve this goal - *What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?*

Jesus' response certainly is not what they expected. Instead of some sort of hard labor, doing the works of God consisted simply in believing in the one whom God had sent and sealed.

They reverted to their self-centered thinking – If you are who say you are, then do a miracle of supernatural provision of physical food, as was done when Moses provided daily food of manna during the Exodus. What they seemed to be asking for was for the feeding of the 5000 to become a daily event, in which their daily food would be supplied by Jesus.

The manna came every day. They were asking Jesus to give them something similar to what Moses gave them – free food that they would receive without having to plant, harvest, and prepare for eating.

Jesus said that they had it all wrong – it was not Moses who gave the Jews bread in the wilderness. It was an act of God and for a specific purpose.

For that matter, Jesus was speaking of spiritual matters as He had done concerning the living water in the exchange with the woman at Jacob's well. As she continued to think in terms of physical water, *The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw (John 4:15)* so the audience in the synagogue of Capernaum continued to think in terms of physical bread, *They said therefore to Him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread."*

IMPORTANT CAVEAT: None of the above should be understood to imply that followers of Jesus should not anticipate blessings from God, including provision of food and other physical blessings. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said,

"Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?'"³² "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."³³ "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:31-33)

The blessings of God that most of us receive are too numerous to count. Even so, it is important for us to have the attitude of Job, when possessions were taken from him and his children killed,

And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21)

JESUS DECLARED HIMSELF TO BE THE BREAD OF LIFE 6:35-40

³⁵ *Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*

³⁶ *"But I said to you, that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe."³⁷ "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."³⁸ "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*

³⁹ *"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."⁴⁰ "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."*

Jesus, continuing to use physical terms for spiritual truth, declared Himself to be eternal food and drink.

He declared that they even though they had seen Jesus, and even though they had seen Him perform the miracle of the feeding of the 5000, they did not believe that He was who He declared Himself to be.

Looking at the crowd, Jesus then stated that God the Father was the one who caused certain hearers to accept Jesus as being all that He was declaring Himself to be. Furthermore, He would receive everyone and anyone that the Father had given to Him.

He then predicted His second coming and the end of the age, when He would cause all who are His to be resurrected unto eternal life.

THE JEWS REACTED NEGATIVELY TO JESUS' CLAIM TO HAVE COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN 6:41-51

⁴¹ *The Jews therefore were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven."* ⁴² *And they were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"*

⁴³ *Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves."* ⁴⁴ *"No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."*

⁴⁵ *"It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God.'*

Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.

⁴⁶ *"Not that any man has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father."*

⁴⁷ *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life."* ⁴⁸ *"I am the bread of life."* ⁴⁹ *"Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died."*

⁵⁰ *"This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die."*

⁵¹ *"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh."*

The leaders of the Capernaum synagogue knew the identity of Jesus' parents, because after turning water into wine at Cana, Jesus and His family went to Capernaum for a few days (John 2:12),

Jesus' statement, *No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him*, reiterates what He had said earlier (6:37, 39). Interestingly, in verse 44, John translated Jesus' Aramaic by the term, *ἐλκω* (*elkoh*), which means, *to drag*. So, based on John's use of this term, it is not that the Father draws someone to Jesus, as iron is drawn to a magnet, but that the Father, in a forceful manner, grabs someone and drags that person to Jesus.

These statements open up the question that has been debated throughout Church history – the role of God's sovereignty and man's free-will.

- Hyper Calvinists argue that God looks at the human race and chooses certain individuals to be saved. The reason for making that choice exists only in the heart of God. This doctrine was introduced by John Calvin of Geneva.
- Arminians, who are semi-Calvinists, argue that because of original sin, no human has the ability to say, "yes" to the Gospel. Therefore, God imparts the Holy Spirit upon those whom He chooses, giving them the freedom to accept or reject the Gospel. Some to whom He gives that freedom accept the Gospel and some do not. This doctrine was introduced by Jacobus Arminius of Amsterdam, who initially was a Calvinist.
- Free-will advocates argue that everyone has the ability to accept or reject the Gospel and those who do accept it are saved and those who do not are lost. This is the view promoted by most evangelicals.

All three of these views cite Scriptural statements to argue their positions.

We cannot avoid the statements made by Jesus in His dialogue with the Jews in the Capernaum Synagogue. However, will not engage in examining these positions, but instead, remember the command of Christ *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you* (Matthew 28:18-20)

The important truth for us to remember is that Jesus has commanded us to evangelize – to present the Gospel to all people of every nation and culture. When we have done that, we have been obedient and leave the results to God.

DISCUSSION ABOUT PARTAKING OF THE SON OF MAN 6:52-59

The Jews therefore began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

⁵³ *Jesus therefore said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.*

⁵⁴ *"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*

⁵⁵ *"For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.*

⁵⁷ *"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.*

⁵⁸ *"This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever." ⁵⁹ *These things He said in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum.**

The dispute that arose among those in the synagogue was hot and stormy. John used the term, μάχομαι (*machomai*), which means *to fight*, or *to argue in anger*.

The natural sense of Jesus' words referred to cannibalism. It was an offensive way of speaking, even if used figuratively. Some probably denounced Him as being insane, and a dangerous imposter. Others possibly argued that because of the feeding of the 5000, they at least, needed to give Him a hearing.

Jesus, hearing their heated arguments, did not explain anything. He reiterated the statement about eating his flesh and drinking His blood. He emphasized that the hope of eternal life lay in abiding in Christ and having Him abide in us.

Jesus stated that contrasted with the manna that the Jews received during the Exodus, those who ate that bread died, but those who eat of the bread of which Jesus spoke will live forever. Once again, speaking somewhat enigmatically and, not surprisingly, confusing to His hearers.

One thing that was a significant problem for them, was Jesus speaking of partaking of His blood. From the time of Noah and continuing in the Law of Moses, partaking of any blood, including the eating of any flesh that contained blood was forbidden.

Noah *"Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. (Genesis 9:4)*

Mosaic Law *'And you are not to eat any blood, either of bird or animal, in any of your dwellings. ²⁷ 'Any person who eats any blood, even that person shall be cut off from his people.'" (Leviticus 7:26-27)⁵⁹*

⁵⁹ Leviticus 17:10-16; 19:26; Deuteronomy 12:16, 23; 15:23; I Samuel 14:34

After the establishment of the New Covenant that began with Pentecost, the elders of the first church in Jerusalem reiterated this restriction in their letter to the Gentile church at Antioch.

"For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials:²⁹ that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell." (Acts 15:28-29)

Therefore, the Jews in the Capernaum synagogue were greatly offended and confused by Jesus speaking of partaking of His blood.

At the Last Supper, before His crucifixion, Our Lord established the ordinance that was to be observed throughout the history of the Church.

- *And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."²⁰ And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. (Luke 22:19-20)*
- *For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread;²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me."²⁵ In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." (I Corinthians 11:23-25)*

The argument that ensued in the Capernaum synagogue is mirrored, somewhat, in the disagreements over the Lord's Supper that have been present throughout the history of the Church.

- Does transubstantiation take place at the communion table? Do the elements in the Lord's Supper become, literally, the body and blood of Christ?
- Does the believer, by faith, receive the bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ, even though they are not transubstantiated into the actual body and blood?
- Are the elements in the Lord's Supper just physical reminders of Christ's death and the believer who partakes is expressing his/her faith in the cross?

Each of these three views is held by major groups within Christendom.

MANY WHO HAD BEEN DISCIPLES OF JESUS WALKED AWAY FROM HIM BECAUSE OF THE THINGS THAT HE SAID IN THE CAPERNAUM SYNAGOGUE 6:60-71

Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?"

⁶¹ *But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble?"⁶² "What then if you should behold the Son of Man ascending where He was before?"⁶³ "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."⁶⁴ "But there are some of you who do not believe."*

For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.

⁶⁵ *And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father."*

⁶⁶ *As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore.*

⁶⁷ *Jesus said therefore to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?"*

⁶⁸ *Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ "And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."*

⁷⁰ *Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?"*

⁷¹ *Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.*

The dialogue with the Jews in the Capernaum synagogue and some of the things that Jesus said which offended the Jews, had a similar impact on some who were followers of Jesus. They thought that Jesus' words were so farfetched that they weren't worth listening to.

In response to their grumbling, Jesus went further and ask them what they would do if they saw Jesus ascending to heaven, from whence He had come when He was born as a human baby.

Jesus spoke a truth that continues today - *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.*

Jesus, knowing the thoughts and heart of everyone, knew who would leave Him. When many left Him, He gave the twelve the opportunity to declare loyalty by asking them, *You do not want to go away also, do you?*

Peter's response was exactly what it should have been, *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ "And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.*

Jesus' response was that even though He had chosen Judas Iscariot, He knew when He did so that Judas would betray Him. He knew that Judas was going to play a role in having Him crucified, which was the ultimate purpose for the incarnation.

JESUS SECRETLY GOES TO THE FEAST OF BOOTHS (TABERNACLES) 7:1-10

And after these things Jesus was walking in Galilee; for He was unwilling to walk in Judea, because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.

² *Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths (tents), was at hand.*

³ *His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here, and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may behold Your works which You are doing. ⁴ "For no one does anything in secret, when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world."*

⁵ *For not even His brothers were believing in Him.*

⁶ *Jesus therefore said to them, "My time is not yet at hand, but your time is always opportune.*

⁷ *"The world cannot hate you; but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.*

⁸ *"Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come."*

⁹ *And having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee.*

¹⁰ *But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as it were, in secret.*

- The Hebrew term for this feast is the feast of סֻּכּוֹת (sukkot), meaning, *thicket* or *booth*.
- The Greek term that John used for this feast is σκηνοπογνία (skaynopognia), meaning *to put up a tent*

The term, *tabernacles*, is the Latin term that Jerome used in translating the Hebrew and Greek for the Latin Vulgate version. Tabernacle is the Latin word for tent.

Succoth begins on the fifteenth day of Tishri (September or October, depending on the lunar calendar) and lasts for one week. It commemorates the experience of the Jews' living in tents or brush arbors during the Exodus. Leviticus 23:33-44 records the origin of this feast.

In this passage, we encounter Jesus' brothers for the second time. The first time that they are mentioned in John is in John 2:12, describing what happened immediately after the wedding at Cana, where Jesus performed His first miracle - *After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother, and His brothers, and His disciples; and there they stayed a few days.* The immediate sequence of events leads us to conclude that the brothers were at the wedding feast with Mary and witnessed Jesus' first miracle.

Jesus was aware of God's timing, and He knew that the time for His atoning death had not arrived. Therefore, to avoid having to deal with those who were wanting to kill Him, He chose to remain in Galilee and not accompany His brothers to the feast.

Even though His brothers had seen Jesus perform miracles, they did not believe that He was the Messiah. He was their half-brother, but we do not know if Mary or Joseph had told them of Jesus' miraculous birth. Perhaps they thought that Joseph was His father. Did they know Him as a child? We do not know how much time passed between the birth of Jesus and their birth. Jesus was about thirty-two years old, by this time, having begun His ministry when He was about thirty years old (Luke 3:23).

One wonders if in their urging Jesus to go to the feast, the brothers had somewhat of a sarcastic, perhaps mocking tone of voice when they said,

Depart from here, and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may behold Your works which You are doing⁴ "For no one does anything in secret, when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world."

⁵ *For not even His brothers were believing in Him.*

Note that they accused Jesus of wanting to be known publicly and so they urged Him to go to Jerusalem and put on a show.

In His reply, He twice stated,

- *My time is not yet at hand* (verse 6)
- *I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come* (verse 8)

After His brothers had headed south to Jerusalem, Jesus did go to the feast, but He did so in secret. Evidently, he did this without His disciples. Had they accompanied Him, it would have been difficult for Him to remain incognito.

THOSE ATTENDING THE FEAST HAD EXPECTED JESUS, LIKE ANY GOOD JEW, TO BE PRESENT AT THE FEAST 7:11-13

The Jews therefore were seeking Him at the feast, and were saying, "Where is He?"

¹² *And there was much grumbling among the multitudes concerning Him; some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He leads the multitude astray."*

¹³ *Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews.*

Everyone present at the feast would have been a Jew. Therefore, the statement, *fear of the Jews*, would refer to the Jewish religious establishment that was seeking to kill Jesus. They had expected Jesus to come to the feast and when He did so, they would arrest Him.

The topic of Jesus' identity was on everyone's mind. Not only were the religious leaders looking for Jesus, but those attending the feast had expected to see Jesus. They anticipated having an opportunity to further evaluate who He might be and whether or not He could be trusted. There was much controversy in private dialogue, but in the environs of the Temple and within the hearing of the priests and other Jewish authorities, no one dared speak openly about the possibility that Jesus might be someone who should be respected, perhaps even honored.

IN THE MIDST OF THE FEAST, JESUS SURPRISED EVERYONE BY ENTERING THE TEMPLE AND BEGINNING TO TEACH 7:14-24

But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach.

¹⁵ *The Jews therefore were marveling, saying, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?"*

¹⁶ *Jesus therefore answered them, and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.*

¹⁷ *"If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself.*

¹⁸ *"He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.*

¹⁹ *"Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?"*

²⁰ *The multitude answered, "You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?"*

²¹ *Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one deed, and you all marvel.*

²² *On this account Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man.*

²³ *If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath that the Law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath?"*

²⁴ *"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."*

Scripture does not tell us why Jesus, in the midst of the feast, chose to put it all on the line by going into the Temple and begin teaching. The Temple was owned by His enemies. Jesus could not have made a bolder move than this one. He had invaded enemy territory.

The response of the learned Jewish religious leaders is reminiscent of the response of the teachers who encountered Jesus in the Temple when He was twelve years old.

And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast;⁴³ and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem.

And His parents were unaware of it,⁴⁴ but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

⁴⁵ *And when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, looking for Him.*

⁴⁶ *And it came about that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them, and asking them questions.*

⁴⁷ *And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. (Luke 2:42-47)*

Also, as noted earlier, Nicodemus, a learned leader of the Jews, addressed Jesus as, *Rabbi*. (John 3:2)

Jesus, knowing their thoughts responded by saying that His knowledge did not come from hours of study of Jewish learned writings nor being orally taught the Jewish traditions. His knowledge came from God.

Jesus further stated that anyone who takes credit for his knowledge and ability to teach, does so because he wants the praise of men.

This is in contrast to the person who states that he cannot take credit for possessing the knowledge that he is presenting. Jesus declared that He was/is merely the agent through whom the one who is the source of the knowledge is using to present that knowledge to the audience.

These statements concerning the origin of Jesus' teaching are somewhat of a surprise, since He is described in Scripture as being Divine, i.e. God.

- *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* (John 1:1)
- *who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and being made in the likeness of men.* (Philippians 2:6-7)
- *See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.⁹ For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form,* (Colossians 2:8-9)

The passage in Philippians uses an interesting play on words

- The term rendered as *form* in both verses 6 and 7 is μορφή (*morphay*)
- The term rendered as *likeness* is σχῆμα (*schayma*)

Both of these terms refer to form, outward appearance, or shape. Even so, Paul was stating that prior to His incarnation, Jesus was a spirit and equal to the Father. When he took on the spiritual identity of humanity, he took on flesh, in contrast to the spiritual form that had been His.

In the Colossians passage, the expression, *bodily form*, is the Greek term, σωματικῶς (*somatikohs*) which is based on the Greek term for body, σῶμα (*sohma*).

We are thrown into the mystery of the relationship between two Divine Beings – the Son and the Father. Jesus clearly stated over and over again, that while He was on the earth in human form, He was subject to the Father.

In the Garden, prior to His crucifixion, Jesus prayed,

And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Matthew 26:39)

The example of Jesus should deeply impress us with the importance of not doing our own thing in ministry, nor teaching, nor advocating practices that are not clearly motivated and given by God. Sadly, many things that are seen in many contemporary churches do not have that as their origin. Some even are substitutes for what God initiated.

Jesus accused the multitude of hypocrisy, *Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?*

The emotional response *You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You*, obviously was from only some of the crowd, since there were those who previously had expressed themselves favorably toward Christ. (verse 12)

Those who were His enemies could not deny that He had performed miracles, but they accused Him of doing so through demonic powers.

Jesus ignored that accusation and referred to the reason that some wanted to kill Him. In a previous visit to Jerusalem, He had healed a man on the Sabbath, which, according to the Jewish leaders was violating the Law of Moses. In doing so, He had challenged the religious authorities' interpretation of God's will. Therefore, the authorities and those who sided with them, wanted to kill Jesus.

He then challenged them not to be conformed to the traditional legalism, but to *judge with righteous judgment*.

JESUS' MESSIANIC CLAIMS 7:25-31

Therefore some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill?"

²⁶ *"And look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?"*

²⁷ *"However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from."*

²⁸ *Jesus therefore cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know."*

²⁹ *"I know Him; because I am from Him, and He sent Me."*

³⁰ *They were seeking therefore to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come."*

³¹ *But many of the multitude believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Christ shall come, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?"*

The Jerusalem authorities' intention to kill Jesus had become well known. When He appeared teaching in the Temple, and the rulers did not try to arrest Him, some of the crowd began to ask why the rulers were not doing so. They asked, among themselves, if the rulers might possibly have come to the conclusion that Jesus was the Christ.

On the other hand, they asked themselves, how could Jesus be the Christ, because they knew that He was from Nazareth. The belief among the Jews at that time was that when the Messiah came into the world, that He would remain in some hidden place until the divine appointed time of His manifestation.⁶⁰

Jesus, knowing that in small groups they were engaging in such debate, said, *You know me and you know where I come from? You may think that you do, but in fact, you do not know. I did not come on my own initiative. I was sent from God. Since you don't know Him, you really don't know where I come from.* (paraphrase of verses 28-29)

This disturbed the rulers so much that they wanted to seize Him, but God did not allow it, because the time of Christ's death had not come.

In spite of the rulers' hostility, many more people came to believe in Jesus, as they remembered the many miracles that He had performed.

⁶⁰ According to Justin's dialogue with Trypho, the Messiah remains unknown, even to himself, until Elijah comes to anoint him and make him manifest to all (Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 989.7). One later fancy pictured him as engaged incognito at the gate of Rome in binding up the wounds of sufferers (Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Sanhedrin* 98a) Bruce page 187

A FLASHBACK INTERLUDE: THE ATTEMPT TO ARREST JESUS 7:32-36

The Pharisees heard the multitude muttering these things about Him; and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.

³³ *Jesus therefore said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. ³⁴ "You shall seek Me, and shall not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come."*

³⁵ *The Jews therefore said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we shall not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He?"*

³⁶ *"What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come '?"*

This obviously is a flash back to verse 25. These verses do not state why they did not arrest Jesus, but obviously their mission was a failure. As stated in verse 30, it was not God's time for Jesus to die. Perhaps because of the number of the multitude who were favorable to Jesus had intimidated the arresting officers.

When Jesus said that He was going somewhere that they could not come, since they did not have our hindsight, asked the obvious question – was He going to travel outside of Israel to the Gentile nations where many Jews remained from the dispersion?

THE LIVING WATER AND FURTHER MESSIANIC DEBATE 7:37-44

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.

³⁸ *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'"*

³⁹ *But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

⁴⁰ *Some of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet."*

⁴¹ *Others were saying, "This is the Christ." Still others were saying, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? ⁴² "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"*

⁴³ *So there arose a division in the multitude because of Him.*

⁴⁴ *And some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him.*

The festival lasted eight days. The eighth day was a holy convocation (Leviticus 25:36; Numbers 29:35ff; Nehemiah 8:18). On this day, the congregation thanked God for all of the crops of the past year – vine, olive, barley, wheat. They also thanked God for the gift of rain, which made possible these crops.

Although not a part of the original command, in Jesus' day, on the last day of the festival a priest led a procession to the pool of Siloam. He carried a golden pitcher. He filled the pitcher with water, and then returned to the Temple as the morning sacrifice was being offered. The water then was poured into a funnel on the west side of the altar and a choir began to sing the Great Hallel (Psalm 113-118).⁶¹

⁶¹ Bruce page 181

On the day that this water ceremonial was being conducted, Jesus cried out, *If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'*"

The living water that would flow from within was the Holy Spirit which, beginning with Pentecost, was/is available to all who are immersed into Christ.

And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

Once again, controversy erupted in the multitude listening to Jesus.

One thing that caused confusion was the fact that they did not know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The Scriptures stated that the Messiah would be a descendant of David, born in Bethlehem (Psalm 89:3-4; Micah 5:2).

All that the crowd know about Jesus' origin was that He and His family lived in Nazareth.

Once again, some wanted to arrest Him, but no one attempted it. It was not God's appointed time for Jesus to die.

UNBELIEF, AMONG THE HIGHEST JEWISH AUTHORITIES 7:45-53

⁴⁵ *The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?"*

⁴⁶ *The officers answered, "Never did a man speak the way this man speaks."*

⁴⁷ *The Pharisees therefore answered them, "You have not also been led astray, have you?" ⁴⁸ "No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he?" ⁴⁹ "But this multitude which does not know the Law is accursed."*

⁵⁰ *Nicodemus said to them (he who came to Him before, being one of them), ⁵¹ "Our Law does not judge a man, unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?"*

⁵² *They answered and said to him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee."*

When the arresting officers returned to the council that had commissioned them to arrest Jesus, they came back empty handed.

When the council spoke in an accusing tone, asking them why they failed in their duty, their reply was not what anyone would have anticipated - *Never did a man speak the way this man speaks.*

There was such authority in Jesus' person, his demeanor, and the authority with which He spoke that they were intimidated and could not proceed to fill their assigned task.

NOTE: This comment on Jesus speaking is reflected in other passages – Matthew 7:29 *authority* & Luke 4:22 *grace*.

The priests and Pharisees acknowledged that the rank of file of the populace might be carried away by Jesus' teaching, but for professional and experienced police officers to be so swayed was totally unexpected.

At this point, Nicodemus, who was a part of the ruling council, spoke up. Nicodemus was a man who knew the law and could cite it authoritatively. He had his own personal experience with Jesus (John chapter 3).

The rule to which Nicodemus appealed is formulated in rabbinic literature:

“Flesh and blood may pass judgment on a man if it hears his words; if it does not hear them, it cannot establish its judgment.”⁶²

Roman law agreed with Jewish law on this point, as is seen in the words of Festus in Acts 25:16

"And I answered them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand over any man before the accused meets his accusers face to face, and has an opportunity to make his defense against the charges. (Acts 25:16)

Based on both rabbinic teaching and Roman law, the only legitimate procedure would have been to call Jesus to appear before them, allow witness to testify, then make a judgment.

One of the witnesses would have been Nicodemus and, based on his accolades spoken to Jesus in their earlier encounter, he would have been a significant voice in favor of acquitting Jesus.

"Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him. (John 3:1)

Nicodemus' protest called forth the suggestion that he had become contaminated and a follower of the Galilean. To his accusers, this was a contemptuous accusation.

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY 7:53-8:1

⁵³*And everyone went to his own home. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.*

²*And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them.*

³*And the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the midst,* ⁴*they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act."* ⁵*"Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?"*

⁶*And they were saying this, testing Him, in order that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.*

⁷*But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."*

⁸*And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground.* ⁹*And when they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst.*

¹⁰*And straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?"*

¹¹*And she said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more."*

THE LACK OF MANUSCRIPT INTEGRITY FOR THESE VERSES

These verses are not included in a wide variety of early Greek manuscripts (the earliest forms of Syriac and Coptic Gospels, several Armenian, Old Gregorian, and old Latin manuscripts, and from the Gothic Bible).

The early church fathers make no mention of this episode until the Twelfth Century.⁶³

⁶² Bruce, page 186

⁶³ <https://www.compellingtruth.org/John-7-53-8-11.html>;

R.C. Foster, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, 796-809 (Joplin Mo. College Press Publishing) 1995

Bruce page 413

At some point it was inserted at what seemed an appropriate place in the Gospels of Luke and John.

In those manuscripts of John that do contain this episode, the majority place it between 7:52 and 8:12. Some place it after 7:36, some after 7:44 and some after 21:25; in Luke after chapter 21. Many manuscripts that do contain these verses mark them with asterisks or daggers, to indicate that their validity is uncertain.

Most modern versions that contain these verses bracket them or side-note them with comments that they are not in the earliest manuscripts.

Because they are so well-known by most Bible students, we will comment on them as if they had manuscript integrity.

Since the priests and Pharisees were stymied and nothing further could be accomplished by their continuing to meet, they ended the meeting and all went home.

According to this account, after the confrontation in the Temple, Jesus and His disciples retired to the Mount of Olives for a reprieve. We assume that His disciples were with Him, since they are with Him in the next episode.

After a night of rest, Jesus returned to the Temple and began to teach. The scribes and Pharisees were preparing a trap for Him.

There is something slightly suspicious about the scribes and Pharisees catching the woman in adultery. Adultery is not the sort of offence that can be committed by just one person. What happened to her partner – her fellow adulterer?

Perhaps he was more fleet of foot and ran away, or perhaps they were not interested in arresting him. Bringing a woman to Jesus for stoning would require more fortitude on His part than if they had brought a man for execution. They probably were counting on His customary compassionate nature.

Moses' law was unambiguous (Leviticus 20:10ff; Deuteronomy 22:22ff). Would Jesus rule differently? If He did, He would be setting Himself against Moses. By doing this, he would forfeit public esteem, as well as making Himself open to prosecution by the Sanhedrin.

The only response that Jesus made to their query was to stoop down and begin writing on the ground with His finger. This is the first time that Jesus is recorded as having written anything. What He wrote has to remain a matter of conjecture.

The Mosaic Law stated that in stoning someone, the persons who witnessed the crime were to be the first ones to cast a stone, then everyone else joined in (Deuteronomy 17:7; cf 13:9; also, Leviticus 24:14). This is what happened in Acts 7:58, in the stoning of Stephen – someone had to hold the robes of the witnesses who were to cast the first stones.

As the scribes and Pharisees kept asking Him, Jesus stood up and stated, *He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her*. Those who had supposedly witnessed her adulterous acts were obligated to be the first to cast a stone, but Jesus challenged these with a statement that forced them to look at themselves. Who among them would declare himself to be sinless? If so, all of the atoning ceremonies of the Temple would have been meaningless.

Jesus then stooped down and began to write again. It often is suggested that He began to list the sins of those among the accusers, but that is speculation. Be that as it may, the accusers abandoned Jesus and the woman, the eldest leaving first and finally the youngest. Perhaps the elder men were more sensitive as to their spiritual imperfections.

When Jesus and the woman were left alone, Jesus asked her, *Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?*"¹¹ *And she said, "No one, Lord."*

Jesus' reply, *Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more*, is similar to that spoken to the man who was healed at the pool of Bethesda. (John5:14)

Jesus obviously was not saying that He did not condemn adultery. He was saying that He was not condemning her to death by stoning.

JESUS CONTINUED HIS SPEECH WITH A DISSERTATION ON THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD 8:12-20

Again, therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."

¹³ *The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You are bearing witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true."*

¹⁴ *Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true; for I know where I came from, and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from, or where I am going."*

¹⁵ *"You people judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone."* ¹⁶ *"But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and He who sent Me."*

¹⁷ *"Even in your law it has been written, that the testimony of two men is true."* ¹⁸ *"I am He who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."*

¹⁹ *And so they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me, nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also."*

²⁰ *These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come."*

As the ceremony of the water had provided a background for Jesus' dissertation on the living water, so the lighting of bright lights in the Temple during the festival provided the setting for the dissertation on the light of the world.

After the previous meeting of the Jewish leaders ended, many of them returned to the Temple to monitor what Jesus was saying.

The Pharisees' accusation, *You are bearing witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true*, harks back to Jesus' own words recorded in John 5:31 *If I alone testify about Myself, My testimony is not true*. Ostensibly, their accusation had a point.

Even so, Jesus Himself knew where He came from, whom He represented, and where He was going to go in God's appointed time.

Therefore, even though the Pharisees' accusation had merit, humanly, Jesus was not shaken by it, because He knew the truth and the whole truth.

Furthermore, Jesus said that the Father bore witness to Jesus' identity, and that would have been demonstrated through the countless impressive miracles that Jesus had performed over and over again, in the presence of multitudes of witnesses.

Continuing to think in human terms, they asked for Jesus to tell them of his pedigree – *where is your father?* They were asking, Jesus, *can you claim to be the son of a highly respected man of God – someone to whom God has given authority and you are carrying that authority, because this respected man authorized you to do so?*

Jesus' response must have sounded confusing to His accusers, *if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.*

On an earlier occasion, when Jesus had appealed to His Father's testimony, He told those who were debating with Him that they had never heard the Father's voice, nor seen Him (John 5:37)

In the encounter recorded in the passage before us, He made a similar statement. In declaring that if they knew Him, they would know the Father, Jesus was declaring one of His purposes for coming into the world – to reveal the Father (cf. John 14:29)

The treasury, where Jesus delivered this portion of His dissertation, was in the Court of Women, also known as the Outer Court (see ADDENDUM E)

In this court there were thirteen trumpet-shaped containers into which the worshippers deposited various offerings and dues. This is the portion of the Temple in which Jesus saw the widow put her two mites into one of the containers (Mark 12:41-44)

Once again, John states, *and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.* God's timing was controlling the situation, even though those involved did not know it.

AFTER A BACK-AND-FORTH EXCHANGE WITH THE JEWS, JESUS DECLARED, "I AM HE" 8:21-30

He said therefore again to them, "I go away, and you shall seek Me, and shall die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come."

²² *Therefore the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, "Where I am going, you cannot come '?"*

²³ *And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. ²⁴ "I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins."*

²⁵ *And so they were saying to Him, "Who are You?"*

Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you from the beginning? ²⁶ "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world."

²⁷ *They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father.*

²⁸ *Jesus therefore said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. ²⁹ "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."*

³⁰ *As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.*

As He did so often, Jesus made a statement which His hearers could not understand. The only thing that they could think of that fit Jesus' statement was that He was planning to commit suicide.

Their lack of comprehension and their response provided Him with an opportunity to explain His statement and to apply it to their situation.

The incarnate Word was to be on the earth in visible form for a limited amount of time. During this limited time, they had the opportunity to accept the Son for who He is. If they did so, they would receive the right to become God's children. If they did not, they would die in their sins.

Jesus, of course, was speaking of the situation before them at that time. It is not an unreasonable assumption to assume that some of these skeptics were present on Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit fell and the terms of forgiveness that prevail in the Gospel age were installed.

When they asked, *Who are you*, Jesus replied that He was/is who He had been declaring Himself to be from the beginning. Furthermore, as He had done before, He said that the words that He spoke were not His words, but the words given to Him by the Father.

Jesus ended His dissertation by stating that when He was crucified, there would be many of them who would come to believe.

His words, on this occasion, were so anointed that many who heard them came to believe in Him. Obviously, in keeping with Jesus's statement earlier, *No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him* (6:37, 39, 44), some were brought to faith by the drawing of the Father (see comments on page 53).

A DIALOGUE CONCERNING ABRAHAM'S CHILDREN AND THE SLAVERY TO SIN 8:31-59

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;³² and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

³³ *They answered Him, "We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You shall become free'?"*

³⁴ *Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.*

³⁵ *"And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.³⁶ "If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.*

³⁷ *"I know that you are Abraham's offspring; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.*

³⁸ *"I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father."*

³⁹ *They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham.⁴⁰ "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do.⁴¹ "You are doing the deeds of your father."*

They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God."

⁴² *Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.*

⁴³ *"Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word.⁴⁴ "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.*

⁴⁵ *"But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.⁴⁶ "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?⁴⁷ "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."*

⁴⁸ *The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"*

⁴⁹ *Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. ⁵⁰ "But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. ⁵¹ "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."*

⁵² *The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he shall never taste of death.'⁵³ "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?"*

⁵⁴ *Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God';⁵⁵ and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I shall be a liar like you, but I do know Him, and keep His word.⁵⁶ "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."*

⁵⁷ *The Jews therefore said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"*

⁵⁸ *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."*

⁵⁹ *Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.*

This exchange between Jesus and His audience began with Jesus speaking to those who had believed in Him. He promised those who had believed in Him, *If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;*

The Greek term rendered, *disciple*, is μαθητής (*mathaytays*) and literally means, *learner*. A *learner* is more than a *student*. A disciple of Jesus not only believes in Him, but seeks to follow Jesus' teaching, Jesus' example, and by the indwelling Holy Spirit, to carry the person of Christ into every situation that the disciple enters. A disciple of Jesus must in some way, be united in Him who is the Truth.

The next clause in Jesus' statement, *and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*, brought forth a negative response from those, who up to that point, had accepted Jesus' words.

The polemical tone of the forthcoming exchange probably indicates that some who had not believed in Him had entered into the dialogue. From verse 37 onward, that certainly is true, since Jesus addressed those who wanted to kill Him, which was not something that those who believed in Him would have wanted to do.

Even though the Jews had been slaves in Egypt and later had been carried into captivity for a season, they would have viewed these as temporary acts of chastisement. The promises to Abraham (Genesis 12:3; 22:18, etc.) would not have been pointless if Abraham's offspring had been slaves and at the mercy of their masters.

Jesus was speaking of spiritual slavery – slavery to sin. It is not surprising that the multitude did not understand what Jesus was saying, until He clearly stated that He was speaking of slavery to sin.

Jesus said that they may have been Abraham's family, physically, but spiritually, their father was the Devil. This was evident in their behavior.

and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

The anger among the Jews became increasingly intense. To them, Jesus was committing blasphemy by claiming *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.*

Totally irrationally, they accused Jesus of not really being a Jew, but being a demon possessed Samaritan.

When Jesus further stated that before Abraham was born, He, Jesus, had existed the anger reached its height, and they began to gather stones to kill Him.

It is not clear how Jesus was able to escape, but somehow, He left the scene and hid from the crowd. It still was not God the Father's time for the son to die.

A MIRACLE AT THE POOL OF SILOAM 9:1-12

And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.

² *And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?"*

³ *Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

⁴ *"We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work. ⁵ "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."*

⁶ *When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, ⁷ and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam " (which is translated, Sent). And so he went away and washed, and came back seeing.*

⁸ *The neighbors therefore, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?"*

⁹ *Others were saying, "This is he," still others were saying, "No, but he is like him." He kept saying, "I am the one."*

¹⁰ *Therefore they were saying to him, "How then were your eyes opened?"*

¹¹ *He answered, "The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam, and wash'; so I went away and washed, and I received sight."*

¹² *And they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."*

After the episode in the Temple, Jesus and His disciples felt free to appear in public since there was no gathered multitude seeking to kill Jesus. As Jesus and his disciples were walking through the streets of Jerusalem, they passed a blind man who had been blind from birth. It was his custom to take a position on a well-traveled street and beg for alms (verse 8).

When Jesus and the disciples were passing by the beggar, the disciples, raised the question, *Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?*

How the disciples knew that the man was born blind, we are not told. Even so, it dictated their thinking that such an infirmity must be the result of sin. Assuming that such an infirmity must be God's retribution for sin, their natural question was, *whose sin?*

It seems strange that they considered the possibility that being blind from infancy was the result of an infant's sin. However, there were some rabbis that sin while still in the mother's womb was entertained by some rabbis.

In the rabbinical commentary, *Genesis Rabba 63:6*, there is a curious discussion about the prenatal conduct of Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:22) in which Psalm 58:3 (*the wicked go astray from*

their mother's womb) is variously translated so as to show how Esau's sinful propensity, demonstrated later in life, was manifested while still in his mother's womb.⁶⁴

Jesus' response was a rather striking statement, *It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

I agree with the opinion⁶⁵ that this reply cannot mean that God deliberately caused the child to be born blind. To take this position is to commit a serious aspersion on the character of God. It does mean, however, that God chose to use the disaster of the child's blindness so that in adulthood he might see the glory of God in the face of Christ. Not only that, but through this miracle others, seeing this work of God, might turn to the true Light of the World.

The manner in which Jesus executed this miracle was unprecedented. Instead of laying hands on the man, or pronouncing the man healed, as He had done previously, He created an eye salve of spittle and dust, as the first step.

The second step required obedience on the part of the man - *Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.*

As far as we know, this was the first time that the man had encountered Jesus, and yet, he followed the unusual instructions given to him. Since the man was totally blind, we have to speculate that he may have had some friends assist him in going to the pool, where, in obedience to the man who put the salve on his eyes, he washed his eyes and received his sight.

Not only was his eyesight restored, but some change must have taken place in his demeanor, since some said that he was the man who had been blind, but others said that he had a different appearance from the man they had known as their blind neighbor.

When they asked him how he received his sight, he described the whole process, but he was not able to tell them who it was who had brought about the healing. Being blind, he had not seen Him, he had only heard his healer's voice.

He could not tell them anything else about his healing or his healer.

THE MAN WHO WAS HEALED WAS INTERROGATED BY THE PHARISEES 9:13-17

They brought to the Pharisees him who was formerly blind.

¹⁴ *Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.*

¹⁵ *Again, therefore, the Pharisees also were asking him how he received his sight. And he said to them, "He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see."*

¹⁶ *Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath."*

But others were saying, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?"

And there was a division among them.

¹⁷ *They said therefore to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?" And he said, "He is a prophet."*

To the Jews, almost every area of life had a religious connection. Such a dramatic healing miracle clearly would have been seen as a religious matter. Because of this, they immediately took the man to the Pharisees for them to evaluate situation.

⁶⁴ Bruce, page 221, note 2

⁶⁵ Bruce page 209

Earlier, neighbors and others had inquired about how the healing took place. Now, those who possessed religious/legal authority, began the interrogation.

There was one very important reason for the man to be taken to the Pharisees- Jesus had healed the man on the Sabbath. This is the second miracle of healing on a Sabbath that Jesus performed in Jerusalem, the first being the healing of the cripple at the pool of Bethesda (Chapter 5).

One of the categories of work that was specifically forbidden on the Sabbath in the traditional interpretation of the Law was kneading (to mix and work dough, clay, etc. into a pliable mass by folding over, pressing, squeezing, with the hands).⁶⁶

When asked how he had received his sight, the man gave the only answer that he knew to give, *He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see.*

Immediately, two points of view erupted.

- The legalistic point of view – a man who breaks the Sabbath is not a man of God
- The testimony of miraculous evidence point of view - How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?

Since they did not have Jesus to interrogate, the best that they could do in their efforts to achieve a consensus was to ask the man who was healed, *What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?"*

The best that he could say was, *He is a prophet.*

INTERROGATION OF THE MAN'S PARENTS 9:18-23

The Jews therefore did not believe it of him, that he had been blind, and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight,

¹⁹ *and questioned them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?"*

²⁰ *His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹ but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he shall speak for himself."*

²² *His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.*

²³ *For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."*

The claim that the man was born blind was an important element in the Pharisees' inquiry into the miracle. Even if the man could not remember ever having been able to see, he might have had some illness or injury in his early infancy. Only the man's parents could authoritatively testify to the fact that the man was born blind.

The parents could testify beyond question that the man was born blind, but they did not dare say that the miracle had been performed by Jesus.

Jesus' presence and activity in Jerusalem since He arrived halfway through the week of Succoth, were well known throughout the city (7:14 forward). The man, himself, had said that Jesus was the one who had healed him. (9:11)

⁶⁶ Mishnah, tractate, *Sabbath* 7.2.

In the Babylonian Talmud, tractate, *'Adodah Zarab* 28b, there is a discussion on whether, or how far, it is permissible to anoint sore eyes on the Sabbath.

According to the code of the day, for someone to be admissible as a witness in court, he had to be at least thirteen years old. The man born blind certainly was older than that.

So, his parents, being afraid to say anything positive about Jesus, because the Pharisees had declared that anyone who spoke positively about Jesus would be expelled from the synagogue, in self-defense, said, *our son is of legal age, ask him.*

THE SECOND INTERROGATION OF THE MAN WHO WAS HEALED 9:24-34

So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner."

²⁵ *He therefore answered, "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."*

²⁶ *They said therefore to him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"*

²⁷ *He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?"*

²⁸ *And they reviled him, and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses." ²⁹ "We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where He is from."*

³⁰ *The man answered and said to them, "Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. ³¹ "We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him.*

³² *"Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing."*

³⁴ *They answered and said to him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they put him out.*

There was no way that the Pharisees could deny the evidence that the man had been born blind. Neither was there any way that they could deny that the man was now able to see.

The facts before the Pharisees were undeniable, but because Jesus had broken the Sabbath law, by healing the man on the Sabbath, Jesus was not a prophet, but a sinner.

In essence, they were saying to the man, *You are being dishonest. We know that you were born blind and were healed, but this man is a sinner, and we cannot give him credit for your healing. Give glory to God.*

The man began by being as circumspect as his parents. *You know that he is a sinner; well, you are the authorities whose business it is to know that sort of thing. I am no authority, so surely you would not expect me to know anything about that.*

However, confining his remarks to strictly what he knew, *I was blind, now I see.*

When they asked him to repeat the account of his healing, the man replied that he had given them the full story earlier. He probably suspected that they were trying to trip him up, by some discrepancy in his repeated testimony.

He knew full well that they did not want to become Jesus' disciples, so there may have been a bit of sarcasm in his asking, *You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?*

It was evident to the Pharisees that the man had seen through their plan to trip him up.

Therefore, they began to speak rather abusively, *You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where He is from.*

The man responded with plain common sense. There had been a debate, earlier, among the Pharisees, one group saying that Jesus was a sinner and therefore God could not have performed a miracle through Him. The other group saying that this man has worked a miracle which could not have been performed without divine activity – therefore the man performing the miracle is not a sinner.

The man then reiterated what he had said before, that no sinner could do a miracle like this – something that had never been done before.

The Pharisees, realizing that they were getting nowhere, ended the meeting and dismissed the man.

THE MAN WHO WAS HEALED MAKES A CONFESSION OF FAITH 9:35-38

Jesus heard that they had put him out;

and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

³⁶ *He answered and said, "And who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"*

³⁷ *Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you."*

³⁸ *And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him.*

The man, now evicted from the synagogue because of his favorable statements about Jesus, had not been in Jesus' presence since he had gone to the Pool of Siloam to wash his eyes.

Jesus sought out the man and asked him, *Do you believe in the Son of Man.?*

NOTE: some manuscripts read, *Son of God*.

Interestingly, when quoting the man's response to Jesus' question, John translated the man's Aramaic by the term, *κύριος (kourios)*. The term can mean either, *lord*, or when used courteously in the vocative voice, as it is here, the term can mean, *Sir*.⁶⁷

Jesus' response to the man's asking to know the identity of the Son of Man is similar to that which He stated to the woman at the well, *I who speak to you am He*. (4:26)

Quickly, the honest and good heart of the man progressed from recognizing Jesus as his benefactor to confessing him as Lord. He quickly bowed upon his knees and worshipped Jesus.

JESUS ADDRESSED JUDICIAL BLINDNESS 9:39-41

And Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind."

⁴⁰ *Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things, and said to Him, "We are not blind too, are we?"*

Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

Jesus said elsewhere that he did not come to judge the world, but to save the world (John 3:17; 12:47).

⁶⁷ Bruce, page 220

Walter Bauer, William Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, *κύριος* 1. b. page 459,

His statement here is not a contradiction of these other statements. Jesus, is not saying here that he came to exercise judgment, but rather that His presence in the world compelled men and women to declare themselves either for Him or against Him. Each person must be on one side or the other. Those who are against Him are judged already (3:18). They have passed judgement on themselves.

Those who had aligned against Jesus and turned their backs on Him, had plunged into deeper darkness. The lesson of John 3:19-21 was exemplified in them.

"And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.²⁰ "For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.²¹ "But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

Had these Pharisees lived in total darkness with no opportunity to have a way out of darkness, no blame would have been attached to them. However, blame did attach to those who were living in darkness but had been exposed to the light and had chosen to reject it. Therefore, they were guilty.

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD 10:1-21

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.

² *"But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep.*

³ *"To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out.*

⁴ *"When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.*

⁵ *"And a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."*

⁶ *This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.⁷ Jesus therefore said to them again,*

"Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.⁸ "All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.⁹ "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.¹⁰ "The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

¹¹ *"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.¹² "He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them.¹³ "He flees because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep.*

¹⁴ *"I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me,¹⁵ even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.*

¹⁶ *"And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd.*

¹⁷ *"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.*

¹⁸ *"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. This commandment I received from My Father."*

¹⁹ *There arose a division again among the Jews because of these words.* ²⁰ *And many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?"*

²¹ *Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?"*

The words rendered as *truly, truly*, are, ἀμὴν ἀμὴν (*amayn amayn*) i.e. *amen, amen*. The term, *amen*, liturgically means, *so be it, or, let it be!*

The idea is expressed well by the colloquial, *truly, truly*.

This double amen is declaring the certainty of what had just been spoken and that what follows, is a result of the previous declarations.

This declaration signals a transition from what had been a dialogue to a lengthy monologue.

In this parable, Jesus uses four figures to illustrate His role. Three are the figure of a shepherd and one of a door.

- The shepherd of the sheep, for whom the steward who oversees the sheepfold opens the door.
- The shepherd whose voice is known by the sheep and, because they know His voice, will follow Him.
- The door through which the sheep leave the fold.
- The shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.

The Old Testament background for this parable is Ezekiel 34, in which God speaks of Himself as the chief shepherd who appointed under-shepherds to look after the sheep. In Ezekiel 34, God denounces the worthless shepherds for being more concerned to feed themselves than they are to feed the sheep entrusted to their care. Instead of looking after the sheep, they neglected them. They slaughtered the fatlings to gorge themselves and used the wool to clothe themselves.

Because of this failure, God will remove these under-shepherds - *and I will set up over them, one shepherd, my servant David, who shall feed them* (Ezekiel 34:23). The expression, *my servant David*, throughout the book of Ezekiel is clearly the Messiah of David's lineage (cf. Ezekiel 37:24, 25) The under-shepherds were the religious leaders of Israel. They were the most determined opponents of Jesus and were more concerned about their status than they were about caring for the sheep.

Jesus declared Himself to be that predicted shepherd. Using figures of speech, Jesus stated that the religious leaders of Israel were not true shepherds. They were robbers and hirelings who had chosen to be in their positions because of all of the temporal benefits they derived from the role.

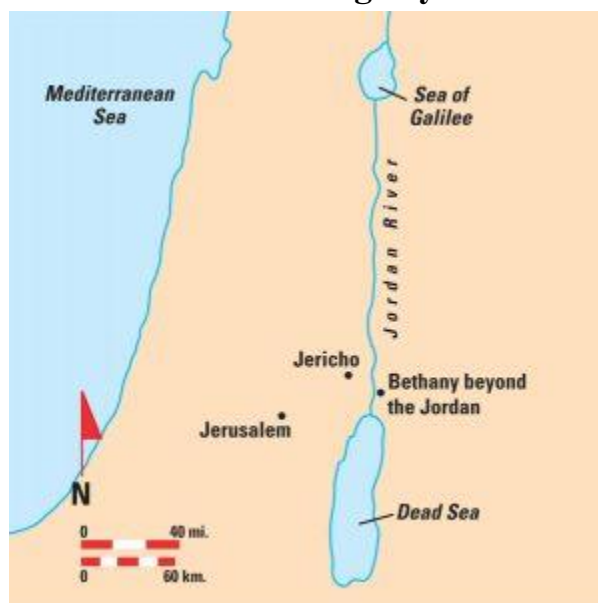
The ultimate evidence of Jesus' being the true shepherd is the fact that He will lay down His life for the sheep. The implications of that statement could not have been understood by the Pharisees, since Christ's atoning sacrifice was more than a year in the future.

Once again in a reaction to Jesus' statements, which the Pharisees clearly understood as an indictment against them, a heated division arose:

- Some accused Jesus of being demon possessed.
- Based on His having healed a blind man, others said that He could not have a demon, since a demon could not work such a miracle.

ADDENDUM A

The site of John's immersing beyond the Jordan⁶⁸



The site has been venerated as the place where John the Baptist baptized Jesus since the late Roman–early Byzantine periods (c. 300 A.D.), when Christians began making pilgrimages to the area.

Archaeological work conducted from 1996 to 2002 in Jordan, about 7 miles north of the Dead Sea on the eastern shore of the Jordan River, uncovered a number of Byzantine-period buildings. Archaeologists excavated a series of churches celebrating the site of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. Two miles east of this church complex lies a small hill called Tell el-Kharrar or Tel Mar Elyas (Elijah's Hill) Early Christian tradition viewed this site as the place where Elijah ascended to heaven (II Kings 2:1-18).

An aerial view of the remains of a Byzantine-era monastery on a low hill at Al-Maghtas, in present-day Jordan.

⁶⁸ Baptismal Site "Bethany Beyond the Jordan" - Biblical Archaeology Society July 14,2015



The other Bethany in Scripture is the Bethany near Jerusalem, where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived (John 11:1ff). The description, *Bethany beyond Jordan*, distinguishes the site of John's ministry from the other Bethany. Some of the later manuscripts name the site of John's ministry, *Bethabara*, and the King James Version, which is based on later manuscripts, state Bethabara, rather than Bethany.

Bethany beyond the Jordan was in the Perea portion of Herod Antipas' tetrarchy. When John spoke against Antipas' immorality, Antipas had him arrested and imprisoned at the fortress in Machaerus. John's imprisonment ended with his execution. (Matthew 14:1ff; Mark 6:14ff; Luke 3:19ff).⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Also described by the First Century Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works*, Book XVIII, Chapter V, (Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications) 1981, page 382

ADDENDUM B BETHSAIDA⁷⁰



⁷⁰ printerst.com

ADDENDUM C⁷¹

Waterpots At The Wedding

Each waterpot held 30 gallons of water



⁷¹ Depositphotos.com

ADDENDUM D

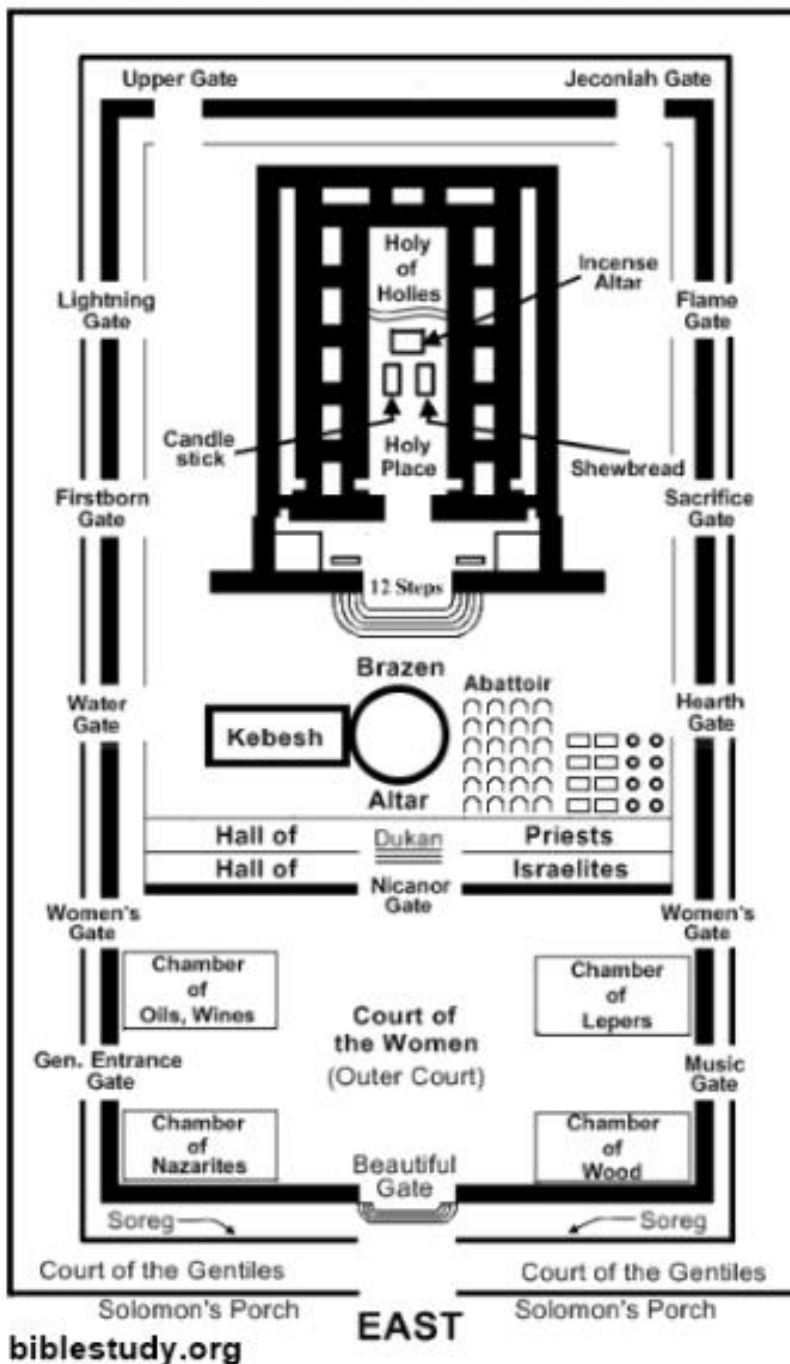
CAPERNAUM⁷²



⁷² Bibleatlas.org

ADDENDUM E⁷³

Interior of Jerusalem's Temple



The Outer Court

The main entrance to the court of women (also known as the outer court or women's hall) was through the *beautiful gate* (Acts 3:2, 10). It was given that name because it was made with richly

⁷³ Adapted and edited from biblestudy.org

ornamented Corinthian brass. The doors of the gate were so massive that it took the strength of twenty men to open and close them.

The outer court was the place where Israelite women could worship God in Jerusalem. Females could not go beyond this point into the court of Israel unless they were bringing a sacrifice. This is the area where Jesus confronted the marketplace, where animals and doves were being sold and foreign currency was being exchanged for sacred money.

The women's large court contained several chambers or places where special activities took place. The chamber of Nazarites was the location where Nazarites, at the end of their vows, cooked their peace offerings and burned their cut hair (during the vow period no hair could be cut from a person's head). The purpose of the wood chamber was to select wood for the altar and hearth.

A chamber for lepers existed where those healed of the disease and purified remained prior to being admitted to the inner court. There was also an oil and wine chamber to store these staples for the temple's use.

Scattered around the court area were at least thirteen trumpet shaped boxes for receiving monetary offerings from the people (see Mark 12:41, Luke 21:1). On the western side of the women's court was a magnificent entrance known as the Nicanor Gate. This gate led to the Jerusalem area known as the inner court.

The Inner Court

Within the inner court of Jerusalem was the hall of Israel. This is where Israelites waited in reverent silence as their sacrifices to God were being burned. Dividing the hall of Israel with that of the priests is a set of three steps called the dukan. The dukan was the place where the priests stood when they blessed the people.

The area between the priest's hall and the temple proper (sometimes referred to as the court of the priests) is the place where sacrifices to God were prepared and offered. Near the northern end of this court there were four rows of posts where sacrificed animals were hung and flayed. Next to these (going south) were four rows of tables on which the sacrifices were washed.

The abattoir was an area that contained rings that secured the head of animals so that they could be killed and their blood collected. Next to the abattoir was the brazen altar (also called the altar of burnt offerings) where not only animals but also grain-based and liquid offerings were burned before God (Exodus 29:38 - 42, Leviticus 6:14 - 15, etc.). On the southern end of the altar was the kebes, which were planks (a bridge) leading up to the altar.

The Holiest Places

The two main areas of Jerusalem's temple proper are the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Holy Place contained a seven-branched candlestick, a golden altar on which to burn incense and a table on which showbread (shewbread) was placed. It also had five tables along both the north and south walls of the area.

Behind the second veil was the Holy of Holies. Originally, the Holy of Holies had contained the ark of the covenant. When the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity, the ark had been lost and so the Holy of Holies did not contain the ark. In its place was a marble slab on which the high priest placed the blood of sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. This was the contents of the Holy of Holies in the time of Jesus.

ADDENDUM F

AENON NEAR SALIM



ADDENDUM G

SYCHOR IN SAMARIA



ADDENDUM H

JEWISH PURIFICATION POOLS: MIKVAH



[Mikvah | Ritual Bath, Immersion, Purification | Britannicabritannica.com](https://www.britannica.com/topic/mikvah)



[Mikveh and synagogue of Besalúen.turismegarrotxa.com](https://www.turismegarrotxa.com/mikveh-and-synagogue-of-besaluen)



[Mikveh - The Jewish Museum Londonjewishmuseum.org.uk](http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk)



[.timesofisrael.com](http://www.timesofisrael.com)

ADDENDUM I

SOLOMON'S APOSTASY AND THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM⁷⁴

Solomon started out well early in his life. He listened to the counsel of his father, David, who told him,

Be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go ([1 Kings 2:2-3](#)).

Solomon's early humility is shown in [1 Kings 3:5-9](#) when he requested wisdom from the Lord. Solomon's book of [Proverbs](#) is filled with practical counsel on how to follow the Lord. Solomon also wrote the [Song of Solomon](#), which presents a beautiful picture of what God intends marriage to be. King Solomon *knew* what was right, but he was not a puppet king. God did not force him to do what was right. Rather, God laid out His will, blessed Solomon with wisdom, and expected the king to obey.

Over time, Solomon forgot his own counsel and the wisdom of Scripture. God had given clear instructions for anyone who would be king of His Chosen People ([Deuteronomy 17:14-20](#))

- no amassing of horses,
- no multiplying of wives,
- no accumulating of silver and gold.

These commands were designed to prevent the king from trusting in military might, following foreign gods, and relying on wealth instead of on God. As the years progressed, Solomon broke all three of these divine prohibitions.

[First Kings 11:3](#) states. Solomon *had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines*. Obviously, God allowed Solomon to have these wives and concubines, but allowance is not the same as approval. Solomon's marital decisions were in direct violation of God's Law, and there were consequences.

Sadly, *As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God ([1 Kings 11:4](#))*. To please his wives, Solomon even participated in sacrificing to Milcom (or Molech), a god that required "detestable" acts to be performed ([1 Kings 11:7-8](#)).

So the Lord said to Solomon, 'Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates' ([1 Kings 11:11](#)). God showed mercy to Solomon for David's sake (verse 12), but after his death, the kingdom was divided.

Judah and Benjamin followed Solomon's son, Rehoboam, and formed the nation of Judah.

The other ten tribes (northern tribes) followed Solomon's former administrator, Jeroboam, and formed the nation of Israel.

⁷⁴ Adapted and edited from <https://www.gotquestions.org/Solomon-wives-concubines.html>

ADDENDUM J

FEEDING THE 5000

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
<p>Now when Jesus heard it, He withdrew from there in a boat, to a lonely place by Himself; and when the multitudes heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities. ¹⁴ And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and felt compassion for them, and healed their sick. ¹⁵ And when it was evening, the disciples came to Him, saying, "The place is desolate, and the time is already past; so send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶ But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat!" ¹⁷ And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸ And He said, "Bring them here to Me." ¹⁹ And ordering the multitudes to recline on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave to the multitudes. ²⁰ and they all ate, picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets. ²¹ And there were about five thousand men who ate, aside from women and children.</p>	<p>And the apostles gathered together with Jesus: and they done and taught. ³¹ And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while." (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.) ³² And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves. ³³ And the people saw them going, and many recognized them, and they ran there together on foot from all the cities, and got there ahead of them. ³⁴ And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things. ³⁵ And when it was already quite late, His disciples came up to Him and began saying, "The place is desolate and it is already quite late; ³⁶ send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." ³⁷ But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat!" And they said to Him, "Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?" ³⁸ And He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go look!" And when they found out, they said, "Five and two fish." ³⁹ And He commanded them all to recline by groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ And they reclined in companies of hundreds and of fifties. ⁴¹ And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all. ⁴² And they all ate and were satisfied. ⁴³ And they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish. " And there were five thousand men who ate the loaves.</p>	<p>And when the apostles returned, they gave an account to Him of all that they had done. And taking them with Him, He withdrew by Himself to a city called Bethsaida. ¹¹ But the multitudes were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing. ¹² And the day began to decline, and the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, surrounding villages and countryside and find lodging and get something to eat; for here we are in a desolate place." ¹³ But He said to them, "You give them something to eat!" And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we go and buy food for all these people." ¹⁴ (For there were about five thousand men.) And He said to His disciples, "Have them recline to eat in groups of about fifty each." ¹⁵ And they did so, and had them all recline. ¹⁶ And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and broke them, and kept giving them to the disciples to set before the multitude. ¹⁷ And they all ate and were satisfied; and the broken pieces which they had left over were picked up, twelve baskets full.</p>	<p>After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). ² And a great multitude was following Him, because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. ³ And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ⁵ Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing coming to Him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" ⁶ And this He was saying to test him; for He Himself knew what He was intending to do. ⁷ Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little." ⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹ "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?" ¹⁰ Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down in number about five the loaves; and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted. ¹² And when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments that nothing may be lost." ¹³ And so they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves, which were left over by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ When therefore the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world."</p>

ADDENDUM K

LOCATION OF THE FEEDING OF THE 5000

