# The Gospel According to JOHN

## Prologue

1 [1]In the beginning the Word already existed,[1] and the Word was with God,[2] and the Word was **God**.[3] [2]He Himself existed in the beginning with God. [3]All things came to be by Him; that is, apart from Him not even one thing that has come into being came to be.[4] [4]In Him was <u>life</u>, and the Life was the Light of mankind.[5] [5]Now the Light shines in the darkness,[6] and the darkness has not overcome it.[7]

*John—a witness to the Light*

[6]There appeared a man, sent from God, whose name was John. [7]This man came as a witness to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. [8]He himself was not the Light but was to testify

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[1] In the beginning (of this world, or perhaps this universe) He already existed. But why the 'word'? If we take the word as the basic unit of verbal communication, and even representing that communication, then we have an important figure. Jehovah the Son in human form becomes the ultimate communication of God to the human race. On the other hand, since the context is of beginning and creation, 'word' might be a reference to the fact that He created with a spoken word (Genesis 1).

[2] The idea seems to be that He was face to face with God (the Father), in His presence. Actually, the Text has "the God"—since the Greeks had any number of gods, the New Testament writers usually refer to Jehovah as <u>the</u> God. In verse 2 the Text also has "the God".

[3] The New World Translation (of the JWs) renders "a god". They defend their choice because the noun 'God' occurs without the definite article, and the absence of the article in Greek has the effect of the indefinite article in English—hence 'a god'. However, another frequent use of the absence of the definite article (in Greek) is to emphasize the quality inherent in the noun—in this case '**God**'. Grammatically, the construction is ambiguous, so those who wish to deny the deity of Christ will naturally translate 'a god'. Since John will himself make perfectly clear that Christ is very God, we take it that he is here emphasizing that inherent quality. A faithful translator will attempt to reflect the meaning intended by the author, so I would say that the New World Translation is not faithful here, since John will repeatedly make clear that Jesus is God. But there is a further consideration. If John had used the definite article we would have an equation (in Greek)—the Word = the God—which would do away with the Trinity. So John could not write 'the God'; he will quote Christ Himself making very clear that the Father and the Son are distinct persons.

[4] This passage, along with Hebrews 1:10 and Colossians 1:16, makes clear that although the Trinity was doubtless involved in the creation of this planet it was Jehovah the Son who was the primary agent.

[5] In what sense can 'the life' be 'the light'? In John 8:12 the Lord said, "I am the Light of the world. He who follows me will <u>not</u> walk in the darkness but will have the Light of the Life." Only as we participate in the Life that Christ offers do we have access to the Light. Without His Life we walk in the darkness.

[6] The word here translated 'darkness', and another closely related word, are frequently used of both physical and moral/spiritual darkness. The latter is associated with Satan's kingdom, in fact characterizes it, while the light characterizes Christ's kingdom. Presumably the "darkness" here is moral/spiritual—Satan's kingdom.

[7] To this day: in Matthew 5:14 Jesus said to His disciples, "You are the light of the world"—as long as there are followers of Jesus here, there is moral/spiritual light in the world.

about the Light—[9]the true Light which illumines everyone who comes into the world.[1] [10]He was in the world, the world that came into being by Him, yet the world did not know Him. [11]He came to His own things, yet His own people did not receive Him. [12]But, as many as did receive Him,[2] to them He gave the right to become children of God,[3] to those who believe into His name:[4] [13]who were begotten, not by blood, nor by the desire of the flesh, nor by the will of a man,[5] but by God.[6]

*Jesus—the Only-begotten*

[14]So the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we observed His glory, glory of an Only-begotten,[7] from the Father, full of grace and truth. [15]John testified about Him and called out saying: "This is He of whom I said, 'The One coming after me is now ahead of me, because He existed before I did.'" [16]Now we have all received from His fullness, yes, grace upon grace. [17]Because the Law was given through Moses;[8] the

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[1] In what sense can we say that everyone is "illumined" since we are all born with an inclination to sin, and most people die lost? Perhaps the answer lies in Romans 1:19-20. One of the expressions of the Life is the material creation that surrounds us—everyone has the light of the creation; there must be an incredibly intelligent and powerful Cause, and since we are persons He must be more so. We also believe that each human being is born with a conscience.

[2] 'Receive', not 'accept'—if you 'accept' something it is inferior, or is offered by someone who is socially inferior; superior people or things are 'received'. If you merely 'accept Jesus' that Jesus can't save you; he is less than you are.

[3] No one is born a child of God (God has no grandchildren); you may become one by receiving Christ. Presumably 'receiving' is a conscious act. [Each of my two children did this when four years old.]

[4] Never does the Text read 'believe in' (Greek εν) Jesus or His name; always it reads 'believe into' (Greek εις). People believe in Santa Claus, the Easter bunny, the goodness of man, or whatever, but it makes no difference in their lives. Many millions of people say they 'believe in Jesus', but it makes no difference in their lives either. You have to believe into Him—commitment and identification are involved, that go along with the change in location, from being outside to being inside. As Jesus Himself said in John 6:53-56, you have to "eat" His flesh and "drink" His blood. If you eat something your body assimilates it, it becomes part of you.

[5] "The will of a man" seems obvious enough—many, perhaps most, people are born because a man decides he wants children. "The desire of the flesh"—many others are born because a man and a woman are carried away by physical attraction, whether or not they are planning to have a child. "By blood"—the best sense I can make out of this is to assume that it refers to levirate marriage; a man fertilizes his brother's childless widow to produce an heir for that brother, precisely because of the blood relationship between them.

[6] For a human being to be begotten physically a man must implant the seed of life, and to be begotten spiritually God must implant the seed of the Life.

[7] Jesus was very literally God's 'only-begotten' Son. Since the Holy Spirit fertilized the virgin Mary, Jesus was literally begotten by God, but He is the only one in all human history who was begotten in that way.

[8] Why "because"? What does the Law have to do with verse 16? We are not accustomed to associate the Law with grace, but as a revelation from God to men would it not be a manifestation of His grace? Of course the Son of God incarnate was a much greater manifestation of that grace—"grace upon grace".

Grace and the Truth came through Jesus Christ.[1] 18No one has ever seen God. The Only-begotten Son,[2] who exists in the bosom of the Father, He has interpreted *Him*.[3]

**John the Baptizer performs his office**

19Now this is John's testimony, when the Jews[4] sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20He confessed, he did not deny but confessed, "I am not the Christ."[5] 21So they asked him, "What then, are you Elijah?" And he says, "I am not."[6] "Are you 'the Prophet'?"[7] "No," he answered. 22So they said to him: "Who are you?—so that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23He said, "I am 'the voice of one calling out: "Make the LORD's road straight in the wilderness,'" just as the prophet Isaiah said."[8]

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[1] "The life", "the light", "the grace", "the truth"—these things the Lord Jesus Christ offers us. In contrast Satan offers death, darkness, hate and the lie. Hey, I don't know about you, but I'm with Jesus!

[2] Instead of "the only begotten son" (as in over 99.5% of the Greek manuscripts), some five manuscripts (of inferior quality, objectively so) have "an only begotten god", while another two (also inferior) have "the only begotten god". Since the absence of the definite article (in Greek) can have the effect of emphasizing the inherent quality of the noun, the second reading could be rendered "only begotten god"—this alternative has appealed to many evangelicals who see in it a strong affirmation of the deity of Christ. But if the God-part of the Christ was begotten in the womb of the virgin Mary, then He is not eternally pre-existent; and in that event Christ could not be God the Son, one of the three persons of the Trinity. Notice the precision in Isaiah 9:6—"unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given." Jehovah the Son was given, not born. Notice further that the context is about the Incarnation, not the Son's eternal pre-existence. But in any case, why follow seven manuscripts of demonstrably inferior quality against 1,700 better ones? The original and therefore true reading is certainly "the only begotten Son".

[3] Instead of "interpret" one could render 'explain', 'describe', 'give a report about'… I connect this statement to verse 1—the Word shows us who the Father really is. As Jesus said to Philip, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

[4] John uses "the Jews" to refer to the religious leaders, the hierarchy.

[5] "Christ" in Greek is a translation of the Hebrew "Messiah". The people were looking for the Messiah.

[6] Note that John declares that he is not Elijah. The point of their question relates to Malachi 4:5, where Elijah is the forerunner of the Messiah. But the context in Malachi is the second coming, not the first. John performed the function at the first coming that Elijah, literally, will perform at the second. John came "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17—the angel Gabriel cites Malachi), but was not Elijah. For more, please see "John is not Elijah" on my website: www.prunch.org.

[7] "The Prophet" is presumably a reference to Deuteronomy 18:15—the Jews figured that this prophecy refers to the Messiah, and so do we.

[8] The reference is to Isaiah 40:3. Hebrew poetry, and prose, makes heavy use of parallel or synonymous statements. From the context in Isaiah it seems clear that "in the wilderness" goes with the verb "make straight", not "call out". But why a straight road in the wilderness? Any road facilitates the movement of people and goods, but a straight road through accidented terrain is a major asset. (Actually, Isaiah 40:3-4 describes the construction of a modern super highway.) John was the voice, but it was the people who had to make the road. So how about us? Are we supposed to be making such a road, and if so, how? At the very least we should be proclaiming biblical values to the world by every available means.

**24**Now those who had been sent were from the Pharisees. **25**So they asked him saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor 'the Prophet'?" **26**John answered them saying: "I baptize with water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. **27**He is the One coming after me who is now ahead of me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose." **28**These things happened in Bithabara,[1] across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

*"Behold the Lamb of God!"*

**29**The next day John sees Jesus coming toward him and says: "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world![2] **30**This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who is now ahead of me, because He existed before I did.'[3] **31**I did not know Him; but so that He should be revealed to Israel, that is why I came baptizing with water."

**32**And John testified saying: "I observed the Spirit coming down like a dove out of heaven, and He rested upon Him.[4] **33**Now I did not know Him,[5] but He who sent me to baptize with water, He said to me,[6] 'The One upon whom you see the Spirit coming down and resting—this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'[7]

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[1] Some 65% of the Greek manuscripts read "Bethany" instead of the familiar "Bethabara" (I follow the best line of transmission in reading 'Bithabara', with 25% of the Greek manuscripts, while 'Bethabara' has 10%), but in either case we do not know the precise location. However, many Bible maps place 'Bethabara' near Jericho, on the west side of the river, but the Text states plainly that it was "across the Jordan" (= on the east side). A combination of such maps plus the true reading sets up an apparent contradiction or error in the text, which is actually in the map.

[2] A tremendous statement! The Sacrifice to end all blood sacrifices is now physically present in the world.

[3] John was six months older than Jesus, so he is affirming that Jesus had a prior existence. Since a mere man cannot have a prior existence, John is affirming Jesus' divinity.

[4] John does not record the baptism of Jesus, as such, but we know from the other Gospels that this incident took place at that baptism. Nor does John record Jesus' confrontation with Satan in the wilderness. In general, John does not repeat information available in the other Gospels. (John wrote after the other Gospels had been in circulation for well over a decade.)

[5] This is curious. John and Jesus were related, and their mothers were close, so it seems improbable that they would never have met as boys or youths. Perhaps John means as the Messiah—until His baptism Jesus gave no overt demonstration that He was the Messiah. (However, given the circumstances surrounding both Mary and Elizabeth, I suppose it is possible that the two boys never met.)

[6] Notice that the Baptizer affirms that God spoke to him directly, in audible or distinguishable words, which he quotes. God spoke like that 2000 years ago, and He continues to do so.

[7] Notice that God Himself told the Baptizer that Jesus "is He who baptizes with Holy Spirit". In John's baptism, John is the agent; in Christ's baptism, Jesus is the agent; the baptism where the Holy Spirit is the agent is distinct from these. In John's baptism the substance used for the ritual was water; in Christ's baptism the substance used is the Holy Spirit. In John's baptism the person got wet but then dried off, so presumably the real point of the exercise was a spiritual transaction; how much more, then, in Christ's baptism. I am inclined to link Christ's baptism (He is the agent) with John 4:13-14 and

34So I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."[1]

**Jesus begins His public ministry**

35Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples. 36And seeing Jesus walking by, he says, "Look, the Lamb of God!" 37The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38So turning and observing them following[2] Jesus says to them, "What do you want?" So they said to Him, "Rabbi" (which translated means 'Teacher'), "where are You staying?" 39He says to them, "Come and see." So they went and saw where He was staying, and stayed with Him that day—it was about the tenth hour.[3] 40One of the two who heard John and followed Him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41He first finds his own brother Simon and says to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated 'Christ'). 42And he led him to Jesus. Looking at him Jesus said, "You are Simon, the son of Jonah;[4] you will be called Cephas" (which is translated 'Stone').[5]

*Nathanael*

43The next day He decided to go to Galilee, so He finds Philip[6] and

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7:38-39. "Jesus answered and said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that **I** will give him will never ever thirst; rather, the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up into eternal life'" (4:13-14). "Jesus stood up and called out saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. The one believing into me, just as the Scripture has said, out from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.' (Now He said this about the Spirit, whom those believing into Him were going to receive, in that the Holy Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified.)" (7:37-39). In other words, when Jesus baptizes you, you are regenerated, you receive a new nature, you receive the Holy Spirit. For a fuller discussion, please see "Baptisms in the Bible" on my website: www.prunch.org.

1 That is what he said, "the Son of God" (actually, 'the Son of the God'), which here probably means that there is only one. John clearly identifies and presents the Messiah to the populace. He performed his office.

2 Presumably Jesus waited for them to catch up, so He was observing them during that time. His purpose in passing by there was precisely to attract those two men (so I imagine), and He was doubtless aware when they started out after Him.

3 This is significant. John uses Roman time, so this is 10 a.m. Which means that Jesus spent most of the day with just those two men. You had better believe they were talking the whole time. Jesus knew they would be two of His disciples and was already investing in them—to such good effect that the next day they bring in two more. The Text does not clarify whether or not they spent the night as well.

4 The Text says, "the son of Jonah". Since Peter obviously had at least one brother, he was not an only son. Perhaps we should understand that Peter was the firstborn. Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts (of objectively inferior quality) read "John" for "Jonah" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

5 *Cephas* is Aramaic for 'stone'; *petros* is Greek for 'stone' (a small object, as opposed to a 'rock'). The name 'Peter' is a transliteration into English of *petros*, but since 'peter' does not mean 'stone' in English, to put 'Peter' in verse 42 misses the point.

6 I cannot prove it, but I suspect that Philip was the second man, of John's disciples, who spent the day with Jesus. (Otherwise, how does one explain the use of "we" in verse 45?) If so, it seems unlikely that he and Andrew spent the night with Jesus, because in that event Jesus would not have to "find" him.

says to him, "Follow me." 44(Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter.) 45Philip finds Nathanael and says to him, "We have found the One of whom Moses in the Law—and also the prophets—wrote: Jesus the son of Joseph, from Natsareth."[1] 46So Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Natsareth?" Philip says to him, "Come and see!"[2]

47Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him and says about him, "There, a genuine Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" 48Nathanael says to Him, "From where do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you." 49In answer Nathanael says to Him: "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"[3] 50Jesus answered and said to him: "You believe because I said that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater than these."[4] 51And He says to him, "I tell you (pl) most assuredly, later on you will see the heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of the Man."[5]

*Water into wine*

2 1On the third day[6] a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee, and Jesus' mother was there. 2Now both Jesus and His disciples had been

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[1] The Hebrew spelling of the town's name comes over into English as 'Natsareth', not 'Nazareth'. This is crucial to a correct understanding of Matthew 2:23 (please see the note there).

[2] "Come and see." "Taste and see that the Lord is good." In the final analysis you have to decide for yourself. Check it out.

[3] Wow, that was a real switch—from disdainful doubt in verse 46 to faith and submission in verse 49. What caused the change? A mature fig tree's branches reach to the ground and form a curtain—there is a clear space around the trunk that is cool and private [I have been there]. It was a great place to be alone with God. But for Jesus to see Nathanael there (there were probably hills in between as well) meant that He was supernatural. That statement convinced Nathanael that he was looking at the Messiah, and he immediately declared allegiance. Of the four Gospels, only John uses the name 'Nathanael', the others do not; they all use the name 'Bartholomew', while John never does. Since Nathanael was one of the apostles, evidently (John 21:2), we may conclude that we have two names for the same person.

[4] The demonstrative pronoun is plural but ambiguous as to gender. Since I would expect the singular (presumably it was the single statement that caused Nathanael's belief) the plural leaves me in doubt. Is it greater things or people, or both?

[5] So far as I know, we have no record of when this took place, but no doubt it did. Jesus addressed Nathanael in particular, "He says to him", but used the plural, "ye", about seeing the heaven opened. "The Son of the Man" appears to be a phrase coined by the Lord Jesus to refer to Himself; the Text does say "the son of the man", which does not make very good sense in English, at first glance, but if "the man" refers to pristine Adam and "the son" to an only pristine descendent, it makes great sense. It seems to indicate a perfect human prototype, like Adam was before the fall—the human side of the God-man.

[6] Counting from when? 1:19-28 happened on one day; 1:29-34 happened the next (2nd) day; 1:35-42 happened the next (3rd) day; 1:43-51 happened the next (4th) day. So the third day here must count from the last day mentioned (1:43-51), although it could (and in Jewish thought probably did) include it. The wedding started that day, but such weddings often lasted several days (and the wine would run out toward the end, if

invited to the wedding.[1] 3So when the wine had given out, Jesus' mother says to Him, "They don't have any wine!" 4Jesus says to her: "What is that to you and me, woman?[2] My hour has not yet come."[3] 5His mother says to the servants, "Do whatever He may tell you."[4]

6(Now there were six stone waterpots set there, according to the purification rites of the Jews, containing 20 or 30 gallons each.) 7Jesus says to them, "Fill the pots with water." So they filled them to the brim.[5] 8So He says to them, "Now, draw some out and take it to the master of ceremonies." So they took it. 9Well, when the master of ceremonies tasted the water[6] that had become wine—he did not know where it came from, but the servants who had drawn the water knew—he calls the bridegroom 10and says to him: "Everybody serves the good wine first, then, when people are intoxicated, the inferior. <u>You</u> have kept the good wine until now!"

11This, the first of the miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee and revealed His glory;[7] and His disciples believed into Him.

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it did). Jesus and His disciples (four?) probably had about an 80-mile walk, 55 miles up the Jordan valley (relatively smooth and straight) and 25 of rougher terrain. Since they did all their traveling on foot, and were therefore used to it, they could easily make the distance in two days. In that event, they would have arrived at the end of the first day of the feast.

1 The disciples had been invited in their own right, before they were disciples.

2 Jesus was not being disrespectful; this was a normal form of address.

3 I conclude from 1:43 that Jesus was at that wedding on purpose, and probably had an idea of what would happen. Perhaps He was testing His mother's faith, and maybe her determination. However, as He declares, He was not yet ready to really go public—He would do that in Jerusalem, as recorded in 2:13-25. He would start with a bang, right in the Temple! But please see "The wedding in Cana" on my website: www.prunch.org.

4 Mary was evidently in a position to issue orders, which leads me to suspect that she was the mother of the bride, which would also explain why Jesus made a special effort to get there. From verse 12 below, it appears that the whole family was there.

5 That was a lot of water—at least 150 gallons! If it was toward the end of the festivity, there would presumably be a great deal of wine left over. Such excellent wine would bring a good price; perhaps Jesus chose this way to give the new couple a financial boost.

6 Wine has color and smell, as well as flavor—I wonder at what point the water took on those characteristics. Perhaps it was only as the servant handed the goblet to the master, so that the servants had drawn and carried 'water'; they obeyed what seemed to them to be a strange order.

7 Jesus "revealed His glory". In what sense? As Jehovah the Son He was the Creator of this world. Transforming water into wine was an act of creation. The chemical components that distinguish wine from water had to be created on the spot, and mixed with the water. This "first miraculous sign" was simply tremendous—it revealed Jesus as Creator. However, although presumably all the guests drank of this new wine, being tipsy they may not have realized what went on. Only the disciples, the servants, and of course Mary, knew what had really happened. Apparently this miracle was not broadcast at that time—like Jesus said, not yet. (Neither Matthew, Mark nor Luke were there, but John, the author of this Gospel, probably was; in which case we have an eyewitness account [John and James were partners with Peter and Andrew; so since Peter and Andrew were invited, they probably were too].)

12After this He went down to Capernaum—He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples—but they did not stay there many days.[1]

*The first cleansing of the Temple—Passover, 27 AD*

13Now the Jewish Passover was near, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14And in the temple He found people selling oxen and sheep and doves, also the moneychangers at work. 15When He had made a scourge out of cords, He drove all out of the temple, both the sheep and the oxen;[2] and as for the moneychangers, He overturned the tables and scattered the coins. 16And to the dove-sellers He said: "Get these things out of here! Stop turning my Father's House into a marketplace!" 17Then His disciples remembered that it stands written, "Zeal for Your House consumes me."[3]

18So the Jews reacted and said to Him, "What sign do you show us, since you do these things?"[4] 19Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple,[5] and in three days I will raise it."[6] 20So the Jews said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and you will raise it in three days?!" 21But He was speaking about the temple of His body. 22Therefore, when He was raised from among the dead His disciples remembered that He had said this; so they believed the Scripture, even the word that

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1 The next verse tells us that the Passover was near. The Passover was one (probably the most important) of the three festivals during the year when every God-fearing male had to present himself at the temple in Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 16:16). Often the whole family would go, so perhaps the whole group mentioned in verse 12 went on to Jerusalem. Jesus had just come up from Judea, only to turn around and go back, which gives us some indication of the importance of the wedding in Cana. That Joseph is not mentioned at all leads one to suspect that he had died by now.

2 The impression I get is that it was mainly the animals that He drove, not the people; in the next verse He commands the dove-sellers to remove them, presumably still in the cages.

3 See Psalm 69:9.

4 The commerce going on in the Temple was crooked, and was under the direction of the religious leaders. What Jesus did was an affront, a direct challenge to their authority. He got their attention! From this moment on they knew about Jesus! What He did was so unexpected, so outrageous, that the Jews did not know how to react. Maybe some were just a little afraid He might be the Messiah. (And just maybe a few of them had been there 18 years before and listened to a certain twelve-year-old Boy.)

5 The Lord gives an unexpected meaning to "this temple", metaphoric, but this prophecy was literally fulfilled. This is not an isolated example of a prophecy with double meaning. Matthew 2:15 cites Hosea 11:1 (see Exodus 4:22)—Hose 11:1 is an affirmation of an historical fact, to which Matthew associates a prophetic purpose that was literally fulfilled; Jesus is, literally, the son of God, and He literally spent time in the literal Egypt. Matthew 1:23 cites Isaiah 7:14—in its context Isaiah 7:14 had to have an immediate fulfillment, that was furnished by Isaiah's wife, Isaiah,8:3-4,8; the more important fulfillment ws also literal: Emmanuel (literally 'God with us') was born of a literal virgin.

6 Since Jesus was referring to His own body, once He was dead how could He do this? His spirit did not die, and at the right moment returned to the body and raised it, uniting with it once again (and in so doing He glorified it).

Jesus had spoken.[1]

**23**Now while He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed into His name, observing the signs that He was doing.[2] **24**But as for Jesus Himself, He did not entrust Himself to them,[3] because He knew all *men* **25**and that He had no need that anyone should testify about man, because He Himself knew what was in man.[4]

*Jesus and Nicodemus*

3 **1**Now there was a man among the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. **2**The same went to Jesus at night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that you have come as a teacher from God, because no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." **3**Jesus answered and said to him,[5] "Most assuredly I say to you, unless someone is begotten from Above,[6] he is not able to see[7] the kingdom of God." **4**Nicodemus says to Him: "How can a man be begotten, being old? He can't enter his mother's womb a second time and be born, can he?" **5**Jesus answered: "Most assuredly I say to you, unless someone is begotten by water[8] and Spirit he is not able to enter the kingdom of God. **6**That which has been begotten by the flesh is flesh, and that which has been begotten by the Spirit is spirit.[9] **7**Do not be perplexed that I said to you, 'You (pl) need to be begotten from Above.' **8**The wind blows

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[1] Note that my rendering, "They believed the Scripture, even the word that Jesus had spoken", has the effect of equating His word with Scripture. More precisely, the Lord's statement in verse 19 was repeated as an accusation three years later, as recorded in Matthew 26:61 and 27:40, and Matthew's Gospel had already been circulating as Scripture for decades when John wrote. If this line of reasoning is correct, then John is calling Matthew 'Scripture'! (Of course there was an interval of a number of years (eight) between the resurrection and the publishing of Matthew's Gospel, but perhaps some did not 'remember' until they saw it written down.) I am not aware of any OT prophecy that could be in view here.

[2] I take it that it was at this point that the Lord really began to heal on a large scale. He forced the religious leaders to take notice of Him in more ways than one. Nicodemus refers to these signs.

[3] I would suggest that our Lord offers us an important example here: He did not entrust Himself to just anybody, even believers. He will command His followers to keep on forgiving those who sin against them, especially 'brothers'. To forgive does not equal to trust!

[4] As Creator He would indeed know what was in man.

[5] He does not waste time with the compliment, although it was true enough, but goes directly to a serious theological question.

[6] The basic meaning of the Greek word here, ανωθεν, is 'from up/above'. A lot of people who say that they have been 'born again' have never been begotten from Above. 'Begotten' refers to the cause; 'born' refers to the result—I take it that the Lord is talking about the cause (the verb is in the passive voice).

[7] 'See' is just a synonym for 'enter' in verse 5 below.

[8] Why 'water'? Some have understood this to refer to water baptism, but it seems more likely to me that it refers to the Word (see Ephesians 5:26, John 15:3, John 17:17). As it says in Romans 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

[9] In 1:13 it is "begotten by God", here "begotten by the Spirit", in 3:3 and 7 "begotten from Above"—I take it that the expressions are synonymous. Without God's direct participation no one is saved.

where it wishes, and you (sg) hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who has been begotten by the Spirit."[1]

**9**Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"[2] **10**Jesus answered and said to Him: "You are the teacher of Israel,[3] yet you do not understand these things? **11**Most assuredly I say to you, we speak what we know and testify to what we[4] have seen, but you (pl) do not receive our testimony.[5] **12**If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I should tell you the heavenly?[6] **13**No one has gone up into Heaven except the One who came down out of Heaven —the Son of the Man, who is in Heaven.[7] **14**Also, just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness,[8] just so the Son of the Man must be lifted up, **15**so that everyone who believes into Him should not be wasted,[9] but should have eternal life. **16**Because God loved the world so

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[1] Notice that the Lord is saying here that it is **we** who are to be unpredictable, like the wind, or the Spirit ("comes" and "goes" are in the present tense). If you are really under the control of the Spirit you will do unexpected things, just like He does. We all know of types of Christian that are rigid, totally predictable—the Lord Jesus Christ says that such 'Christians' have not been begotten by the Spirit. A word to the wise…

[2] His philosophical orientation was based on keeping the Law, on human responsibility. Jesus introduces the divine factor, declaring it to be indispensable.

[3] The Lord used the definite article with 'teacher', which I understand to mean that Nicodemus was the number one teacher at that time.

[4] Why "we"? Jesus begins the verse with "I" and begins verse 12 with "I"; so to whom does the "we" refer? Is it the 'plural of majesty', as some say? Perhaps He is including one or both of the other members of the Trinity—actually, it is probably the Father; see John 12:49-50. (This is early in His public ministry and He does not yet have a recognized group of disciples traveling with Him.)

[5] He had doubtless been teaching, as well as performing miracles, during those days.

[6] The implication is clear: He could tell the heavenly if He chose to do so.

[7] About 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "who is in Heaven" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Presumably those copyists could not figure out how Jesus could be on earth and in Heaven at the same time, so they altered the Text. But let us stop and think about what this verse says—Jehovah the Son came down out of Heaven all right, but when did He go up? If "the Angel of Jehovah" in the O.T. was Jehovah the Son, as I believe, then He had been back and forth many times. In John 5:19 Jesus said that He could only do what He saw the Father do—so when and how could Jesus see the Father? Even though Jehovah the Son was in the human body of Jesus Christ, evidently there was some sense in which He was also in Heaven; He existed there. Well, that is what John 1:18 says, "who exists in the bosom of the Father."

[8] See Numbers 21:8-9. Once bitten, the only way to avoid an early death was to look at the bronze snake. Similarly, the only way to avoid wasting your life is to believe into Jesus.

[9] Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "should not be wasted but" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The phrase is repeated in verse 16, but this is a conversation between two Jews and it is standard Hebrew procedure to repeat things. But why do I render "be wasted" instead of "perish"? Well, what do you think "perish" means? It cannot mean 'to die', because Christians die. It cannot mean 'to suffer', because Christians suffer, etc. Although the Greek verb here, *apollumi*, is used in contexts of decay, loss, ruin, destruction, death, I take it that the core idea is 'waste'—the

much that He gave His only begotten Son,[1] so that everyone who believes into Him should not be wasted, but should have eternal life.[2] **17**For God did not send His Son into the world in order to condemn the world,[3] but so that the world might be saved through Him. **18**The one believing into Him is not condemned, but the one not believing has already been condemned,[4] because he has not believed into the name[5] of the only begotten Son of God.

**19**"Now this is the *basis for* the condemning, that the Light has come into the world,[6] but the people loved the darkness rather than the Light, because their deeds were malignant. **20**For whoever practices evil hates the Light and does not come to the Light, so that his deeds may not be exposed.[7] **21**But whoever does the truth comes to the Light so that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they are done in God."

*John the Baptizer testifies again*

**22**After these things Jesus, with His disciples, went into the Judean countryside, and there He spent time with them[8] and baptized. **23**Now John also was baptizing in Aenon, near Salem, because there was plenty of water there.[9] And *people* were coming and being baptized; **24**for John had not yet been thrown into prison.

**25**Then some of John's disciples had an argument with a Judean about purification. **26**So they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the One who was with you across the Jordan, about whom you have

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potential of a person or thing is wasted, does not come to fruition. The potential that your life represents, the reason why you exist, can only be realized if you believe into Jesus—otherwise you will be wasted.

1 "Only begotten" means precisely only begotten, and not 'only'. Versions that put 'only' are deceiving their readers. God has many 'sons', including adopted ones, but only One who was begotten, literally.

2 The opposite of 'eternal life' is not 'non-eternal life', it is 'eternal death'. But 'death' does not mean 'cease to exist'—the human spirit, the image of the Creator, is immortal, it exists forever. There are but two destinies for the human being—unending life or unending death. The central idea in 'death' is separation; physical death means the spirit is separated from the body; spiritual death means the spirit is separated from the Creator, forever. The essence of 'life' is to be in communion with the Creator, so we can start enjoying our eternal life right here, right now.

3 The world was already condemned; the Son came to offer a way out.

4 Since we are sinners by inclination and by choice, we are already under condemnation; the only way out is to believe into the Lord Jesus.

5 "Believe into the name" = "believe into Him"; a person's name represents that person.

6 The light makes itself available, comes into our area, announces the address, but we must take the initiative to go to that light.

7 In John 7:7 Jesus said, "The world cannot hate you, but does hate me, because I testify about it that its works are malignant", and in 8:12 He said, "I am the Light of the world". Those who love darkness generally hate Jesus.

8 Again, He was investing in those men (not yet the full twelve).

9 To this day there is plenty of water in the Aijalon valley, some 15-20 miles WNW of Jerusalem (Salem is an ancient name for Jerusalem; see Genesis 14:18 and Hebrews 7:1)—perhaps that is where it was. I take it that Jesus and John were in the same area, at this point.

testified—well, here He is baptizing, and everyone is flocking to Him!"[1]
**27**John answered and said: "A person can receive nothing unless it has
been given to him from Heaven.[2] **28**You yourselves can testify that I said,
'**I** am not the Christ, but I have been sent ahead of Him.' **29**He who has
the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands
by and hears him, has great joy at the bridegroom's voice. So this my joy
has been fulfilled. **30**He must increase, but I must decrease.[3]

**31**"He who comes from Above is above every one; he who is from the
earth is earthly, and speaks of the earth. He who comes from Heaven[4]
is above everyone. **32**And to what He has seen and heard He testifies, yet
no one receives His testimony.[5] **33**The one who receives His testimony
certifies that God is true.[6] **34**For He whom God sent speaks God's words,
because God does not give the Spirit by measure.[7] **35**The Father loves the
Son and has given all things into His hand.[8] **36**The one believing into the
Son has eternal life, but the one disobeying[9] the Son will not see the Life,
but the wrath of God will remain upon him."[10]

### Jesus and the Samaritans

4 **1**Now when Jesus[11] knew that the Pharisees[12] had heard, "Jesus is
making and baptizing more disciples than John" **2**(although Jesus

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1 I imagine that the 'argument' mentioned in verse 25 had to do with the efficacy of the two baptisms.

2 John states a basic truth, which is why it is not good to boast (1 Corinthians 4:7).

3 Now there we have an excellent example to follow; all of us should have the same attitude—"He must increase, but I must decrease".

4 "From Above" = "from Heaven". John is talking about Jesus.

5 So where did Jesus do this 'seeing' and 'hearing'? In Heaven.

6 Since the testimony given by Jesus represented the words of god the Father, to receive Jesus' testimony as being true was also to receive the Father's words as being true.

7 The Text does not have "to Him", but in the context that is presumably to be understood. To the Son the Father gave the Spirit in full measure, but not to us—at least not in the same sense.

8 John obviously had a pretty good understanding of who Jesus was.

9 The Text has "disobeying", not 'disbelieving'. 'Believing into' has to do with commitment, with identification, with relationship. If you enter into a relationship with the Sovereign of the Universe, He is the **Boss**. Either you obey or bad things start to happen to you.

10 There are differing opinions about where the Baptizer's speech ends—the rest would then be a commentary by the author, John. The verbs in the present tense in verse 32 tip the decision in favor of the Baptizer—John would have had to use a past tense. I take it that the Baptizer's speech goes through verse 35, at least. Verse 36 could be an editorial comment by John, but I see no reason in the Text for taking the verse away from the Baptizer. Notice the verb 'will remain'; the only way out is to obey the Son. (Perhaps 50% of the Greek manuscripts have 'remains', instead of "will remain", which does not change the impact of the statement.)

11 I follow the best line of transmission in reading "Jesus", rather than 'the Lord', albeit with only 21.7% of the Greek manuscripts.

12 The 'Judean' in 3:25-26 was probably a Pharisee.

Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples), 3He left Judea and went away into Galilee.[1]

4Now He needed to go through Samaria;[2] 5so He comes to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.[3] 6Now Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, being worn out from the journey, sat as He was by the well. It was about 6 p.m.[4]

*The woman*

7A woman of Samaria comes to draw water. Jesus says to her, "Give me a drink." 8(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) 9So the Samaritan woman says to Him, "How can you, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, being a Samaritan woman?" (for Jews do not associate with Samaritans). 10Jesus answered and said to her: "If you knew the gift of God, and who is the one saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." 11The woman says to Him: "Sir, you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep; so where do you get this living water? 12You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." 13Jesus answered and said to her: "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, 14but whoever drinks of the water that **I** will give him will never ever thirst;[5] rather, the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up into eternal life."[6] 15The woman says to Him, "Sir, give me this water! so that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

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[1] This was a tactical withdrawal. I take it that Matthew 4:12 refers to the same withdrawal. Between John 3:36 and 4:1 the Baptizer was imprisoned. If the Pharisees knew something it would not be long before Herod knew it. It was not part of the Plan for Jesus to have to deal with Herod at this juncture.

[2] He could have gone up the coast and avoided most of the mountains, but He "needed" to go through Samaria. Probably because the Father told Him to—it was harvest time in Sychar.

[3] See Joshua 24:32.

[4] Since John elsewhere always uses Roman time, I assume that he does so here as well. The Text has "the sixth hour". Many versions put "noon", which reflects Jewish time. But the Text says Jesus was worn out, which agrees better with a full day's walk than with a half day's walk. The distance between Salem and Sychar was probably about 35 miles, as the crow flies, but since the whole distance was over accidented terrain, the walking distance would be a good deal more. They had walked some 50 miles in twelve hours. Like the Text says, He was tired! And He was hot and thirsty. John emphasizes that as a human being He felt the full effects of the day.

[5] Here again the Lord gives a double meaning to a word—in verse 13 He uses "thirst" in a physical sense, but in verse 14 the sense has to be spiritual, since Jesus Himself experienced physical thirst. In verse 15 the woman sees only the physical sense. I personally do not find the spiritual meaning to be transparent. I have been serving the Lord for many years, but still experience spiritual thirst. I have to keep drinking. However, the 'water' being the Holy Spirit, any thirst will not be for lack of 'water'.

[6] That is what the Text says, "into eternal life". Eternal life is a quality of life, more precisely a life in communion with the Father. The picture is not necessarily of a geyser, water spouting up, but there has to be a constant flow. As our capacity increases the

[16]Jesus says to her, "Go, call your husband and come back here." [17]The woman answered and said, "I don't have a husband." Jesus says to her: "You stated correctly that you do not have a husband, [18]because you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is no husband of yours. You spoke the truth there!"[1] [19]The woman says to Him: "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. [20]Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, while you (pl) say that the place where one must worship is in Jerusalem." [21]Jesus says to her: "Woman, believe me, a time is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. [22]You [Samaritans] worship what you do not know; we [Jews] worship what we do know, because the salvation is from the Jews.[2] [23]But the time is coming, in fact now is, when the genuine worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Really, because the Father is looking for **such** people to worship Him.[3] [24]God is Spirit,[4] and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

[25]The woman says to Him: "I know that Messiah is coming (who is called Christ). When He comes He will explain everything to us." [26]Jesus says to her, "I am He, the one who is talking with you!"[5]

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flow should also increase. Of course the water must be shared with others, or we become stagnant. See John 7:38.

[1] Dear me! Would you say that Jesus was making a special effort not to hurt her feelings? But He knew what He was doing, as verse 29 below makes clear. So how about us? Are we prepared to hurt people's feelings?

[2] Quite so. The Lamb of God is a Jew, and the Old Testament canon came through the Jewish people (see Romans 3:2). For that matter, most (if not all—Luke [?]) of the New Testament was written by Jews as well.

[3] The Father "is looking" for those who will worship Him in spirit and truth. It may be that we have here a window on the reason why God created a race such as ours—persons in His image with the capacity to **choose**. God "is looking" for something, which means He does not have it, at least not automatically, nor in sufficient quantity. I take it that He wants to be appreciated for who He is, but to have meaning such appreciation cannot come from robots—it has to be voluntary. So He created a type of being with that capacity, but He had to take the risk that such a being would choose not to appreciate Him. Unfortunately, most human beings make the negative choice, and with that negative choice come all sorts of negative consequences. Ever since Adam humans are born with an inclination toward sin, so for someone to choose to appreciate God is definitely not automatic, nor even easy. No one can reasonably accuse God of having 'stacked the deck' in His own favor, of 'buying votes'—He seems to have done just the opposite. If a human being, against his natural inclination, chooses to appreciate God, then He receives what He is looking for. "In spirit and truth" presumably means that it cannot be faked, cannot be forced, cannot be merely physical, cannot be merely emotional (though both body and emotions can, and often will, be utilized). Please see Matthew 23:9-10 and 13.

[4] Again the lack of the definite article presents us with an ambiguity; the rendering 'a spirit' is possible. But as I indicate by the underlining, I understand that the quality inherent in the noun is being emphasized.

[5] As recorded in the four Gospels, this is the first time Jesus declares bluntly that He is the Messiah, and He does it to a woman, and a Samaritan one at that! That woman had had her ups and downs, but was no dummy; that the people of the town listened to her indicates that she had influence. Jesus knew what He was doing.

*The disciples*

**27**At that point His disciples arrived, and they were amazed that He was talking with a woman; yet no one said, 'What do you want?"[1] or "Why are You talking with her?" **28**So the woman left her water jar,[2] went her way into the town, and says to the men: **29**"Come see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could this be the Messiah?" **30**So out they went from the town and started toward Him.

**31**Now in the meantime the disciples were urging Him saying, "Rabbi, eat." **32**But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." **33**So the disciples started saying to one another, "Could someone have brought Him *something* to eat?" **34**Jesus says to them: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to complete His work.[3] **35**Do you not say, 'There are four months before the harvest comes?' Well I say, Look! Lift your eyes and observe the fields; they are white for harvest already! **36**Now he who reaps receives pay and gathers fruit into eternal life,[4] so that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. **37**Now the saying, 'One is the sower and another the reaper,' is true in this: **38**I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labors."[5]

*The Samaritans*

**39**Now many of the Samaritans from that city believed into Him because of the word of the woman, testifying that "He told me everything I ever did!" **40**So when the Samaritans came to Him they urged Him to stay with them; and He did stay there two days. **41**Many more believed through His own word, **42**and they kept saying to the woman, "It is not just because of what you said that we believe, because we ourselves have heard *Him*,[6] and we know that this One is truly the Messiah,[7] the Savior of the world!"[8]

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[1] A number of versions capitalize the 'You', as if the question would have been directed to Jesus, but it seems more likely to me that this first question would have been to the woman.

[2] That was nice of her; they could get water while she was gone. (It was also a clear indication that she intended to return, obeying His command.)

[3] The Lord was totally committed to the Father's will and game plan; His daily life revolved around it (it was His 'food'). In His excitement at seeing the plan for Sychar unfold He forgot His physical hunger.

[4] That is what the Text says, "into eternal life". Surely, Jesus is talking about harvesting souls, gathering them into the Kingdom—when someone is born from Above everyone who participated in the process is glad.

[5] "I sent you to reap" must refer to activity in the past, so I take it that the Lord is stating a general principle.

[6] As the italics indicate, "Him" is not in the Text; perhaps the addition confuses the picture. What do you suppose the disciples were doing during those two days? I bet the Samaritans were eager to hear all that they could about Jesus, what He had said and done—they kept the disciples busy!

[7] About 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "the Messiah" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[8] All right! They got the message!

**Jesus in Galilee**

43So after the two days He departed from there and went on into Galilee. 44(For Jesus Himself had testified that a prophet does not have honor in his own country.)[1] 45So when He came into Galilee the Galileans welcomed Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem, at the festival; for they too had gone to the festival.

*Jesus heals at a distance*

46So Jesus went again to Cana of Galilee,[2] where He made the water wine. Now there was a certain royal official whose son was sick in Capernaum. 47When this man heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son,[3] for he was about to die. 48So Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders you will not believe!"[4] 49The official says to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!" 50Jesus says to him, "Go; your son lives." Well the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and off he went. 51Now while he was still going down his slaves met him and reported saying, "Your son lives!" 52So he inquired of them the hour in which he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."[5] 53So the father knew that it was at the exact hour in which Jesus told him, "Your son lives." Both he himself and his whole household believed. 54Again, coming out of Judea into Galilee, Jesus performed this second miraculous sign.[6]

**Jesus returns to Jerusalem—Passover, 28 AD**

5 1After these things there was the[7] feast of the Jews, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

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1 I believe that the episode recorded in Luke 4:16-30 took place between verses 43 and 45 here, and verse 44 is an echo of Luke 4:24. From Sychar Jesus went directly to Natsareth, was rejected there, and proceeded to Cana. Verse 45 is a summary statement, after the fact. [Of course He was born in Bethlehem, Judea, but I doubt that He is referring to it as 'his own country'.]

2 I suspect that He had a brother-in-law living there.

3 The man was asking Jesus to make an emergency hike of some 25 miles (unless he was mounted and had brought an extra horse for Jesus; but He probably wasn't used to riding). Evidently he figured that the healer had to be physically present.

4 Again, Jesus is not exactly 'polite'.

5 It is virtually certain that the official and his slaves used Roman time, in which case the cure took place at 7 p.m. It could not be 7 a.m. because the man would have met his slaves before noon and they would have said 'today', not 'yesterday' (verse 52). It could not be Jewish time for a similar reason—if Jesus healed at 1 p.m. the man would have met his slaves before sundown and they would have said 'today'. The man probably walked (unless he was mounted, but at night the horse would be held to a walk) during at least part of the night; the slaves would have started out at dawn; they probably met at a point much closer to Capernaum than to Cana.

6 That is, He healed at a distance, just by His thought. Curiously, He was in Cana for both of them.

7 The manuscript evidence is badly divided here, between 'the feast' and 'a feast'—I take it that the best evidence is on the side of the definite article. In that event the feast was the Passover (with the other alternative it could still be the Passover), the second

*The pool of Bethesda*

**2**Now in Jerusalem, by the Sheep Gate, there is a pool called Bethesda,[1] in Hebrew, which has five porches.[2] **3**In them a large number of sick people were lying—blind, lame, paralyzed—waiting for the moving of the water; **4**because an angel would go down from time to time into the pool and stir up the water[3]—then the first one to get in after the stirring of the water became well of whatever disease that was holding him.[4]

**The man selected for healing**

**5**Now there was a certain man there who had been sick for 38 years.[5] **6**Seeing this man lying there and knowing that he had already been sick a long time, Jesus says to him, "Do you want to get well?" **7**The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to throw[6] me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming another gets in before me." **8**Jesus says to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk!" **9**Immediately the man became well and picked up his pallet and started to walk! **10**But that day was a Sabbath, so the Jews said to the one who had been healed: "It's the Sabbath! You aren't allowed to carry the pallet." **11**He answered them: "The one who made me well—He said to me, 'Pick up your pallet and walk.'" **12**So they asked him, "Who is the

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during Christ's public ministry; one and a half years are behind Him and there are two to go. For events between the first two Passovers see Mark 1:14-2:17, Luke 4:14-5:39 and Matthew 4:12-8:4.

1 Fully 99% of the Greek manuscripts read the familiar 'Bethesda', and this name is attested by the 1st century Copper Scroll from Qumran. The so-called 'critical text' (UBS and N-A) serves up the pitiful 'Bethzatha', following just five Greek manuscripts (as in TEV, RSV, Jer., etc.). The UBS editors have introduced an historical error into their text on the flimsiest of evidence, even going against their favorites, $P^{75}$ and B.

2 The pool is a rectangle (it is still there), so it has four sides—so where was the fifth porch? Across the middle, dividing the pool into two smaller ones. Instead of 'porch' one could use 'portico', 'cloister', 'colonnade'—a covered walkway.

3 The angel, whether good or bad, would presumably be invisible to the people, so this information must have been revealed to John.

4 About 0.8% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit the last clause of verse 3 and all of verse 4 (as in NIV, NASB, LB, [TEV], etc.). But obviously all those people would not stay there (in discomfort) day in and day out, year in and year out, if nothing was happening. Obviously people got healed (from serious diseases), and verse 7 makes clear that it had to do with the stirring of the water—so why didn't those manuscripts omit verse 7 as well? The UBS editions do us a considerable disservice by following a very small minority of manuscripts (perhaps 2%) and making the angel 'of the Lord'. Since angels can be good or fallen, it seems most likely to me that the angel involved was fallen. A capricious, occasional healing condemned all those people to added suffering (being at the pool instead of the comfort of home), including the frustration and despair of those who never made it (like the man Jesus healed). A sadistic procedure is just like Satan.

5 Wow!

6 That is right, "throw". Hey, where a split second could make the difference no one is going to stand on ceremony—when the water started to move there would be a mad scramble; people would be thrown at the water, literally. (The demons would really enjoy themselves, seeing 'the image of God' humiliated in that way.)

man who said to you, 'Pick up your pallet and walk'?" 13But the man who was cured did not know who it was, because Jesus had disappeared, there being a crowd in the place.[1]

14After these things Jesus found him in the temple and said to him: "See, you are well. Don't sin any more, so that something worse doesn't happen to you."[2] 15The man went off and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

**The Jews want to kill Jesus**

16So because of this the Jews began persecuting Jesus and trying to kill Him,[3] because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.[4] 17But Jesus answered them, "Until now, my Father works, I also work."[5] 18So because of this the Jews wanted to kill Him all the more, because He was not only breaking the Sabbath but was even saying that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God!

*Jesus addresses the Jews*

**He affirms His equality with the Father**

19Then Jesus answered and said to them: "Most assuredly I say to you, the Son is not able to do anything from Himself, except something He sees the Father doing; because whatever things He does, precisely these the Son also does.[6] 20For the Father loves[7] the Son and shows Him everything that He Himself is doing; and He will show Him greater

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1 Let us stop and think about what Jesus did here. There were probably hundreds of sick people there—why did He only heal **one** of them? And why did He disappear into the crowd before the man could find out who He was? And why did He do this on a Sabbath? I think it was all deliberate—He wanted to provoke the Jews. He chose a Sabbath; He chose a man who had a pallet, but who had no slave or other helper; He commanded (yes, commanded) the man to carry the pallet; He got out of the way so the Jews would have the man to themselves. In this way He set up a confrontation, as we will see below. [In passing we may note that if ever there was a 'divine healer' it was the Lord Jesus, and yet He did not empty out this 'hospital'. Maybe divine healers aren't supposed to empty hospitals.]

2 The Lord seems to be implying that the former sickness was the result of sin. But he had been sick for 38 years, so he had paid a heavy price!

3 Less than 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "and trying to kill Him" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

4 The last recorded events before John 5:1 are in Luke 5:12-39. The healing of the paralytic had impressed the Jews, but then Jesus immediately went and ate with publicans; and verses 36-39 were against what the Jews represented. Here in John Jesus challenges their authority over the Sabbath.

5 Not only does Jesus not run and hide, He 'ups the ante'—He claims to be God, as the Jews understood perfectly well (and which in their mind called for the death penalty, since they were not prepared to acknowledge that claim).

6 I find this statement to be amazing, revealing and challenging. Jesus only did what He saw the Father doing; so how about us? I would say that my main 'ministry' problem is that I often don't know what the Father is doing, and so I waste a lot of time and effort. But looking at the Text again, Jesus said that He was <u>not able</u> to do what the Father was not doing. Well now, if He was not able, how much less are we!

7 To my surprise the verb here is *φιλεω*, not *αγαπαω*—the Father is emotionally attached to the Son. Well, since we have emotions God must have had them first. God affirms that He has soul (Isaiah 42:1, Matthew 12:18, Hebrews 10:38).

works than these, so that you may marvel. 21Now just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, just so the Son also gives life to those whom He wishes. 22In fact the Father does not judge anyone but has committed all the judging to the Son,[1] 23so that all will honor the Son just as they honor the Father.[2] Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.[3]

**The Son is the just Judge**

24"Most assuredly I say to you that the one listening[4] to my word and believing on Him who sent me has eternal life; he will not go into judging but has moved out of the death into the Life.[5]

25"Most assuredly I say to you that a time is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of the God, and those who listen will live.[6] 26Because just as the Father has life in Himself, just so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; 27furthermore He gave Him authority to pass judgment, because He is Son of Man.[7] 28Do not marvel at this, because a time is coming in which all those in the graves will hear His voice 29and will come out—those who did good things into the resurrection of life,[8] but those who practiced evil things into the resurrection of condemnation. 30I am not able to do anything from myself. As I hear, I judge, and my judging is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the Father who sent me.

**Four witnesses to Jesus**

31"If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid.[9] 32There is another who testifies about me, and I know that the testimony that He

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[1] I suppose this means that it will be the Son who sits on the 'great white throne' (Revelation 20:11).

[2] Of course someone who does not honor the Father will not honor the Son either.

[3] I take it that the Lord Jesus is saying that monotheistic people (Jews, Muslims) who claim to honor the Father, but do not honor the Son, are not really doing so. (Perhaps that would not apply to those who have never heard about Jesus.)

[4] Most versions render 'hear' instead of 'listen', both here and in the next verse, but from the context it seems clear that Jesus is not talking about sound striking the eardrum; He is talking about acting on the basis of what is heard.

[5] "The death" refers to Satan's kingdom; "the life" refers to Christ's kingdom (and they are the only alternatives in this world).

[6] It seems clear that the picture here is different from that in verses 28-29. Here Jesus says "now is", so He is not talking about future judgment; so the dead here are spiritually dead, and those who listen to Him receive spiritual life. In verse 28 the reference is to the physically dead, who are raised to face the final judgment.

[7] We as human beings will be judged by another human being, someone who knows what it's like. There is no definite article with either "Son" or "Man", so this is not the title He normally used; 'son of man' emphasizes the humanity of Jesus.

[8] Notice again the emphasis on doing, because what you do reflects what you **really** believe, and what you really believe is what you are—and you cannot kid God. "All those in the graves" means everyone who has died; all will be raised, and all must face the final Accounting.

[9] According to the Law at least two witnesses were required, so if Jesus had only His own word it would not be enough, would not be valid (even though He told the truth).

gives about me is true.[1] 33You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. 34Yet I do not accept the testimony from a man; but I say these things so that you may be saved.[2] 35That man was a burning, shining lamp, and for a time you were willing to be glad in his light. 36But I have a greater testimony than John's, because the works that the Father gave me to complete—the very works that I am doing—they testify about me that the Father has sent me.[3]

37"Further, the Father who sent me has Himself testified about me. You have neither heard His voice nor seen His form at any time. 38Nor do you have His word abiding in you,[4] because you do not believe on the very one whom He sent. 39You examine the Scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life, yet they are the very ones that testify about me. 40But you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life.[5]

**The Jews are accused by Moses**

41"I do not accept glory from people. 42Rather I have come to know you,[6] that you do not have the love of God in you. 43I have come in my Father's name and you do not receive me; should another come in his own name, him you will receive.[7] 44How can you believe, who receive glory from men[8] and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?[9]

45"Do not suppose that I will accuse you before the Father. **Moses** is the one who accuses you, on whom you have set your hope. 46Because if you *really* believed Moses you would believe me, because he wrote

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1 I take it that this witness must be the Father, since in verse 34 Jesus discounts John the Baptizer.

2 Since Jesus has three supernatural witnesses—the Father, His own works and the Scriptures—He does not need John. I do not believe Jesus was angry with John or otherwise dissatisfied with his testimony; it is just that the Jews had already rejected John's testimony about Jesus (as they had rejected Jesus Himself). As He says, He would like for them to turn around and be saved, so He organizes His argument in that attempt.

3 Nicodemus recognized this.

4 The Lord declares their spiritual bankruptcy. For a religious leader to have never heard God's voice is pretty poor, but much worse is to study God's Word without its ever finding a place in your heart.

5 Jesus had proved that He was the Messiah, but He threatened everything that they stood for.

6 That is what the Text says, "I have come to know"—presumably He is referring to knowledge gained by observation; they have clearly demonstrated in His presence that in fact they do not have God's love.

7 Might this be a prophetic reference to the Antichrist?

8 Here I follow what I consider to be by far the best line of transmission, although attested by less than 30% of the Greek manuscripts.

9 This is serious! Apparently one's attitude toward glory affects his ability to believe. If the approval of people is more important to you than the approval of God, you probably will not believe into Jesus.

about me. 47But since you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my sayings?"[1]

**Jesus is back in Galilee[2]**

6 1After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, or Tiberias.[3] 2And a huge crowd was following Him because they had seen His signs that He kept performing on the sick.[4] 3So Jesus went up on the mountain and sat down there with His disciples.[5] 4(Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near.)[6]

*Food for 15,000[7]*

5Then, raising His eyes and observing that a huge crowd was coming toward Him, Jesus says to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread so that these folks may eat?"[8] 6Now He said this to test him, for He Himself

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[1] The Lord is affirming the inspiration and authority of Moses' writings; in effect He places them on a level with His own word, for which He claims eternal authority (Luke 21:33).

[2] Almost a whole year has elapsed between chapters 5 and 6 here. For the events that transpired during that period see Luke 6:1-9:10, Mark 2:23-6:31 and the corresponding accounts in Matthew.

[3] From the parallel accounts it appears that He embarked at Capernaum. (Matthew informs us that He had just heard of the Baptizer's ignominious death and wanted to get away—perhaps to grieve and assimilate the news.) From John 6:23 we learn that the destination was near Tiberias. Capernaum and Tiberias are both on the western side of the Sea of Galilee, but there is a large bay between them; so they went over 6-8 miles of water.

[4] The crowd was not about to let Jesus get away. Mark makes clear that they ran along the shore—the faster runners stayed even with the boat and were waiting on the shore when the boat put in. The others were spread out behind for several miles (like in a marathon) and kept arriving. Any late starters would see the stragglers and could easily follow the action. Apparently He immediately started to heal the sick and went on to teach (Matthew 14:14, Mark 6:34). But just where was it? John says it was near Tiberias, but Luke 9:10 says it was "a deserted place belonging to a town called Bethsaida". [Less than 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have "into a town called Bethsaida" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), which makes Luke contradict himself (verse 12 says it was a deserted place) as well as the parallel accounts.] I assume that the place was indeed near Tiberias but did indeed belong to Bethsaida—either it had been deeded to the town somehow or the family that owned it was based in Bethsaida. Any near neighbors could not use it, so it was basically untouched—a great place for a picnic. For more discussion, please see `Bethsaida, or Tiberias?` on my website: www.prunch.org.

[5] Comparing the other accounts, I take it that they had already spent quite a bit of time on the beach, and the afternoon was wearing away. Since verse 6 says He knew what He was going to do, I assume it was a deliberate move to get the crowd up where there was grass so they could sit down in relative comfort.

[6] I frankly do not see what connection this information has with the story, but it does give us a time frame. Since chapter 5 happened at Passover time, there was an interval of a year.

[7] Why 15,000? Well, Matthew 14:21 says plainly that there were about 5,000 men besides women and children. In any crowd what is there usually most of? Since the context was not one of war (where there would be mostly men) I imagine there were at least 15,000 people there (like mothers with sick children).

[8] According to the other three accounts, the disciples had already suggested to Jesus that He send the people away to the surrounding towns to buy food. But let's stop and

knew what He was about to do. 7Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread[1] would not be enough for them, so that each of them could receive a little." 8One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, says to Him, 9"There is a little boy here who has five loaves of barley bread and two small fish, but what are they for so many?"[2]

10Then Jesus said, "Make the people recline." Now there was plenty of grass in the place; so the men reclined, about five thousand in number. 11Then Jesus took the loaves, and having given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples[3] to those who were reclining; so too with the fish, as much as they wanted. 12So when they were full, He says to His disciples, "Collect the leftover fragments so that nothing be wasted."[4] 13So they collected and filled twelve baskets[5] with fragments from the five barley loaves that were left over from those who had eaten.

14Now then, having seen the miraculous sign that Jesus performed the men said, "This One really is the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15So Jesus, perceiving that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king,[6] withdrew up the mountain again by Himself, alone.

**Jesus walks on water**

16Now as evening came on His disciples had gone down to the sea, 17and getting into the boat they started to go across the sea toward Capernaum.[7] Well it had been dark for a while and Jesus had not come

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think. How many bread stores would a village have, and how much bread would a store still have on hand at 5 p.m.? If they could have gone to every store within a radius of 30 miles, I doubt that they would have found even 10,000 loaves available. The Lord's question shows that their suggestion was really a cop-out.

1 How much bread can you buy with the wages for 200 days of manual labor? Probably an awful lot of it. But the crowd was so huge that Philip figured that even that much would not do it. [If a day's wage would buy 50 small loaves, for instance, that would make 10,000 loaves—more people than bread.]

2 I think it must be understood that the boy handed them over willingly, so he participated in the miracle. We also must give to God willingly, and when we do we participate in the results.

3 Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit the reference to the disciples here and have Jesus distributing directly to the crowd (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), making John contradict the other three Gospels.

4 Notice the care that nothing be wasted. A common human reaction would be, 'easy come, easy go'—since Jesus can make more any time He wants, why worry. But no, the Lord does not look at it that way.

5 They were large baskets, probably borrowed from the fishing boats (see verse 23 below). The disciples probably had help with the collecting; and in any case, they did not keep that food.

6 Only John records this information, plus what is given from verse 22 on. I take it that at least up to verse 40 Jesus is basically dealing with the 'king-makers'.

7 When they started out, the boat would be pointing toward Capernaum / Genesaret / Bethsaida; only as they went on would it become clear that their first destination was Bethsaida (Mark 6:45).

to them.[1] 18Further, the sea was being agitated by a strong wind blowing. 19Then, after they had rowed some three or four miles,[2] they see Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat; and they were afraid. 20But He said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid!"[3] 21Then they wanted to receive Him into the boat,[4] and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.[5]

**The 'king-makers' return to Capernaum**

22The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea,[6] having seen that there was no other boat there except the one into which His disciples had entered,[7] and that Jesus had not gotten into the boat with His disciples but only His disciples had gone away—23although other boats had come from Tiberias,[8] near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks—24so when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor His disciples were there, they got into the boats[9] and went to Capernaum, looking for Jesus.[10] 25When they found

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[1] This statement puzzles me. The author of this Gospel was in that boat. Did they really expect Jesus to come to them over the water? How? Evidently they did not expect Him to come walking.

[2] The Text actually says 'twenty-five or thirty stadia'. In Matthew 14:24 over 99% of the Greek manuscripts have them "in the middle of the sea". If you draw a line from Tiberias to Bethsaida (see Mark 6:45) and put an X at four miles you will be in the middle of the widest part of the sea. Matthew further informs us that the wind was contrary and that Jesus came between 3 and 6 a.m. (the 4th watch). They had been on the water at least nine hours and most probably rowing most of that time (they were in a fishing boat, not a little rowboat). They were tired! From the parallel accounts it is clear that Jesus sent them on their way. He deliberately sent them into a difficult and trying situation. We need to understand that He may do the same with us.

[3] Only Matthew records that Peter also took a little walk.

[4] They were ready for some help.

[5] They were still some four miles from Bethsaida, so here we have another remarkable miracle—Jesus transported the boat those four miles instantaneously. There have been repeated references to crossing the sea, so the reading of the so-called 'critical text' in Luke 9:10 that places the feeding of the 5,000 in the town of Bethsaida is patently ridiculous. What would motivate the editors to print such a ridiculous reading in their text?

[6] These were men who stayed on the scene; I assume that they bedded down on the grass right there, waiting for Jesus to come down from the mountain—these were decision makers, and they still wanted to make Jesus king.

[7] Around 4% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "except the one into which His disciples had entered" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[8] The point seems to be that only one boat came with Jesus, so when it left there was no other at His disposal. The boats from Tiberias doubtless returned home for the night (the town was not far and the owners would prefer to sleep in their beds).

[9] How many people could those boats carry? Probably less than a hundred, all told, but these were special people who had stayed on the scene for a reason.

[10] From Matthew and Mark I gather that from Bethsaida Jesus went directly to Genesaret; verse 59 below makes clear that the men found Him in Capernaum, which was close by. So why did Jesus send the disciples to Bethsaida? Perhaps it was to give an accounting to the owner of the place where the multitude was fed—15,000 people can make quite a mess. (I suspect that Jesus had permission to use the place when He wanted to get away, but no one had foreseen such a crowd as that.)

Him on another side[1] of the sea they said to Him, "Rabbi, when[2] did you get here?"

*The Bread of Life*

**26**Jesus answered them and said: "Most assuredly I say to you, you are not seeking me because you saw miraculous signs, but because you ate the bread and were filled.[3] **27**Do not work for the food that wastes away but for the food that endures into life eternal, which the Son of the Man will give you;[4] because on Him God the Father has set His seal." **28**So they said to Him, "What should we do so that we may work the works of God?"[5] **29**Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe into the One whom He sent."[6] **30**So they said to Him: "Well then, what sign are you going to do so we may see and believe you?[7] What are you going to perform? **31**Our fathers ate the manna in the desert, just as it is written: 'He gave them bread from Heaven to eat.'"[8]

**32**Then Jesus said to them: "Most assuredly I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from Heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from Heaven. **33**For the bread of God is the One coming down out of Heaven and giving Life to the world."[9] **34**Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."[10] **35**So Jesus said to them: "I am the bread of the Life. Whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes into me will never thirst.[11] **36**But, as I told you, you have actually seen me, yet you do not believe. **37**All that the Father gives me will come

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[1] There is no definite article with 'other side', since it was just across the bay, not the other side of the lake.

[2] "When", not "how". Surely, they knew that Jesus could have taken a back trail through the hills and made it on foot without difficulty.

[3] He does not answer their question but goes to the heart of their problem—they want to make Him king for purely materialistic reasons. Certain kinds of people like free food; or maybe most people do; or maybe almost everybody does.

[4] Jesus will give the Life, but they have to work for the food that endures into that Life. So how do we "work for the food"? Most people have to work so as to have food to maintain their physical health and strength, and there are clear biblical strictures against laziness, so our Lord's statement presumably has to do with priorities. 'Making a living' should not be our top priority; like Jesus, our top priority should be to do the Father's will (Hebrews 10:7, John 4:34). What we build in 'gold, silver, precious stones' (1 Corinthians 3:12) will indeed "endure into" life eternal.

[5] I do not think they listened very well; they answered according to their own ideas.

[6] If we want to serve or please God, the first step is to believe into Jesus. After we belong to Jesus we have the privilege of participating in God's works.

[7] These guys are hard to believe—they had seen Jesus multiply the bread and fish; how much more of a sign did they want? They had been so impressed that they wanted to make Him king. But instead of offering free food Jesus is now demanding commitment; so they start to backpedal.

[8] See Exodus 16:4, Nehemiah 9:15 and Psalm 78:24.

[9] Jesus said that 'bread' 'gives life'. Bread was their staff of life; their physical life depended on it. Similarly, our spiritual life depends on Jesus.

[10] This seems to be a bit of a change in attitude. They are vacillating.

[11] I have underlined 'never' because Jesus was very emphatic.

to me, and the one who comes to me I will not throw out;[1] **38**because it is not to do my own will that I have come down out of Heaven,[2] but the will of the One who sent me. **39**Now this is the will of the Father who sent me, that I should lose nothing out of all that He has given me, but should raise it[3] up at the last day. **40**Again this is the will of Him who sent me, that everyone who 'sees' the Son and believes into Him may have eternal life, and **I** will raise him up at the last day."[4]

**41**Then the Jews[5] started complaining about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of Heaven." **42**And they were saying: "Isn't this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?[6] So how can he say, 'I have come down out of Heaven'?"[7]

**43**So Jesus answered and said to them: "Stop complaining among yourselves. **44**No one is able to come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him,[8] and I will raise him up at the last day. **45**It is written in the prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.'[9] Therefore everyone who listens and learns from the Father comes to me.[10] **46**(Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God—He has seen

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[1] "All that" is in the neuter gender and presumably includes more than people; but does it exclude people? "The one who" refers only to people. Jesus will not throw you out, but you can back out, decide to turn back.

[2] Here we have a plain statement: "I have come down out of Heaven". We can either accept it or reject it; those who say that Jesus was merely a good man are rejecting it.

[3] The manuscript evidence is badly divided here, but I take it that the best line of transmission has "it" rather than "him" (neuter rather than masculine)—in the preceding clause, "nothing out of all" is definitely neuter. The 'problem' is the verb "raise"—if it is taken as raising the dead then the direct object should be masculine. But "raise" is much more general in use, being used for erecting a building, lifting something up, etc. There is a contrast between verse 39 (things) and verse 40 (people). Verse 39 joins other passages that indicate that during the Millennium the earth will be restored to conditions reminiscent of Eden (compare Romans 8:19-22).

[4] Since only His contemporaries could see Jesus physically, everyone else has to 'see' Him spiritually. But in verse 36 the Lord says that even though they were seeing Him physically, they were not believing—so even for the contemporaries the 'seeing' had to be spiritual. Jesus Himself will raise up His followers, and to do that He has to be alive!

[5] I take it that up to verse 40 Jesus has been interacting with the 'king-makers'. The "Jews" here probably represent the ruling hierarchy—since Jesus was in the synagogue there were others present besides the 'king-makers'.

[6] I wonder why they refer to Joseph's parents. Of course they were assuming that Jesus was in fact Joseph's son.

[7] Notice that they understood clearly that Jesus was claiming that He had come down out of Heaven.

[8] As Jesus pointed out to Nicodemus (see note at John 3:6), without God's direct participation, no one is saved. But see the next verse.

[9] See Isaiah 54:13.

[10] In verse 44 Jesus emphasizes God's sovereignty; here He emphasizes human responsibility. We can 'listen and learn', and then 'come'. But in what sense is everyone "taught by God"? Everyone has the light of creation and is born with a conscience, at least. Perhaps there are other ways that God 'teaches'.

the Father.) 47Most assuredly I say to you: the one believing into me[1] has eternal life.

48"I am the bread of the Life.[2] 49Your fathers ate manna in the desert, and they died.[3] 50This is the bread that comes down out of Heaven, so that anyone may eat of it and not die.[4] 51**I** am the living bread which came down out of Heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. Actually, the bread that I will give is my flesh,[5] which I will give on behalf of the life of the world."[6]

**Chew flesh, drink blood**

52At that the Jews started quarrelling among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?!"[7] 53So Jesus said to them: "Most assuredly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of the Man and drink His blood, you do not have Life within yourselves. 54Whoever chews[8] my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life,[9] and I will raise him up at the last day. 55Really, my flesh is genuine food and my blood is genuine drink. 56Whoever chews my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him.[10] 57Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so also the one who feeds[11] on me will live because of me. 58This is the bread that came down out of Heaven. Whoever feeds on this bread of mine will live forever (in contrast to your fathers who

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1 About 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "into me" (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.). But the object of one's belief is of the essence; it is impossible to live without believing in something, so everyone believes. The reading of the so-called 'critical text' opens the door to universalism—the more so since the Lord is making a formal statement about how to be saved.

2 Since the Lord is obviously not claiming to be a loaf of literal bread, this is a figure of speech, a metaphor. Bread was their staff of life; they could not live without it. Jesus is our spiritual 'staff of life'; we cannot live spiritually without Him.

3 I take it that this statement is in response to theirs in verse 31 above.

4 Verse 49 presumably refers to physical death, while verse 50 refers to spiritual death. Notice the "anyone may eat"; this is an open invitation.

5 I take it that He is referring to His physical body, which represents the incarnation, with all that involved.

6 "The life of the world"—wow! Well, according to Romans 8:19-23 the whole creation is groaning, waiting for redemption.

7 They were being strictly literal, which could not be right—if they had started cutting Him up right there, they would have killed Him, and only those physically present could have eaten and drunk.

8 The verb here is different from the "eat" in verse 53. The verb here would typically be used of a cow munching fodder, but fodder is usually crunchy, so the munching is noisy. Because "munch" suggests noise, I have rendered "chew". In verse 56 chewing is linked to abiding, something we need to do every day.

9 The Roman Church takes this literally when they claim that during their Mass the priest actually converts the elements into flesh and blood (transubstantiation). But since John repeatedly records that it is by believing into Jesus, or His name, that one receives eternal life, then we should understand the eating and drinking here as metaphoric.

10 This reciprocal abiding takes place in the spiritual realm.

11 This is the same verb rendered "chew" above.

ate the manna and died).”[1] 59He said these things while teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum.

**Jesus loses many followers**

60Therefore, upon hearing this many from among His disciples said: “This word is hard! Who is able to hear it?” 61So Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples were complaining about this, said to them: “Does this offend you? 62What if you should see the Son of the Man going up to where He was at first?[2] 63The Spirit is the One who makes alive; the flesh does not benefit anything. The words that I speak to you are spirit, are Life. 64But there are some among you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the start who they were who did not believe, and who was betraying Him.) 65And He said, “That is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it has been granted to him by my Father.”[3]

66From that time many of His disciples turned back and stopped going around with Him.[4] 67So Jesus said to the twelve, “You don’t want to go away too, do you?” 68So Simon Peter answered Him: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69Further, we have come to believe and to know that you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!”[5] 70He said to them: “Did I myself not choose you twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.”[6] 71He was referring to Judas Iscariot, *son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

**Passover, 29 AD**

7 1After these things Jesus continued to move about in Galilee,[7] since He did not wish to move about in Judea because the Jews were wanting to kill Him.[8]

*Jesus and His brothers*

2Now the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles was near. 3So His brothers

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[1] Many of those who died in the wilderness died in rebellion against God, so the “died” here may refer to spiritual death as well.

[2] I find this question to be curious. How does it apply to what He has been saying?

[3] Verse 54 emphasizes human responsibility; verse 65 emphasizes divine sovereignty.

[4] It is possible that Jesus used the language that He did deliberately, precisely to reduce the number of ‘hangers-on’. Too many people hanging around would get in the way, reduce efficiency.

[5] Instead of “the Christ, the Son of the Living god”, perhaps 0.5% of the Greek MSS, of objectively inferior quality, read ‘the Holy One of God’ (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.)—obviously an inferior reading.

[6] The root meaning of ‘devil’ is ‘slanderer’; presumably Judas was a human being, so Jesus was not calling him a literal demon.

[7] All of chapter six took place in Galilee, so why make a point of Jesus’ continuing there? 6:4 says that the Passover was near, but 7:2 says that the Feast of Tabernacles was near—that is six months later. As a God-fearing male, Jesus had to go to Jerusalem for the Passover, so He must have gone, although none of the Gospels records it. I take it that He went without calling attention to Himself, and returned immediately to Galilee, for the reason given in the second half of the verse.

[8] Between 6:71 and 7:2 six months elapsed. For events that occurred during that period see Matthew 15:1-18:35, Mark 7:1-9:50 and Luke 9:18-50.

said to Him: "Leave here and go into Judea so your disciples also[1] may see the works that you are doing, **4**because no one does anything in secret while he actually wants to be in evidence. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world!" **5**For not even His brothers were believing into Him.[2]

**6**So Jesus says to them: "My time is not here yet, but your time is always available.[3] **7**The world cannot hate you, but does hate me, because I testify about it that its works are malignant.[4] **8**You guys go up to this feast; I am not going up yet[5] to this feast, because my time has not yet fully come." **9**So upon saying these things to them He stayed on in Galilee.[6]

**Jesus leaves Galilee—the last six months of His public ministry**

**10**Now when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He too went up, not openly but in secret like. **11**So the Jews were looking for Him at the feast and saying, "Where is he?" **12**And there was a lot of murmuring about Him among the crowds. Some were saying, "He is good"; others were saying, "On the contrary, he's deceiving the people." **13**However, no one was talking openly about Him for fear of the Jews.

*Jesus teaches in the Temple*

**14**Now when the feast was already half over Jesus went up into the temple and started to teach. **15**And the Jews were marveling saying, "How is this man learned, not having been educated?"[7] **16**So Jesus answered them and said: "What I teach is not mine, but His who sent me.[8] **17**If anyone wants to do His will,[9] he will know concerning the

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1 These would have to be dwellers in Judea who were not following Jesus around. Since His statement about eating His flesh, the number of hangers-on was drastically reduced, giving the impression that He was losing popularity in Galilee.

2 Well now, those brothers were not very nice, were they? I take it that they knew very well that the hierarchy was plotting to kill Jesus (it seems to me obvious that the Jews had researched Jesus' past and family, and had doubtless been working on His brothers), so they were trying to send Him to His death. With friends like that, who needs enemies?

3 I assume that He meant that they could repent and believe into Him at any time.

4 If we raise the standard of biblical values in the public arena, calling a spade a spade, the world will hate us too—try it and see!

5 Perhaps 3% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, omit "yet" (as in NASB, TEV, RSV, etc.). The reading of the so-called 'critical' text has the effect of ascribing a falsehood to Jesus, since He did in fact go to the feast (and doubtless knew what He was going to do). Among the 97% are $P^{66,75}$ and B—since the UBS editors usually attach the highest value to $P^{75}$ and B, isn't it strange that they reject them in this case?

6 That is, His brothers started out on their way to Jerusalem and Jesus stayed behind, for the moment.

7 That is, He had never been to a recognized theological seminary, rabbinical school, or whatever. But He knew more than they did! (Which of course was hard for them to swallow.)

8 Jesus is evidently aware of what they are saying or thinking, since He addresses it.

9 If we want to **do**, we will know. The Lord did not say, if we just want to know—we have to be committed to obey before we know what the order is. Once we are committed to obey, it is in God's own interest to talk to us.

teaching, whether it is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. 18Someone who speaks on his own is seeking his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

**Moses versus the Jews**

19"Did not Moses give you the Law? And yet not one of you keeps the Law! Why do you want to kill me?" 20The crowd answered and said, "You *must* have a demon! Who wants to kill you?"[1]

21Jesus answered and said to them: "I did one work, and you all marvel. 22*Consider* this: Moses gave you circumcision (not that it comes from Moses, but from the patriarchs),[2] and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the Law of Moses won't be broken, are you angry at me because I made a whole man[3] well on the Sabbath?[4] 24Stop judging on the basis of appearances, but judge the righteous judgment."

**Public opinion divided**

25Now some of the Jerusalemites were saying: "Isn't this the man they are wanting to kill? 26Yet look! He is speaking openly and they are saying nothing to Him. Could it be true that the rulers know that this is really the Christ? 27On the other hand, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Christ comes nobody knows where He is from."[5]

28So Jesus while teaching in the temple, called out saying: "You do know me, and you know where I am from. Yet I have not come on my own, but the One who sent me is true, whom you do not know. 29I do know Him because I am from Him, and He sent me."[6] 30So they tried to arrest Him, yet no one laid a hand on Him because His hour had not yet come.

31Now many of the crowd were believing into Him, and they were saying, "Whenever the Christ comes He won't perform more signs than these which this man has done, will He?" 32The Pharisees heard the

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1 The 'crowd' is made up of common people who are not in the know with a sprinkling of Pharisee types, the bosses. Jesus is really addressing the bosses, but the common people don't get it.

2 It started with Abraham, 430 years before Moses.

3 The Lord seems to be contrasting circumcision, which involves only a small part of the body, with His healing, which involved the whole body.

4 Hey, the last healing on a Sabbath in Jerusalem, as recorded by John, happened a year and a half ago! In fact, none of the four Gospels records any activity by Jesus in Jerusalem during the year and a half since John 5. Jesus seems to be implying that they are still mad about that!

5 If no one could know where the Messiah came from, how come the rulers were able to tell Herod that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem? The people had bought into a false idea. Verses 25-27 presumably record bits from various speakers.

6 The Lord is very emphatic about His heavenly origin. Of course the Jews want to be rid of Him because He most definitely is not fitting into their scheme of things. I take it that there is divine intervention at work so they are not able to arrest Him.

crowd murmuring these things about Him, so the Pharisees and the chief priests sent operatives to arrest Him.

**33**Then Jesus said: "For a little while I am still with you, and then I go to the One who sent me. **34**You will look for me and not find me; also, where I am you cannot come."[1] **35**So the Jews said among themselves: "Where does this fellow intend to go that we won't find him? He doesn't intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks, does he? **36**What word is this that he spoke, 'You will look for me and not find me'; also, 'where I am you cannot come'?"

*The last day of the Feast*

**37**Now on the last and most important day of the Feast, Jesus stood up and called out saying: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. **38**The one believing into me, just as the Scripture has said, out from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water."[2] **39**(Now He said this about the Spirit, whom those believing into Him were going to receive,[3] in that the Holy Spirit had not yet been *given* because Jesus had not yet been glorified.)

**40**So upon hearing this word many from the crowd began to say, "This One really is 'the Prophet'!" **41**Others were saying, "This One is the Christ!" Others were saying: "Surely the Christ isn't coming out of Galilee, is He? **42**Doesn't the Scripture say that the Christ comes out of the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"[4] **43**So there developed a division in the crowd because of Him. **44**Further, some of them were wanting to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him.

**The operatives are empty-handed**

**45**Then the operatives came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why haven't you brought him?" **46**The operatives answered, "No man ever spoke like this man!" **47**So the Pharisees answered them: "You haven't been fooled too, have you? **48**None of the rulers or the Pharisees have believed into him, have they? **49**But this

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[1] "Where I am"—that is what the Text says. I imagine that the idea is the same as in John 3:13, "who is in Heaven". He has just said in verse 33 that He is going back to Heaven. So, He is telling those Jewish leaders that they cannot go to Heaven!

[2] Just where does the Scripture say this, and why "rivers" (pl); wouldn't one be enough? Reference Bibles will give a variety of suggestions, none of which really fit. I personally believe that the reference is to Ezekiel 47:1-12, and most especially to verse 9 where the Hebrew text has two rivers (or torrents)—when that river got to the Dead Sea it evidently divided, so as to go along both banks at once. Living water takes life and health wherever it goes. So how much living water is flowing out of me, or you? The secret of that water is given in verse 12: "their water flows from the sanctuary" (compare 1 Corinthians 6:19).

[3] When you believe into Jesus you receive the Holy Spirit. Please read "Baptisms in the Bible" on my website: www.prunch.org.

[4] I smell a rat. In verse 27 above they claimed that no one knew where the Christ was coming from; now here they say it is Bethlehem. I suspect that there were people planted in the crowd whose job it was to create confusion, and they felt no obligation to tell the truth.

crowd that doesn't know the law is accursed!"

**50**Nicodemus (the one who came to Him at night, being one of them) says to them, **51**"Our law doesn't judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing, does it?" **52**They answered and said to him: "You aren't from Galilee too, are you? Search and see that no prophet has ever arisen out of Galilee."[1] **53**So each one went to his own house.[2]

*The Light of the world at work*

8 **1**Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.[3] **2**And at dawn He went again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; so sitting

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[1] A bit of an overstatement—Jonah was from Gath Hepher of Zebulon, north of Natsareth (2 Kings 14:25). Further, it was beside the point, an *ad hominem* argument. Not only that, they knew that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

[2] Some 15% of the Greek manuscripts omit 7:53-8:11, including most of the early ones; but that means that 85% contain it, including the Latin tradition that dates from the 2nd century. Assuming (for the sake of the argument) that the passage is spurious, how could it ever have intruded here, and to such effect that it is attested by some 85% of the MSS? Let's try to read the larger passage without these verses—we must go from 7:52 to 8:12 directly. Reviewing the context, the chief priests and Pharisees had sent officers to arrest Jesus, to no avail; a 'discussion' ensues; Nicodemus makes a point, to which the Pharisees answer:

(7:52) "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee."

(8:12) Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world…"

What is the antecedent of "them", and what is the meaning of "again"? By the normal rules of grammar, if 7:53-8:11 is missing then "them" must refer to the "Pharisees" and "again" means that there has already been at least one prior exchange. But, 7:45 makes clear that Jesus **was not there** with the Pharisees. Thus, UBS [the 'critical' text] introduces an aberration. And yet, Metzger claims that the passage "interrupts the sequence of 7.52 and 8.12 ff." (p. 220)! To look for the antecedents of 8:12 in 7:37-39 not only does despite to the syntax but also runs afoul of 8:13—"the Pharisees" respond to Jesus' claim in verse 12, but "the Pharisees" are somewhere else, 7:45-52 (if the Pericope is absent).

Metzger also claims that "the style and vocabulary of the pericope differ noticeably from the rest of the Fourth Gospel"—but, would not the native speakers of Greek at that time have been in a better position than modern critics to notice something like that? So how could they allow such an "extraneous" passage to be forced into the text? I submit that the evident answer is that they did not; it was there all the time. I also protest their use of brackets here. Since the editors clearly regard the passage to be spurious they should be consistent and delete it, as do NEB and Williams. That way the full extent of their error would be open for all to see. Unfortunately, NIV, NASB, NRSV, Berkeley and TEV also use brackets to question the legitimacy of this passage.

But why was the story omitted? Leading church father and theologian, Augustine (about A.D. 430), answers: "Certain persons of little faith, or rather enemies of the true faith, fearing, I suppose, lest their wives should be given impunity in sinning, removed from their manuscripts the Lord's acts of forgiveness toward the adulteress, as if He who said 'sin no more' had granted permission to sin." (See Augustine, "Adulterous Marriages" [2.7] trans. by Charles T. Huegelmeyer, in *Saint Augustine: Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects* [New York: Fathers of the Church, 1955], p. 107.) [I took this material on Augustine from *Living Water: The Gospel of John—Logos 21 Version*, Absolutely Free Incorporated, p. 74.]

[3] There is a basic three-way split in the manuscript attestation for these twelve verses (7:53-8:11)—the three major groups represent three lines of transmission that are both

down He started to teach them.

**A dirty deal**

3Then the scribes and the Pharisees bring to Him a woman caught in adultery; and placing her in the center 4they say to Him: "Teacher, we found this woman committing adultery, in the very act. 5Now in our law Moses commanded that such women are to be stoned;[1] so what do you say?" 6They said this to test Him, so that they might have an accusation against Him.

But stooping down[2] Jesus began to write on the ground with His finger, taking no notice. 7But since they kept on asking Him, straightening up He said to them, "Let the one without sin among you throw the first stone at her." 8And stooping down again He continued writing on the ground.[3] 9Now upon hearing *this*, and being convicted by their conscience, they began to go out one by one, starting with the older ones down to the least. So only Jesus was left, with the woman in the center.[4]

10So straightening up, and not seeing anyone except the woman, Jesus said to her: "Where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11So she said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said to her: "Neither do I condemn you.[5] Go, and from now on don't sin anymore!"

**Jesus dialogs with the Pharisees**

12Then Jesus spoke to them again,[6] saying: "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk around in the darkness,[7] but will have the light of the Life."[8] 13So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are

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ancient and independent. It follows that where two agree against one, the two presumably retain the original reading. In these verses there are 25 places where two groups agree against one, six others where 2½ agree against ½, and just one place where each of the three major groups has its own reading. It happens that one of the three groups is always in the majority (in the 31 places), so it is the only one that is always right in those 31 places—so in the one place where there is a three-way split I follow that group, because it has the best credibility quotient.

1 According to Leviticus 20:10 **both** the man and the woman were to be executed—so where is the man? This was obviously a put-up job; if they got her "in the act" the man was probably one of them. Those guys were dirty!

2 Recall that He is sitting, so He just bends forward so as to reach the ground.

3 A small minority of the manuscripts completes the verse with "the sins of each one of them". I, for one, would like to know what Jesus wrote, and I wouldn't be surprised if He wrote just that, but I take it that John did not record that phrase.

4 The center of what? The center of the crowd—the accusers had all left, but the crowd wasn't going any place! They hadn't seen a show like this for a long time!

5 Jesus was not even a witness, and it required at least two witnesses to condemn; so of course He could not condemn her. But He makes clear that He does not condone her behavior.

6 "Them" refers to the crowd, and "again" means that He resumes His teaching after having been so rudely interrupted. The interruption occupies verses 3-11, so we are referred back to verse 2.

7 "The darkness" = Satan's kingdom.

8 There is a certain secret society that requires a candidate to declare that he is coming out of darkness in search of light. A Christian who does this is formally denying Jesus, and He will deny before the Father anyone who does that (Matthew 10:33).

testifying about yourself; your testimony is not valid." 14Jesus answered and said to them: "Even though I testify about myself, my testimony is valid, because I know where I came from and where I am going.[1] But you do not know where I come from or where I am going. 15You are judging according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. 16Yet even if I do judge, my judging is valid, in that I am not alone *in judging*, but I and the Father who sent me *are together*. 17It is written precisely in your law that the testimony of two men is valid: 18I am one testifying concerning myself and the Father who sent me testifies concerning me." 19Then they said to Him, "Where is your father?"[2] Jesus answered: "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me you would also know my Father." 20Jesus spoke these words in the treasury, while teaching in the temple; yet no one arrested Him, because His time had not yet come.[3]

**"you will die in your sins"**

21Then Jesus said to them again: "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where **I** am going you cannot come."[4] 22So the Jews said, "He won't kill himself, will he, since he says, 'Where I am going you cannot come'?"[5] 23He said to them: "You are from below; I am from Above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.[6] 24That is why I told you that you will die in your sins, because if you do not believe that I am,[7] you will die in your sins."[8] 25So they said to Him, "Who are you?" And Jesus said to them: "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. 26I have many things to say and to judge about you, but He who sent me is true, and what I myself have heard

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[1] An interesting argument—why would His knowing His origin and destination validate His witness? I imagine that He is really referring to His identity; as God His witness is always valid.

[2] Their question is reasonable. Since Jesus is adducing His Father as a witness they want to know where they can find Him, to confirm the witness. But Jesus does not give a direct answer, as He usually did not, when dealing with Pharisees.

[3] Supernatural intervention is implied.

[4] I wonder if the Lord is not referring to two future stages, short and long range—they thought it was short range; He meant long range. Since there are still six months to go until His death, He will go away from Jerusalem (He divided those six months between Judea and Perea) and they will be looking for Him, to kill Him. That is the short range. Long range—since they will not repent, they will die lost and so not go to Heaven.

[5] But of course they could kill themselves too, and would die sooner or later in any case, so they would be together in Hades (on that hypothesis).

[6] Here we have a plain statement.

[7] Most versions supply a 'He', making the phrase "I am He"; but the Text just has "I am". Any Jew would immediately think of Jehovah calling Himself 'I am'. Having just said that He was from Above, and not of this world, it seems to me clear that Jesus is claiming to be Jehovah—but they just do not want to get the point.

[8] To "die in your sins" is to be spiritually lost. If they do not recognize Him as the Messiah, they are lost. They have already seen more than enough evidence, but have rejected it; since Jesus knows that they are not going to turn around, He states that they are lost. (Here it is 'sins' (pl) while in verse 21 it is 'sin' (sg); if a difference is intended I don't know what it is.)

from Him—these things I say to the world."[1] 27They did not understand that He was speaking to them about the Father.[2] 28Then Jesus said to them: "When you lift up the Son of the Man, then you will know that I am[3] and that I do nothing from myself; but just as my Father has taught me, these things I speak. 29And the One who sent me is with me. The Father has not left me alone, because I always do the things that please Him."[4]

**"the Truth will make you free"**

30While He was saying these things many believed into Him. 31So Jesus said to those Jews who had believed Him: "If you abide in my word, you really are my disciples;[5] 32and you will know the Truth, and the Truth will make you free."[6] 33They answered and said to Him: "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free'?"[7] 34Jesus answered them: "I tell you most assuredly that everyone committing sin is a slave of sin.[8] 35Now the slave does not remain in the household forever; the son does remain forever.[9] 36Therefore, if the Son should make you free, you really will be free. 37I know that you are descendants of Abraham, but you are

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1 Again, Jesus links His teaching directly to the Father.

2 But they should have—their blind spot may have been the result of supernatural interference. (In John 5:17-18 they had already understood that He was making Himself equal with God.)

3 With the supernatural darkness from 12:00 to 3:00, the earthquake, the torn veil, and later the report of the guards at the tomb, they would know for sure that they had crucified the Messiah. But they would not (perhaps could not) repent. Their doom was sealed.

4 Presumably if we always did the things that please the Father He would not leave us alone either. I suspect that when we choose to do wrong the Father lets us fend for ourselves.

5 So what happens if we <u>don't</u> abide in His Word? And how can you abide in something that doesn't exist (for you)? There are still thousands of languages spoken in the world that do not have even one verse of the Bible translated into them. How can speakers of such languages be true disciples of Jesus? I have actually heard some who claim they have been 'baptized in the Spirit' say they don't need the Bible, because the Holy Spirit speaks to them directly. Now why would the Holy Spirit speak to someone who disagrees with the Lord Jesus? In this connection, notice especially John 16:14-15.

6 Free from what? Free from self, free from sin.

7 The ones who were believing were sprinkled throughout the crowd, but Jesus' opponents were still in the front row. I assume from verse 37 that it is the opponents who speak here in verse 33. They conveniently forget that they are under the Roman yoke.

8 Apart from Jesus Christ every human being is a slave of sin. The only way out is to become a slave of Jesus Christ. The only true freedom available in this life is through submission to Him.

9 A son becomes part of the genealogical record, a slave does not. Some versions capitalize "Son" here (as in the next verse), but I take it that Jesus is making a generic statement. However, in verse 36 it must be "Son", because "make <u>you</u> free" is plural, referring to His hearers.

wanting to kill me because my word finds no place in you.[1] **38**On my part, I speak what I have observed with my Father, while on your part you do what you have observed with your father."[2]

**"your father is the devil"**

**39**They answered and said to Him, "Our father is Abraham!" Jesus says to them: "If you were children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham; **40**but now you are wanting to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God.[3] This *sort of thing* Abraham did not do! **41**You do the works of your father." Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication;[4] we have one Father—God."[5] **42**So Jesus said to them: "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I came forth from God and I am here.[6] Further, I have not come on my own, but He sent me. **43**Why don't you understand what I say?—because you are not able to *really* hear my word.[7] **44**You are of your father the devil,[8] and it is the desires of your father that you want to do. He was a murderer[9] from the beginning and has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him.[10] Whenever he speaks the lie he speaks from his own things, because he is a liar and the father of *lying*.[11] **45**But since I speak the truth you do not believe me. **46**Which of you convicts me of

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1 Their hearts were closed against His message. He was demanding a change of world view.

2 Jesus has affirmed several times that He could observe the Father, but in what sense could the Jews observe Satan? Our Lord's statement makes me curious. Perhaps the Jews were doing what they saw Satan doing (rather than seeing him physically). Some 10% of the Greek manuscripts have 'heard from' rather than "observed with".

3 Here Jesus identifies clearly the source of His teaching: 'my Father' equals 'God'.

4 The Jews had doubtless done exhaustive research on Jesus. They knew that He was born within six months after the wedding of Joseph and Mary, and that He was born full size. [Recall that Jesus had been rejected by the people of Natsareth, so there were plenty of people who would be happy to 'spill the beans'.] Assuming, as they did, that the father was human, whether Joseph himself or someone else, Jesus would be the result of fornication. So they here throw that information in Jesus' face.

5 Since Jesus has rejected their claim to Abraham, they now claim God!

6 As John will write later, "he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (1 John 4:20). So anyone who loved the Father (not having seen Him) would certainly love the Son who was physically present and visible. Jesus keeps reiterating His divine origin.

7 Their 'father' had blinded their minds (2 Corinthians 4:4). Those Jewish leaders were "sons of the disobedience" if there ever were any, and Satan is actively at work in such people (Ephesians 2:2).

8 1 John 3:8-10 makes clear that in fact Satan has lots of other 'children'.

9 They want to murder Jesus, showing thereby that they are worthy sons of their father. Satan instigated the death of the first couple, and may have influenced Cain to kill Abel.

10 If there is no truth in Satan then I conclude that it is impossible for him to tell the whole, undistorted truth. He may tell a partial truth, etc., but always with the intent to deceive.

11 So whenever we tell a lie we are doing Satan's thing. And whenever we accept a lie (like evolutionism, Marxism, Freudianism, humanism, relativism, etc.) we give Satan a foothold in our minds, which he usually turns into a stronghold.

sin?[1] So if I speak the truth, why do you not believe me? [47]The one who is of God hears God's words; that is why you do not hear, because you are not of God."[2]

[48]So the Jews answered and said to Him, "We say that you are a Samaritan and have a demon[3]—are we wrong?" [49]Jesus answered: "**I** do not have a demon; rather, I honor my Father, while you dishonor me. [50]Yet I do not seek my glory; there is One who seeks and judges. [51]Most assuredly I say to you, if anyone should keep my word he will never ever see death."[4]

**"before Abraham was, I AM"**

[52]So the Jews said to Him: "Now we know that you have a demon! Abraham died and so did the prophets; yet you say, 'If anyone should keep my word he will never ever taste death'! [53]Surely you aren't greater than our father Abraham, who died?[5] And the prophets are dead. Who 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.'[6] [55]Yet you have not known Him, but I do know Him. And if I should say that I do not know Him I would be a liar just like you (pl);[7] but I do know Him and I keep His word. [56]Your father Abraham was overjoyed to see my day;[8] yes, he saw it and rejoiced."

[57]So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old,[9] and you have seen Abraham?!" [58]Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly I say to

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1 I suppose that the point here is that if they could point to any sin in His life this would raise a question about His character, and therefore about His credibility. But since they can't, His character is above question; so they should believe Him.

2 Here is another plain statement.

3 A lot of people heard Jesus say that the leaders were not of God but of the devil. They did not want to swallow that in silence but they could not refute Him either, so they resort to 'ad hominum' argument.

4 The Lord is unusually emphatic here. He is evidently referring to spiritual death, but the Jews took it as referring to physical death. Notice that He said "keep my word"—again the emphasis is on commitment and obedience.

5 Of course He was greater than Abraham, but they were wearing spiritual blinders.

6 They have been refusing to understand repeated hints, so here Jesus makes a flat statement: His Father is God, Jehovah. Perhaps 30% of the Greek manuscripts have 'your God', making it an indirect quote.

7 Their father is a liar; they are liars. Rather than being conciliatory, Jesus is definitely aggressive. If any of them are to be saved they have to start on the basis of abject surrender.

8 What day was that? I suppose He is referring to the time that He, Jehovah the Son (the Angel of Jehovah), paid Abraham a personal visit. From the Record it is clear that Abraham knew very well that he was talking with Jehovah. Don't you know that was the high point in Abraham's life! Hey, just stop and think about what happened.

9 This statement intrigues me. Jesus was thirty-three, and they had researched His past, so why did they say 'fifty'? Could it be that Jesus looked older than He was? I wonder if the heavy pressures of His life style and ministry did not take a toll on His physical body, making Him prematurely gray, as it were.

you, before Abraham came to be, I AM!"[1] **59**Then they picked up stones to throw at Him;[2] but Jesus was concealed[3] and went out of the temple, going through the middle of them; yes, that is how He got away!

*The man born blind*

9 **1**Now as He was passing by He saw a man blind from birth. **2**And His disciples asked Him saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, in that he was born blind?"[4] **3**Jesus answered: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but so that the works of God might be displayed in him.[5] **4**I[6] must accomplish the works of Him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. **5**While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."[7]

**The man is healed**

**6**Upon saying these things He spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud on the blind man's eyes.[8] **7**And He said to him, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, 'Sent'). So he went and washed, and came away seeing!

**8**Then the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind[9] started saying, "Isn't this the man who sat begging?" **9**Others said,

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[1] Here Jesus is openly, unmistakably claiming to be Jehovah. They are obliged to get the point, and not wanting to acknowledge Him they pick up stones. At this point to argue, as some have done, that Jesus was merely a good, moral man won't wash. Either He was God, as He claimed; or He was a charlatan, a megalomaniac; or He was demonized. The Jews at that time took the third option; I take the first.

[2] Since certain situations demanded a stoning, there were doubtless piles of ammunition placed strategically around the temple premises.

[3] The familiar "hid Himself" is not the best rendering here. Jesus did not try to hide behind a pillar, or whatever. Obviously they would have seen Him and started stoning. He became invisible and simply walked out, passing right through the middle of them. About half a percent of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "going through the middle of them; yes, that is how He got away" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The 99.5% are doubtless correct, and supply an important detail.

[4] Wait a minute—if being born blind was the result of the man's own sin (as they suggest), when did he commit it? In any case, Jesus rejects their basic premise.

[5] Wow! Did you get that? Jesus is saying that it was part of the Plan—the man was born blind so that the Messiah could come along years later and give him sight. (Does that fit anywhere in your theology?)

[6] Perhaps half a percent of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read "we" for "I" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). Virtually the same handful of manuscripts also has "Him who sent <u>us</u>" (in this verse), but none of the versions mentioned goes along—a curious proceeding.

[7] In Matthew 5:14 Jesus said to His disciples, "You are the light of the world"—so as long as we are here there is light, and so it isn't night yet. We had better get on with accomplishing the Father's works.

[8] How unhygienic! The dirt in the street or road would be mixed with manure and all sorts of other contaminants, and human saliva is worse than a dog's. So why did Jesus do it? I don't know. Apparently it was part of His game plan to use a variety of procedures. There are cultures today where the shamans use saliva to heal, and to them this incident is especially significant.

[9] Instead of "blind", perhaps 10% of the Greek manuscripts read 'a beggar', as in most modern versions.

"This is he"; still others, "He is like him." He kept saying, "I'm the one!"

**10**So they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" **11**He answered and said: "A man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So when I went and washed, I saw!" **12**Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He says, "I don't know."

**The man is excommunicated**

**13**They bring the man who was formerly blind to the Pharisees. **14**(Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.)[1] **15**So once again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. So he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."[2] **16**Then some of the Pharisees said, "This man cannot be from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath,"[3] Others were saying, "How can a sinful man do such signs?" And there was a division among them. **17**So they address the blind man again, "What do you say about him, in that he opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."[4]

**18**However the Jews did not believe concerning him that he was blind and received sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had received sight. **19**And they asked them saying: "Is this your son, whom you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" **20**So his parents answered them and said: "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; **21**but by what means he now sees we don't know, or who opened his eyes we don't know. He is of age. Ask him. He will speak for himself." **22**His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, because the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ he would be barred from the synagogue.[5] **23**That is why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

**24**So they summoned the man who had been blind a second time and said to him: "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner."[6] **25**So he answered and said: "That He is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know, that having been blind I now see!"[7] **26**So they said to him again: "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"[8] **27**He

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[1] 7:37 says "the last day of the feast", which was Tuesday, Oct. 17, 29 (I believe). Chapter 8 took place the next day, Wednesday. Here we are told that the healing of the blind man happened on a Saturday. Since we are still in Jerusalem (verse 7—Siloam is there), it may well have been the first Saturday after the events of chapter 8.

[2] The man's answer is almost rude in its brevity. I don't think he liked the Pharisees.

[3] Of course they were defining the terms—it was the rules they had imposed on the Sabbath that were not being kept.

[4] He is being cautious. I conclude from the context that he believed Jesus to be the Messiah, but like his parents he was aware of the risk involved (verse 22).

[5] In their culture, to be barred from the synagogue was to be socially ostracized.

[6] How so? If the cure was effected by a sinner, then it wasn't by God. In their desperation they could not think logically.

[7] Beautiful!

[8] The poor Jews are in a pickle. The fact of an extraordinary work of creation (giving sight where there never was any) won't go away, yet they refuse to acknowledge the

answered them: "I already told you and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don't want to become His disciples too, do you?" **28**They reviled him and said: "You are that fellow's disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. **29**We know that God spoke to Moses; but this fellow—we don't know where he's from."[1] **30**The man answered and said to them: "Why, this is remarkable—you don't know where He is from; yet He opened my eyes! **31**Now we know that God doesn't listen to sinners;[2] but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, to him He listens. **32**Since time began it was never heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.[3] **33**If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything." **34**They answered and said to him, "You were totally begotten in sins, and you are teaching us?" And they expelled him.[4]

**35**Jesus heard that they had expelled him, and finding him He said to him, "Do you believe into the Son of God?"[5] **36**He answered and said, "And who is He, Lord, that I may believe into Him?" **37**So Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and He is the One who is speaking with you." **38**So he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshipped Him. **39**And Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see, and those who 'see' may become blind."[6]

**40**And some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words and said to Him, "We aren't blind too, are we?" **41**Jesus said to them: "If you were 'blind' you would not have sin. But now you say, 'We see,' so

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obvious explanation. [Sort of like the 'scientists' of our day who refuse to acknowledge the Creator.]

1 Not precisely true.

2 He knew his Bible—Psalms 66:18.

3 Jesus had already restored sight to many blind people, but evidently this was the first instance of giving sight to one born blind, congenitally blind. No one challenged the man's statement. The man's argument here is very strong; irrefutable, in fact.

4 The Pharisees here demonstrate their moral and intellectual bankruptcy. They couldn't answer the man, he had bested them fair and square, so they resort to the cowardly tactic of expelling him. ("Totally born in sins"—like the disciples, the Pharisees figured there was a lot of sin involved, for the man to be born blind.)

5 Less than 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read "Man" instead of "God" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

6 In verse 5 of this chapter Jesus declared Himself to be "the Light of the world". Light enables people to see—"so that those who do not see may see". But too much light blinds—"and those who 'see' may become blind". The Pharisees had 'spies' dogging Jesus wherever He went, and they speak up in the next verse (40). Romans 2:17-20 explains their attitude:

> Look, you declare yourself a Jew, and rest on the Law, and boast in God, **18**and know the Will, and approve the superior things, being instructed out of the Law. **19**Further, you are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those in darkness, **20**an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and truth. ["The embodiment of knowledge and truth" is an excellent description of the Scriptures.]

The light of the Law enabled them to see, up to a point, but the Light that Jesus offered blinded them, since they did not want to acknowledge it.

your sin remains.[1]

*Jesus the Shepherd*

**A true shepherd**

10 [1]"Most assuredly I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. [2]But he who enters by the door is a shepherd[2] 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]And whenever he takes out his own sheep he goes ahead of them,[3] and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. [5]But they will not follow a stranger; rather they will run away from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." [6]Jesus gave them this illustration, but they did not understand what He was telling them.

**The Door**

[7]Then Jesus addressed them again: "Most assuredly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. [8]All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers,[4] but the sheep did not listen to them.[5] [9]I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved,[6] and will go in and out and find pasture.[7] [10]The thief comes only in order to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.[8] I have come so that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

**The Good Shepherd**

[11]"I am the good shepherd.[9] The good shepherd lays down his life on behalf of the sheep. [12]But the hired man, not being the shepherd and not owning the sheep, sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep, and

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[1] According to Romans 5:13, "sin is not imputed where there is no law", because it is the Law that defines what sin is (Romans 3:20). So those who are without the light of the Law are 'blind' in that sense, and their sin is not imputed. In contrast, the Pharisees prided themselves on having the light of the Law, to the point of being guides to the blind, but since they themselves did not obey the Law, their sin remained.

[2] "A shepherd"—the fold was communal, so the sheep belonged to a variety of shepherds. That is why each one had to call his own sheep by name (verse 3). The doorkeeper would know all the shepherds.

[3] He 'leads', not 'drives'. Going out they need to be led; only the shepherd knows where they are going.

[4] Although some 50% of the Greek manuscripts (also the three ancient versions) omit "before me", we are virtually obliged to understand this, in any case, since presumably Jesus means pretending to be the Messiah. Gamaliel refers to two possible candidates in Acts 5:36-37.

[5] Any true servants of God, such as Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25-38), would not be taken in by an imposter.

[6] Jesus is the doorway, the only means of access into eternal life, a truth He will emphasize again in John 14:6.

[7] What does a sheep want? Protection and pasture. These Jesus offers, but since people are more complex than sheep, He offers abundant life.

[8] The original thief is Satan. "The thief comes" VS "I have come"—since Jesus contrasts "the thief" with Himself, that thief is presumably Satan. Jesus calls him a murderer and a liar in John 8:44. A thief is usually a liar as well, and vice versa.

[9] Here Jesus changes the figure—as the good shepherd He really cares about the sheep, to the point of dying for them.

runs away; and the wolf snatches the sheep and scatters them. 13Now the hired man runs away because he is a hired man and it does not matter to him about the sheep.

14"I am the good shepherd, and I know my own *sheep*, and I am known by them. 15Just as the Father knows me, I also know the Father, and I lay down my life on behalf of the sheep. 16I also have other sheep, that are not of this fold;[1] I must bring <u>them</u> also, and they will listen to my voice; and there will be one flock, one shepherd.

17"Because of this the Father loves me, in that I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. 18No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself.[2] I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father."[3]

19Therefore there was another division among the Jews because of these words. 20Many of them were saying: "He has a demon and is raving mad. Why do you listen to him?" 21Others were saying: "These are not the sayings of someone who is demonized. A demon cannot open blind people's eyes, can it?"[4]

**"My sheep hear my voice"**

22Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem;[5] and it was winter. 23And Jesus was walking about in the temple,[6] in Solomon's porch. 24Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him: "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25Jesus

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1 "This fold" presumably refers to Israel, so the "other sheep" would be Gentiles. Paul develops this theme in Ephesians 2:11-22.

2 This is important! The cross did not kill Jesus; He dismissed His spirit—see John 19:30 and Matthew 27:50. In Mark 15:39 the loud shout followed immediately by death convinced the centurion. He had seen many crucifixions and was doubtless hardened to it. He knew that a person on a cross dies from asphyxiation. The weight of the body pushes the diaphragm against the lungs and you cannot breathe. Nailing the feet was a sadistic procedure that prolonged the agony—rather than die they would push against the nail to get a breath. Finally, when too weak to do that they would die for lack of air. (That is why they broke the legs of the two thieves; they then died within a few minutes.) Obviously, if you are dying without air you cannot shout! The centurion knew that the cross had not killed Jesus. But what mere human can just tell his spirit to leave? 2 + 2 = 4. Jesus had to be the Son of God.

3 The whole procedure was part of the Plan. An ordinary human being can kill himself, all right, but cannot change his mind later and come back. To Jesus the Father gave the ability to re-unite spirit and body—presumably a unique occurrence.

4 So they thought, but on the basis of what happens in Spiritist and Satanist circles, it appears that if a demon causes blindness (which they can), the same or a stronger one can remove it.

5 Chapter 8 happened on Oct. 18, 29 (I think). Chapter 9 and 10:1-21 presumably happened shortly after. Here in 10:22 it is Dec. 17, 29—two months later. I suppose that Luke 10:1-14:24 occurred during those two months; which means that the seventy were sent out during the last six months of the Lord's earthly ministry. Their target was interior Judea, in contrast to the twelve, whose target was Galilee.

6 It was probably cold and He was walking to stay warm.

answered them: "I did tell you, and you do not believe.[1] The works that I do in my Father's name—these testify concerning me. **26**But you do not believe because you are not among my sheep, just like I told you.[2] **27**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **28**And I give them eternal life, and they will never ever be wasted; and no one will snatch them out of my hand.[3] **29**My Father, who has given *them* to me, is greater than all;[4] and no one is able to snatch out of my Father's hand. **30**I and the Father are one."

**31**Therefore the Jews picked up stones[5] again to stone Him. **32**Jesus answered them: "Many good works I have shown you from my Father. For which one of them are you stoning me?" **33**The Jews answered Him saying, "It is not for a good work that we are stoning you, but for blasphemy; precisely because you, being a man, make yourself God!" **34**Jesus answered them: "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'?[6] **35**If He called them 'gods' to whom the Word of God came—and the Scripture cannot be broken[7]—**36**do you say 'You are blaspheming' to the One the Father sanctified and sent into the world because I said, 'I am God's Son'? **37**If I am not doing the works of my Father, do not believe me. **38**But if I am doing *them*, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him."[8]

**39**So they tried again to seize Him, but He escaped from their hand.[9]

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1 Quite right. Their 'suspense' was pretended; they simply did not want to acknowledge Him. So they twist and squirm.

2 When was that? Probably two months before, as recorded earlier in this chapter.

3 Being snatched is one thing; jumping out is another. You can't 'snatch' yourself, it must be done by an outside force, and no such force is greater than God. But, if you don't want to go to Heaven, you won't. Jesus puts it very plainly in John 15:6, "If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch…" 'Abiding' is up to us; we are not forced to do it. If we choose not to, we are out.

4 About 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts (with variations), of objectively inferior quality, read "What my Father has given me is greater than all" (as in TEV, etc.). Now there you have a stupid variant!

5 The temple courts were paved and presumably swept with some regularity. So how come there were stones lying around? I imagine there were piles of stones, of the right size and strategically placed, precisely for moments like this one. (If stoning serious offenders is an obligation, you need to be prepared.)

6 The reference is to Psalm 82:6, where the speaker is God (verse 1). Jesus calls the Psalms 'law'.

7 The Lord inserts this as an aside, but it is an important statement in itself—Scripture cannot be broken. If we build our lives on God's Word we have a secure foundation, one that cannot be shaken. (Your faith in that Word may be shaken, but not the Word itself.)

8 The Lord is still appealing to them to repent, to change direction.

9 See John 8:59 and Luke 4:30, where Jesus used supernatural means to avoid a premature death. Presumably this is a third instance.

**The last three months**

40He went away again across the Jordan, to the place where John was baptizing at first; and He remained there. 41And many came to Him and said, "Though John did not perform any sign, everything John said about this man was true." 42And many *of the people* there believed into Him.[1]

*Lazarus of Bethany*[2]

11 1Now a certain man, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha, was sick. 2(It was the Mary who [later][3] anointed the Lord with myrrh and wiped His feet with her hair whose brother Lazarus was sick.) 3So the sisters sent to Him saying, "Lord, please, the one you love is sick!"

**Jesus lets Lazarus die on purpose**

4Upon hearing it Jesus said, "This sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." 5(Now Jesus loved[4] Martha and her sister and Lazarus.) 6So, when He heard that he was sick He stayed where He was two more days![5] 7Then after this He says to the disciples, "Let us go into Judea again."[6]

8The disciples say to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and you are going back there?" 9Jesus answered: "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks during the day he doesn't stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10But if anyone walks in the night he does stumble, because the light is not in him."[7]

11Having said these things He says to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going in order to awaken him." 12His disciples said to Him, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will get well." 13But Jesus had spoken of his death, while they thought He was talking about natural sleep. 14So then Jesus said to them plainly: "Lazarus died. 15And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let

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1 We are back in Bithabara (see John 1:28). Although people came to John from all over, presumably the local residents, because of the convenience, would have made up a large percentage of the crowd. They heard John say, "Behold the Lamb of God!" This may be the first time that Jesus came back to this spot, and He may have stayed there for a bit. So they got their chance.

2 I take it that the events recorded in Luke 14:25-18:17, or most of the ministry in Perea, occurred between 10:42 and 11:1, here.

3 John is writing many years after the fact. Mary became identified by her famous deed, which actually took place several weeks after the raising of Lazarus, and is recorded in chapter 12.

4 Here the verb is *αγαπαω*; in verse 3 it is *φιλεω*.

5 And how long had it taken the messenger to find Him? Perhaps no more than a day; from Bethany to Jericho was all downhill.

6 They are in Perea, on the eastern side of the Jordan.

7 "The light is not <u>in</u> him"—I take it that here in verse 10 Jesus refers to spiritual darkness and light, because no one has sunlight inside him. With God's light inside, Jesus was not going to stumble, regardless of the time of day.

us go to him."[1] 16Then Thomas (called Twin) said to his fellow disciples, "Let's us go too, so that we may die with Him."[2]

17So when Jesus had come, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.[3] 18(Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away, 19and many of the Jews had joined the women around[4] Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.) 20Then Martha, when she heard that Jesus was coming,[5] went to meet Him; but Mary remained sitting at home.[6]

**Martha**

21Then Martha said to Jesus: "Lord, if You had been here my brother would not have died. 22But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." 23Jesus says to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24Martha says to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25Jesus said to her: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes into me, though he may die, will live; 26and everyone who both lives and believes into me will never ever die.[7] Do you believe this?" 27She says to Him, "Yes, Lord, I have come to believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, the One coming into the world."[8]

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[1] "Let us go to him"—would you say that about a corpse? Jesus knows what He is going to do.

[2] Thomas has received negative 'press', off and on, but his heart was in the right place.

[3] Four days—that seems like quite a bit. In verses 11 and 14 Jesus makes clear that Lazarus had died before He left Perea. Someone in a hurry could make the distance in one day. I can't prove it, but I imagine that the events recorded in Luke 18:18-19:27 (and the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark) occurred between verses 16 & 17, here. Jesus probably spent a night at Zacchaeus' house (see Luke 19:5), doing the climb (of over 3,000 vertical feet) from Jericho to Jerusalem the next morning. The Lord deliberately took His time, delayed His arrival.

[4] Instead of "the women around Martha", perhaps 1% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read just "Martha" (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, LB, etc.). It seems obvious that the sisters would be surrounded by women.

[5] Since Jesus stopped outside the village (verse 30), I wonder how Martha got the word. Perhaps Jesus sent one of the disciples, but there may well have been a lookout watching the road.

[6] Mary was quite possibly unhappy with Jesus. It was obvious that He had not come when called, or He would have arrived several days sooner. She would conclude that He just didn't care that much. Since Jesus acted deliberately, it is clear that the Plan involved making the sisters go through that emotional suffering. We need to fix firmly in our minds that belonging to Jesus does not mean a free ride—we too may suffer precisely because of the outworking of God's Plan. After all the discussion is over, we have two options: rebel or submit.

[7] The verb 'die' in verse 25 refers to physical death, in verse 26 it refers to spiritual death, while the verb 'live' refers to spiritual life (although one might translate the Text as 'will not die forever', rather than "will never ever die", indicating that physical death is temporary). Note that 'lives' and 'believes into' are in the present tense, and then note the word 'both'. Once you have life in Christ, you need to keep on believing.

[8] Martha was not a theologian; she may not have understood it all, but she knew who Jesus was! Like Martha, we don't have to understand everything, but we do need to know who Jesus is.

**Mary**

28Having said these things she went and called her sister Mary,
saying privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling you!" 29Upon
hearing it she gets up quickly and goes to Him. 30(Now Jesus had not yet
entered the village, but was in the place where Martha met Him. 31Then
the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, when they saw
Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her saying, "She is going
to the tomb to weep there.") 32Then, when Mary came where Jesus was,
upon seeing Him she fell at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had
been here my brother would not have died!"[1]

**Jesus is troubled**

33So when Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with
her crying, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.[2] 34And He said,
"Where have you put him?" They say to Him, "Lord, come and see."
35Jesus wept.[3] 36So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" 37But some of
them said, "Couldn't this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have
also kept this one from dying?" 38Then, groaning within Himself again,
Jesus arrived at the tomb.

**Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead**

It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39Jesus says,
"Remove the stone!" Martha, the sister of the deceased, says to Him,
"Lord, he already stinks; it's been four days!"[4] 40Jesus says to her, "Did
I not say to you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?"[5] 41Then
they took away the stone from where the deceased was lying. Jesus
raised His eyes and said: "Father, I thank You that You heard me.[6] 42I
know that You always hear me, but I spoke for the sake of the crowd
standing around, so that they may believe that You sent me."[7] 43Upon

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[1] I see a significant contrast between the sisters. Both of them say the same thing, but in a different tone. Mary is given over to her grief, she has no hope. Martha goes on to declare her confidence in Jesus; she still has hope.

[2] Why? What troubled Him? He would not be inconsistent with Himself and His commitment to the Father's will, the Plan. Seeing Mary's despair, perhaps He felt distress at the suffering the Plan was causing—He did not enjoy the fact that He was responsible for that suffering.

[3] The verb rendered 'wept' is really 'shed tears', different from the verb in verse 33, which is often associated with mourning. Jesus was not mourning, knowing what He was about to do. So why did He weep? Perhaps He was empathizing with their grief. But I imagine that their hopeless perspective also troubled Him—their view of death was inadequate.

[4] That is just what she said. Hey, at that moment Martha was not thinking about how it would read 2,000 years later! She reacted instinctively and blurted it out. Being a practical person she wanted to avoid further distress.

[5] When had He said that? The Text does not say, but I imagine it was during their earlier conversation—to me it is obvious that they said more than is recorded. In any event, we have here an important declaration. Have you seen the glory of God lately?

[6] He is saying in so many words that He and the Father had already talked about the plan of action.

[7] He was talking out loud on purpose, so that the people around would hear what He said.

saying these things He shouted with a loud voice,[1] "Lazarus, come out!"[2]
44And out the deceased came! Bound hand and foot with bandages,[3] and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus says to them, "Loose him and let him go."[4]

**The reaction**

45So many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed into Him. 46But some of them went off to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47Then the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council[5] and said: "What can we do? Because this man performs many miraculous signs; 48if we let him *go on* like this everybody will believe into him; and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation!"[6]

49But one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them: "You know nothing at all![7] 50Nor do you consider that it is advantageous for us[8] that one man should die on behalf of the people, rather than the whole nation perish!" 51(Now he did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die on behalf of the nation;[9] 52and not only on behalf of the nation, but also to

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1 That is what the Text says. Of course to shout is to use a loud voice, so the point seems to be that He really put His lungs into it—you could have heard Him a mile away! Well, Lazarus heard Him in Hades, which is in the middle of the earth somewhere (Matthew 12:40, Ephesians 4:9). Yes, but, could He not have done it with a whisper? I suppose so. So why did He yell? I do not know; I was not there. However, there may have been some symbolism involved—the longer one is dead the harder it is to bring him back.

2 As someone has said, if the Lord hadn't specified 'Lazarus' He might have emptied the graveyard!

3 He must have come jumping out like a kangaroo—with his feet tied he could not walk. It must have been an interesting sight. And with his eyes covered he could not see, so obviously he had supernatural help.

4 Would you have wanted to be the first one to start untying? I bet it was Martha. Notice that Jesus did not do what they could do; removing the stone and unwrapping Lazarus was up to them.

5 There is no definite article with 'council', so I doubt that it was the full Sanhedrin; they would not want Nicodemus, or any others who were sympathetic to Jesus, to be there.

6 This was their 'hidden agenda'. Jesus had more than substantiated His claim to be the Messiah, but they did not want the political consequences of installing Him. They were well off personally and did not want to 'rock the boat'.

7 Dear me, he wasn't very nice! But John says he was prophesying, so it may have been God telling them what He thought of them.

8 For "us" perhaps 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, read "you" (as in NIV, NASB, TEV etc. [LB omits]). Since this is a prophecy, the difference is significant.

9 The 'nation' in question would be the Jewish nation. I find it interesting that God would choose to speak through Caiaphas. He was not the real high priest (who was Annas) but reflected a Roman imposition whereby the Jews had to name a new one every year, and that year it was Caiaphas. Maybe from God's point of view Annas was worse, or he may not have been physically present.

gather into one all the scattered children of God.)[1] 53So from that day on they *really* plotted to kill Him.[2]

*A tactical withdrawal*

54Therefore Jesus no longer moved about openly among the Jews, but went away from there into the country near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim; and He stayed there with His disciples.[3]

*The Passover is near*

55Now the Jewish Passover was near, and many from the country went up to Jerusalem before the Passover in order to purify themselves. 56So they were looking for Jesus,[4] and as they stood in the temple they were saying to each other, "What do you think—that he won't come to the feast at all?" 57Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had together issued an edict that if anyone knew where He was he should report it, so they could arrest Him.

**The last week**

*Mary anoints Jesus' feet[5]*

12 1Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was (the deceased whom He raised from the dead). 2So they gave a dinner for Him there—Martha was serving, while Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. 3Then Mary, bringing a pound of pure oil of nard, very costly, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped His feet with her hair![6] And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

**Judas has a problem**

4Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son (who was about to betray Him), said, 5"Why wasn't this oil sold for 300 denarii[7] and given to the poor?" 6(Now he did not say this because the poor mattered to him, but because he was a thief and had the money-box; and used to pilfer what was put in it.)[8] 7So Jesus said: "Let her be; she has

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[1] The actual terms of the prophecy seem to be limited to the one nation, so I take it that verse 52 is an added application offered by John.

[2] They have been wanting to kill Him for some time, but at this point it becomes **top** priority.

[3] The time available was probably not more than two weeks, if that. It was a last bit of rest before the final storm, but the Lord doubtless took advantage of the opportunity to teach the disciples, without the distraction of the crowds.

[4] I think this refers back to verse 53—it is the leaders who are conversing among themselves.

[5] This incident must not be confused with the one recorded in Matthew 26:6 and Mark 14:3. Here Mary anoints His <u>feet</u> on Saturday (March 30, 30), while in Matthew and Mark an unidentified woman anoints His <u>head</u> on Wednesday (April 3, 30). The houses are also different.

[6] She has obviously forgiven Him for letting her brother die, and might even have been making amends for having doubted Him.

[7] 300 denarii represented one year's wages for a working man (manual labor); it was indeed an expensive offering.

[8] This is an editorial comment offered after the fact. Obviously they all trusted Judas at the time or they wouldn't have made him treasurer, and if he was caught the purse

performed this with a view to my burial. 8For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

**Lazarus <u>is</u> a problem**

9Then a large crowd of the Jews learned that He was there; and they came, not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. 10So the chief priests decided to kill Lazarus as well,[1] 11in that because of him many of the Jews were defecting and believing into Jesus.

*The Triumphal Entry*

12The next day a large crowd that had come to the feast,[2] when they heard[3] that Jesus was coming into Jerusalem, 13took branches from palm trees and went out to meet Him. And they started shouting: "Hosanna!" "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!"[4] "King of Israel!"[5] 14And finding a young donkey Jesus sat on it; just as it is written: 15"Fear no more, daughter of Zion. Look, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!"[6] 16(Now His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him, and they had done them to Him.)[7]

17So the crowd that had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. 18That is also why the crowd met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign. 19So the Pharisees said among themselves: "You can see that you are not making any difference! Just look, the world has gone off after Him!"

*Some Greeks*

20Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the feast.[8] 21So these men approached Philip, who was from

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would go to someone else. In fact, John may have received this information by divine revelation.

1 If they succeeded in killing Jesus first, then He would not be around to raise Lazarus a second time.

2 If they had "come" to the feast, they were not local residents. As Matthew 21:10 makes clear, the locals did not know what was going on.

3 I wonder how that happened.

4 This is a quote from Psalm 118:26, where "the Lord" is Jehovah.

5 Comparing the parallel accounts, we get a better idea of the variety of expression: "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Hosanna in the highest!" "Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the LORD!" "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

6 See Zechariah 9:9.

7 Presumably the Holy Spirit was involved in this—John 14:26, 1 Corinthians 2:13. The 'remembering' would not necessarily have been immediate or automatic.

8 It is difficult to know just when this episode occurred; as I compare all four accounts, I doubt that it happened as part of the triumphal entry. It seems more likely to me that it happened the next day, after the cleansing of the temple. The atmosphere would be tense, and as non-Jews (even though converts to Judaism) they were keeping a low profile; so they act indirectly.

Bethsaida in Galilee, and requested of him saying, "Sir, we want to see Jesus."[1] **22**Philip goes and tells Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. **23**But Jesus answered them saying: "The hour has come for the Son of the Man to be glorified.[2] **24**Most assuredly I say to you, if a grain of wheat, having fallen into the ground, does not die, it remains alone;[3] but if it dies it bears a lot of fruit.[4] **25**The one 'loving' his life will waste it, and the one 'hating' his life, in this world, will preserve it into eternal life.[5] **26**If anyone would serve me, let him follow me; and where **I**

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[1] They were not asking to look at Him from a distance; they could manage that without help. They wanted to talk with Him.

[2] The impression one gets is that Jesus did not address the Greeks directly, but I wonder if they didn't sort of tag along and thus were within earshot. We know that the Lord could read thoughts, and so He would know what they really wanted—I assume that what they wanted did not fit in the Plan at that point. However, if the Greeks were within range, verses 24-26 would be for them just as much as for anyone else.

[3] Once a seed is planted, if it doesn't germinate it rots, and is wasted, but the germinating process destroys the seed, it 'dies'. How this applies to us is developed in the next verse.

[4] Jehovah the Son had 'fallen to the ground' some 34 years before, but now He was going to die—the 'fruit' is still being produced!

[5] To understand what the Lord is saying here, let us go to the parallel passage in Luke 9:23-25. "If anyone desires to come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross each day and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. For what will it profit a man to gain the whole world but waste or forfeit himself?" What does the Lord mean when He speaks of losing one's "life"? One does not lose one's soul for love of Christ. Nor is the reference to being killed. Rather, Jesus has in mind the life we live, the accumulated results of our living. All that I have done up to this moment plus all that I will yet do until overtaken by death or the rapture of the Church, whichever happens first—that is the "life" that is at risk (in my own case).

Let us look at our Lord's words a little more closely. There seems to be a contradiction here—if you lose, you save; if you want to save, you lose. How can it work? The following context helps us out. In verse 26 Jesus explains verses 24-25 in terms of His second coming. The parallel passage, Matthew 16:27, is clearer. "For the Son of the Man is going to come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, and then He will repay each according to his deeds." Christ was thinking of the day of reckoning. In other words, "we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10) and "each of us will give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive his due according to what he has done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

I understand that 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 is referring to the same occasion, the day of reckoning. After declaring that Jesus Christ is the only foundation, Paul speaks of different materials that one might use in building on it: "gold, silver, precious stones" or "wood, hay, straw". (Although the primary interpretation of this passage presumably has to do with the performance of teachers and leaders in the church, I believe it clearly applies to the daily life of each believer as well.) The point is, our deeds will be tested by fire. If fire has any effect upon gold or silver it is only to purify them, but its effect on hay and straw is devastating! Okay, so what?

Let us go back to the beginning. God created the human being for His glory; to reflect it and contribute to it. I suppose we may understand Psalm 19:1 and Isaiah 43:7 in this way, at least by extension. But Adam lost this capacity when he rebelled against God. For this reason the sentence that weighs against our race is that we "fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But the Son came into the world to restore

am, my servant will be too.[1] Further, if anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.[2]

*A Voice out of Heaven*

**27**"Now my soul is distressed, and what should I say—'Father, rescue me from this hour'? But this is why I came to this hour— **28**'Father, glorify your name!'" Then a **Voice** came out of Heaven, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again!" **29**So the crowd that was standing by and listening said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."[3] **30**Jesus answered and said: "It was not for my sake that this Voice came, but for your sakes.[4] **31**Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be thrown out.[5] **32**While I, if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all *people* to myself." **33**(Now He said

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our lost potential. Ephesians 1:12 and 14 tell us that the object of the plan of salvation is "the praise of His glory" (see also 2 Corinthians 1:20). And 1 Corinthians 10:31 puts it into a **command**: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Now then, the point of all this is not to 'ruin' our lives, to take all the 'fun' out of them (as many seem to think). God is not being arrogant, unreason-able, too demanding. Quite the contrary—He is just trying to save us from throwing away our lives. Surely, because the glory of God is eternal (Psalm 104:31), and when I do something for His glory, that something is transformed and acquires eternal value—it becomes "gold, silver, precious stones". Works done for the glory of God will go through the fire without harm. On the other hand, what is done with a view to our own ambitions and ideas is "straw". We all know what fire does to straw!

So there it is. To be a slave of Christ means to live with reference to the Kingdom; it means to do everything for the glory of God. In this way the slave "saves" his life because he will be building it with "gold and silver", which will pass through the fire at the judgment seat of Christ without loss. In contrast, the believer who refuses to be a slave of Jesus builds his life with "hay and straw", which will be consumed by the fire—and so he "loses" his life; he lived in vain; the potential that his life represented was wasted, thrown away. What a tragedy!

[1] If we want to be where Jesus is, we need to stick close to Him. (Well, you know, that's really kind of obvious, but how many of us do it?)

[2] Each underlined pronoun corresponds to an emphatic pronoun in the Original Text. What the Lord did here was quite unusual; in other places He emphasized one pronoun, but not five in a row, and especially with all five referring to Himself! So what was He trying to tell us? I take it that He is telling us to focus on HIM, his person and our relationship to Him. He needs to be **number one**, without competition. He is talking about total commitment, but not without recompense—"the Father will honor him."

[3] It seems clear that the bystanders did not hear the words, at least not to distinguish them; they heard the Voice, which must have been impressive (they compared it to thunder). A similar thing happened on the road to Damascus; only Paul understood the words.

[4] How so, if they did not understand what was said? The Voice got their attention for what He would go on to say.

[5] "Thrown out" as ruler of this world; upon Christ's victory through the cross and the resurrection Satan was deposed. Satan continues to carry on as if he were still the ruler, but he is acting on the basis of bluff and usurpation. If Christ is now the true and legitimate ruler of this world, why is Satan allowed to carry on? The Father is 'seeking' those who will worship Him in spirit and truth, not because it is easy or convenient. So there has to be testing, there has to be an adverse context; so no one can claim that God is 'buying votes' (which was Satan's allegation about Job).

this to indicate by what kind of death He was about to die.)[1] **34**The people answered Him: "We have heard from the Law that the Messiah remains forever; and so how can you say, 'The Son of the Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'the Son of the Man'?"[2]

**35**Then Jesus said to them: "The Light will be with you just a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that darkness does not overtake you;[3] the one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. **36**While you have the Light,[4] believe into the Light, so that you may become sons of light."[5] Jesus said these things, and going away He was hidden from them.[6]

**An editorial comment**

**37**Although He had performed so many signs in their presence, they were not believing into Him; **38**so that the word spoken by Isaiah the prophet should be fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed what we heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD *really* been revealed?"[7] **39**Therefore they were unable to believe, in that Isaiah said again: **40**"He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,[8] lest they should see with their eyes and understand with their hearts and should turn around, and I

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[1] Again, although our Lord was literally 'lifted up', His intended meaning would not be immediately obvious to His hearers.

[2] I find it interesting that the people were evidently equating 'the Son of the Man' with the Messiah, which was precisely correct; but what Jesus was saying did not match their expectations.

[3] Since most people did their traveling on foot, they would understand this principle very well—you need to make as much distance as you can while there is light.

[4] Presumably He was referring to His physical presence among them.

[5] By believing into Jesus they would become 'sons of light'—they would live according to the values of the Kingdom of Light, not those of the kingdom of darkness.

[6] Since in verse 44 Jesus reappears and resumes speaking, He evidently stayed close by. He became invisible so He would not be bothered while He prepared His final word.

[7] The reference is to Isaiah 53:1. Many years ago (over 50) I did an exegesis of this passage for my Hebrew professor at Dallas Seminary. The section really begins at 52:13—in verses 13-15 Jehovah describes the suffering of the Messiah. In verses 1-3 the people of Israel try to justify or explain why they rejected Him; you can almost hear them whine: "Who would have believed what was reported to us? And to whom has the arm of Jehovah *really* been revealed?" (They argue that the way in which the Messiah was presented was unexpected, unreasonable, unacceptable.) The word usually rendered 'report' (in verse 38), ακοη, refers to something you hear, not something you say.

[8] Both Matthew (13:15) and Paul (Acts 28:27) also quote Isaiah 6:10 (as John is doing here), and they agree with the LXX (or the LXX agrees with them, since the LXX we know is based on inferior Alexandrian manuscripts); they give the impression that the people did it to themselves, rather than being a judicial act of God. What is involved is a different vowel pointing for the consonants of the main verbs. Since the original text had no vowel pointing, and both sets of pointings are possible and legitimate, we are looking at an option of the translator or interpreter. I imagine that both sides of the ambiguity are true, much as in the case of Pharaoh—during the first five plagues he hardened his own heart, after that God hardened his heart.

would heal them." 41Isaiah said these things when[1] he saw His glory[2] and spoke concerning Him.

42Nevertheless, even among the rulers many believed into Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, so they would not be expelled from the synagogue;[3] 43for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.[4]

*The last public word*

44Jesus called out and said: "The one believing into me believes not into me but into Him who sent me. 45And the one seeing me sees Him who sent me. 46I, Light,[5] have come into the world so that everyone who believes into me will not remain in the darkness.[6] 47Also, if someone hears my words and does not believe, I do not judge him; because I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.[7] 48The one who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken, that is what will judge him on the last day;[8] 49because I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me, He gave me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. 50And I know that His command is eternal life. So whatever I say, I say it just like the Father told me."[9]

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1 Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of inferior quality, read "because" instead of "when" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.). The difference in meaning is significant.

2 Wait a minute! Whom did Isaiah see? John is talking about Jesus, so when did Isaiah see Jesus? The quote in verse 40 is from Isaiah 6:10. The quoted words were spoken by Jehovah, verse 8, the One who was sitting on the throne, verse 1. In verse 5 Isaiah says of Him, "my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts". So John is affirming that the One on the throne was Jehovah the Son, Jesus. I love it!

3 To be barred from the synagogue was to be excommunicated, and in consequence to be socially ostracized.

4 This is bothersome. In Matthew 10:32 the Lord Jesus said, "whoever confesses me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in the heavens". So what happens if you don't confess? Like the rulers here who were 'secret believers'. But in verse 33 the Lord goes on to say, "whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in the heavens". Is there a difference between denying and keeping quiet? Proverbs 29:25 says, "the fear of man brings a snare". Writing to the Laodicean church the glorified Christ said, "because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:16). If confessing is to be 'hot', and denying is to be 'cold', then keeping quiet is to be 'lukewarm'. All in all it looks like the odds are in favor of confessing (see Luke 12:4-5). (See the note at John 5:44.)

5 In verses 35 and 36 He has already referred to Himself as "the Light"—here there is no article, so I take it that He is emphasizing the quality inherent in the noun.

6 Again, 'the darkness' refers to Satan's kingdom.

7 This refers to His first advent. At His second advent He will indeed judge.

8 'Ignorance of the law is no excuse.' If the Bible exists in your language and you know how to read (or you know someone who can read), then you could have learned Jesus' sayings. Claiming that you did not know will not hack it.

9 In John 5:19 Jesus affirms that he only did what He saw the Father do. Here He affirms that He only said what He heard the Father say. Although the Father and the Son are distinct persons, as Jesus repeatedly made clear, His identification with the

**The last night**

13 [1]Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world He loved them to the end.[1]

*Jesus washes the disciples' feet*

[2]And after supper[2] (the devil already having put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him),[3] [3]Jesus, knowing that the Father had given everything into His hands,[4] and that He had come from God and was going to God, [4]He gets up from the meal and lays aside His garments,[5] and taking a towel He tied it around Himself. [5]Then He poured water into the basin[6] and began to wash the disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel with which He was wrapped.[7]

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Father was so complete that to see Him was to see the Father, to believe into Him was to believe into the Father (verses 44-45, above).

1 This appears to be a cover statement, introducing the rest of the book. What Jesus would do in the upper room, in the garden, on the cross, after the resurrection, were expressions of His love for His own. His love took Him through to 'the end', the last consequence—nothing was left undone. How could He return to the Father if He didn't do all that had to be done? He had been sent to recover all that the first Adam had lost, and He did!

2 Less than 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, read 'during' supper (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.), which confuses the account. There was an ordinary meal, and then the Passover ritual itself. The meal was basically over, but they couldn't proceed with the ritual because they were ceremonially unclean—their feet hadn't been washed (they were dirty from the dust of the road).

3 This editorial aside seems to interrupt the flow of the narrative, but John does this sort of thing in other places as well. However, it furnishes important background information for verse 27 below.

4 The Plan depended on Him, was "in His hands". For Him to know that He was "going to God" (end of verse) meant that He knew He was going to win.

5 The Text has 'garments', plural, so the rendering 'robe' doesn't seem to fit. I gather that Jesus stripped down to a loincloth, or basic underclothing, which is what a servant might wear. Since He was about to perform the duty of a servant (that should have been there, but wasn't), it was a graphic symbolism.

6 Yes, 'the' basin. When the Lord sent some disciples to prepare the room, they would not only have to be sure that there were thirteen couches, properly arranged [they did not sit on chairs, they reclined on couches, with their heads in toward the table, and so their feet would stick out—just right for washing], but also see to a basin, water and a towel, so that the necessary ceremonial washing could be performed. So this was 'the' basin that had been placed there on purpose.

7 Normally there would have been a servant there to perform the duty of washing feet, but I assume that the Lord had given instructions not to have one. There was an ongoing dispute among them as to who was the greatest (Luke 22:24), so naturally none of them was prepared to take the place of the servant. They could eat the meal with dirty feet, as they did, but not the Passover. I imagine that the situation began to get uncomfortable—it was time to proceed with the ritual, but first someone had to wash feet, and no one was offering. So finally Jesus Himself gets up.

**Simon Peter**

6So He comes to Simon Peter, and he[1] says to Him, "Lord, **you** wash my feet?!" 7Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know [by experience] after this."[2] 8Peter says to Him, "You will never ever wash my feet!!"[3] Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me." 9Simon Peter says to Him, "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head!"[4] 10Jesus says to him: "One who is bathed has no need except to wash his feet, but is clean all over. And you (pl) are clean, but not all of you." 11(He knew who was betraying Him; that is why He said, "Not all of you are clean.")

**Jesus explains His action**

12So when Jesus had washed their feet and put His garments back on, He reclined again and said to them: "Do you know what I have done to you? 13You address me as 'Teacher' and 'Lord', and you speak correctly, because I am. 14So then, if I, Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15Because I have given you an example, so that you also should do just as I did to you.[5]

16"Most assuredly I say to you, a slave is not greater than his owner, neither is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17If you understand these things, you are blessed if you do them.[6]

18"I do not speak concerning all of you—I know whom I chose. But let the Scripture be fulfilled: 'The one eating bread with me lifted up his

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[1] The pronoun is emphatic. The picture seems to be that Jesus had already done several pairs of feet, whose owners had submitted in silence. But now it is Peter's turn and he cannot take it (maybe he had a more tender conscience than the others).

[2] The Lord makes an important distinction here—He advises Peter that he doesn't understand what is going on, as Peter proves the next time he opens his mouth, but in the future his knowledge on this subject will have been gained by experience.

[3] Peter loses it; his answer is totally without restraint.

[4] Peter continues to demonstrate that he is not understanding, but his heart is in the right place. Faced with the possibility of being cut off from the Lord, he swings to the other extreme—now he wants a bath.

[5] First, we have the physical example of washing feet—those communities that practice foot-washing have more basis for doing so than the rest of us have for not doing so (foot-washing can be an important spiritual exercise).

Second, we have the spiritual reality behind the example. The crucial point is in verse 10, "One who is bathed has no need except to wash his feet". Anyone who has been 'washed in the blood of the Lamb' has had his bath. But walking on the paths of life we get our feet dirty, we sin, and sin breaks our fellowship with God—you can't go into the living room with dirty feet. We need the blood of Christ for our daily cleansing, upon which depends our fellowship and communion with Him—as He said to Peter, "If I do not wash [not 'bathe'] you, you have no part with me". I regard Philippians 2:5-8 as a parallel passage: He took the form of a slave (verse 7), and His 'work' took Him to the cross, where He shed His blood, upon which both our salvation [bath] and daily walk [washing] depend.

[6] We have here a condition of fact—the Lord is assuming that they understand; it follows that it is not enough to understand—we must do, in order to be blessed.

heel against me.'[1] **19**I am telling you <u>now</u> before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am. **20**Most assuredly I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives me,[2] and he who receives me receives Him who sent me."

*The traitor is identified*[3]

**21**Having said these things, Jesus was distressed in His spirit and testified saying, "Most assuredly I say to you, one of you will betray me!" **22**So the disciples started looking at each other, at a loss as to whom He meant.[4] **23**Now one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved,[5] was reclining beside Jesus' bosom.[6] **24**So Simon Peter motions to him to inquire whom it might be that He was referring to. **25**And leaning back against Jesus' breast he says to Him, "Lord, who is it?" **26**Jesus answers, "It is the one to whom I will give the piece of dunked bread." And dunking the bread He gives it to Judas Iscariot, Simon's son. **27**And after the sop, <u>then</u> Satan entered into him.[7] Whereupon Jesus says to him, "What you are doing, do quickly!"[8] **28**(Now none of those reclining at the table knew why He said this to him. **29**Since Judas had the moneybox, some supposed that Jesus was telling him to buy what they needed for the feast, or to give something to the poor.)[9] **30**So having received the sop, immediately he went out. And it was night.[10]

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1 The reference is to Psalm 41:9.

2 To represent Christ on this earth is both a great privilege and a great responsibility.

3 This is the second time; for the first see Matthew 26:21-25, Mark 14:18-21 and Luke 22:21-23.

4 The way I used to think about Judas, I would have expected that the others would immediately suspect who it was, and start looking at him out of the corner of their eye. But no, they were clueless—no one thought of Judas! Which tells me that up to that moment he had conducted himself in an exemplary way; in fact, they trusted him so much that he was the treasurer.

5 The love here is *agape*.

6 They were reclining on their sides, propped up on their left elbows (unless someone was left-handed). So John was next to Jesus, with his back to Jesus' bosom. In order to put his question, he leaned back until his shoulder touched Jesus' chest (he would have to rest his weight there), and in that way he was looking up at Jesus.

7 As we know from verse two, Satan had already planted the idea in Judas' head/heart, but at this point he enters the man—Judas wasn't just demonized, he was satanized! Evidently Satan required permission to do this, and giving the sop was the signal; Jesus gave him the go-ahead. Obviously Satan had to be there, in that upper room! (If he was in that upper room, why can't he be in your church? Any Judases in your church?) I take it that Satan entered Judas to make sure that he would carry through with the plan.

8 Although to the disciples it would appear that Jesus was addressing Judas, I rather suspect that He was actually addressing Satan, since it was Satan who would now control the man's thoughts. He orders him to get on with it; that is right, Jesus gave Satan an order, and Satan obeyed.

9 This is instructive—even though Jesus had just said that it was Judas, the others just could not believe it.

10 Commentators like to wax eloquent on this statement. It was literally night, perhaps about 9 p.m., but it was also spiritually 'night'—Satan's finest hour. Just by the way,

*A new commandment*

31When he had gone out Jesus says:[1] "Now the Son of the Man has
been glorified, and God has been glorified in Him. 32Since God has been
glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him with Himself, and He will do
so presently.[2]

33"Little children, I am with you *just* a little longer. You will look
for me, and as I said to the Jews, 'Where **I** am going you cannot come,'
so now I say to you.

34"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another just
as I have loved you[3]—that you also love one another. 35By this all will
know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."[4]

**Jesus warns Peter[5]**

36Simon Peter says to Him, "Lord, where are you going?"[6] Jesus
answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but later
you will follow me."[7] 37Peter says to Him: "Lord, why can't I follow you
now? I will lay down my life for your sake!" 38Jesus answered him: "You
will lay down your life for my sake? Most assuredly I say to you, no
rooster can crow until you have denied me three times![8]

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the Greek manuscripts generally put 'it was night' with the following paragraph: 'It was night when he went out'.

1 The verb is in the present tense; I get the impression that as soon as the door clicked behind Judas the Lord started speaking. The events have been set in motion that will culminate in His being glorified.

2 Actually, 'do so' stands for 'glorify Him', that is repeated from the previous clause.

3 The Law says to love your neighbor as yourself; Grace says to love as Christ loves—clearly a higher standard!

4 Since *agape* love is an unknown commodity in the 'world', demonstrations of it do tend to get attention.

5 This is the first warning. The second is recorded in Luke 22:31-34, which I would place after John 16:15, toward the end of the proceedings in the upper room. Both the context and the content of the warning differ from John. The third warning, in two parts, is recorded in Matthew 26:31-35 (1st part) and Mark 14:27-31 (2nd part). The first two warnings happened in the upper room, the third after they had left it.

6 Peter didn't hear the 'new commandment'; he was stuck on the prior statement. (This sort of thing happens during sermons all the time. So if the preacher says something unexpected, he had better stop and explain or he loses his audience.)

7 I imagine that the Lord is referring to Hades, in the first instance (referring to physical death), but then also to Heaven. It is not part of the Plan for Peter to die just yet (in fact, he was delivered from prison in a supernatural way to avoid a premature death—Acts 12:6-11), but of course he will die and go to Heaven later on.

8 The emphasis here is on the obligatory absence of any cockcrow until Peter has denied [at least] three times. There is no definite article with 'rooster', so it is "a rooster"; the negative is double, therefore emphatic, "absolutely not". If you have lived where there were a number of roosters, you know that one or another can sound off at any time, and some one of them will crow almost on the hour throughout the night, while at dawn they put on a chorus. It was probably somewhere around 9 p.m. when Jesus issued this warning, and Peter's first denial probably happened at least five hours later. For not a single rooster to crow anywhere within earshot during that time required supernatural intervention—which is why I render "no rooster can crow" (if an angel can close lions' mouths [Daniel 6:22], closing roosters' beaks would be a cake walk).

*The Way, the Truth, the Life*

14 [1]"Do not let your (pl) heart be distressed; you believe into God and you believe into me.[1] [2]In my Father's house are many dwellings[2] (otherwise I would have told you).[3] I am going away to prepare a place for you. [3]And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.[4] [4]Now you know where I am going, and you know the way."

**Thomas' question**

[5]Thomas says to Him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"[5] [6]Jesus says to him: "**I** am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one goes to the Father except through me.[6] [7]If you had known me, you would have known my Father as well;[7] from now on you both know Him and have seen Him."

**Philip's question**

[8]Philip says to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." [9]Jesus says to him: "Such a long time I have been with you, and you have not known me, Philip?[8] He who has seen me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? [10]Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own; rather it is the Father who dwells in me who

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[1] A Greek verb is ambiguous in the 2nd person plural between Indicative and Imperative, and since that form occurs in both clauses here, there are four possibilities—Ind. Ind., Ind. Imp., Imp. Ind., Imp. Imp. The choice is up to the translator, which is why you will find differences among the versions at this point. We have already been told, in John 6:64, that Jesus knew who did not believe; it follows that He also knew who did. He knew that the eleven believed, so it seems more likely to me that He spoke in the Indicative. He is appealing to them to be consistent with their belief.

[2] 'House' and 'dwelling' translate different words. I suppose that "my Father's house" is a synonym for Heaven.

[3] You can find quite a variety of interpretations and translations of this clause. I assume that the Lord had certainly given them teaching on the subject of Heaven; He here assures them that if their expectations were false He would have warned them. I take it that over 95% of the Greek manuscripts do not have "that" introducing the next clause.

[4] He wants us. We are important to Him. So much so that before He created our race He had determined to pay the price for our redemption—1 Peter 1:19-20.

[5] Peter wasn't the only one who hadn't figured it out. But we may thank Thomas for eliciting the tremendous statement that occupies verse 6!

[6] Jesus answers both questions: He is the way, and He is going to the Father. The only way that any human being, including Adam and Eve and all the Old Testament saints, can go to the Father is on the basis of the shed blood of the Lamb of God.

[7] The Lord is saying that up to that moment the disciples had not really gotten the point—they were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, all right, but did not understand the Messiah's relationship to the Father. But as a result of the immediately coming events, culminating with the advent of the Holy Spirit, they will understand.

[8] It sounds like Jesus is a little disappointed. They are slow pupils.

does the works.[1] 11Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or else, believe me because of the works themselves.[2]

*"Greater works than these"*

12"Most assuredly I say to you,[3] the one believing into me, he too will do the works that I do;[4] in fact he will do greater works than these,[5] because I am going to my Father. 13Further, whatever you (pl) may ask in my name,[6] that I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If you ask anything in my name, I will do it! 15If you love me, keep

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[1] Notice again the close connection between saying and doing—"I speak… the Father does". If, like Jesus (John 12:49-50), we only speak what the Father says, He will act on the basis of our word too.

[2] This is basically the same appeal He had already made to the Pharisees.

[3] "Most assuredly" is actually "amen, amen"—rendered "verily, verily" in the AV. Only John registers the word as repeated, in the other Gospels it is just "amen". In the contemporary literature we have no example of anyone else using the word in this way. It seems that Jesus coined His own use, and the point seems to be to call attention to an important pronouncement: "Stop and listen!" Often it precedes a formal statement of doctrine or policy, as here.

[4] This is a tremendous statement, and not a little disconcerting. Notice that the Lord said, "will do"; not 'maybe', 'perhaps', 'if you feel like it'; and certainly not 'if the doctrine of your church permits it'! If you believe you **will do!** The verb 'believe' is in the present tense, 2nd person singular; if you (sg) are believing you will do; it follows that if you are not doing it is because you are not believing. 2 + 2 = 4. Doing what? "The works that I do." Well, Jesus preached the Gospel, He taught, He cast out demons, He healed all sorts and sizes of sickness and disease, He raised an occasional dead person, and He performed a variety of miracles (water to wine, walk on water, stop a storm instantaneously, transport a boat several miles instantaneously, multiply food, shrivel a tree—and He implied that the disciples should have stopped the storm and multiplied the food, and He stated that they could shrivel a tree [Peter actually took a few steps on water]). So how about us? The preaching and teaching we can handle, but what about the rest?

I once heard the president of a certain Christian college affirm that this verse obviously could not mean what it says because it is not happening! Well, in his own experience and in that of his associates I guess it is not. But many people today cast out demons and heal, and I personally know someone who has raised a dead person. Miracles are also happening. So how about me? And you?

[5] Well now, if we cast out demons, heal and perform miracles, isn't that enough? Jesus wants more, He wants "greater things" than those just mentioned. Notice again that He said "will do", not maybe, perhaps, or if your church permits. But what could be 'greater' than miracles? This cannot refer to modern technology because in that event such 'greater things' would not have been available to the believers during the first 1900 years. Note that the key is in the Lord's final statement (in verse 12), "because I am going to my Father". Only if He won could He return to the Father, so He is here declaring His victory before the fact. It is on the basis of that victory that the 'greater things' can be performed. Just what are those 'greater' things? For my answer, see my outline, "Biblical Spiritual Warfare", available from my site: www.prunch.org, as well as any edition of my book *ESSAYS*.

[6] In verse 12 the verb 'will do' is singular, both times, so it has to do with the individual. Here, 'you may ask' is plural, reminiscent of Matthew 18:19-20. To ask "in Jesus' name" is to ask something Jesus would ask, or is asking (remember John 12:49-50)—notice that the purpose is to glorify the Father (or more precisely, that the Father be glorified in/through the Son), not to satisfy any selfish wish we may have.

my commandments. 16Also,[1] I will ask the Father and He will give you another Enabler,[2] so that He may stay with you throughout the age[3]—
17the Spirit of the Truth,[4] whom the world is unable to receive,[5] because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you do know Him, because He is staying with you and will be in you."[6]

18"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you [shortly].[7] 19In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live you also will live.[8] 20In that day[9] you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21The one who has my commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves me. Now the one who loves me will be loved by my Father; and I will love him, and reveal myself to him.[10]

**Judas' question**

22Judas (not the Iscariot) says to Him, "Lord, just how is it that You are going to reveal Yourself to us and not to the world?" 23Jesus

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[1] I take it that verse 16 is parallel to verse 13, and both are tied to verse 12.

[2] Greek has two words for 'another', another of the same kind and another of a different kind. Here it is another of the same kind—being two members of the Trinity, the Son and the Holy Spirit are definitely of the 'same' kind!

[3] Strictly, 'into the age'; 'age' is singular, and for the meaning 'forever' we would expect the plural, 'into the ages'. I doubt that the Lord is promising that the Holy Spirit will remain in us (see next verse) throughout eternity, just during this age. During this age we need the Holy Spirit in us to counteract the 'flesh' or fallen nature; in Heaven we will be free of all contaminants.

[4] That is what the Text says, 'the' Truth. The Holy Spirit represents the Truth, whereas Satan represents 'the lie' (John 8:44).

[5] 1 John 5:19 says that the whole world 'lies in the wicked one'; Satan exercises control over it. The world is controlled by 'the lie' and thus is incapable of receiving the truth. Just try speaking out against relativism, humanism, abortion, homosexuality, materialism, permissiveness, etc. and see how the world reacts.

[6] "Will be in you", presumably a prophetic reference to Pentecost and after. During this age the Holy Spirit resides in the true believer.

[7] I assume that the reference is to His appearances during forty days (Acts 1:3) after His resurrection. They saw Him die on Friday and saw Him alive on Sunday, so they were not 'without' Him very long. Pentecost was fifty days after Passover; the Ascension was at least forty days after the Resurrection; so the interval between Ascension and Pentecost was only 7-8 days. Indeed, He did not leave them orphans.

[8] "I live", present tense. As the I AM who is Life, at any moment throughout eternity (past or future) He can say, "I live". As "the resurrection and the life" He can guarantee our future life.

[9] What 'day' is that? I assume that it refers back to verse 16, to the coming of the Enabler. With the indwelling Holy Spirit they will have a better understanding of the relationships.

[10] The Lord gives an important insight on spiritual growth, here: our love → our obedience → His love → His self-revelation. Can you love someone you don't know? Perhaps in theory, but not really. The more you know someone the more you love him/her (especially if they are nice). As we come to know the Lord we grow to love Him, which translates into obedience, which leads Him to reveal Himself to us, which increases our knowledge of Him, which increases our love for Him, which increases our obedience, which increases His self-revelation, which increases our knowledge, love, obedience, and so on. It is an upward spiral which takes us ever closer to Him.

answered and said to him: "If anyone loves me he will keep my word. And my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.[1] **24**The one who does not love me does not keep my words;[2] further, the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

*The Teacher, the peace; the Father, the enemy*

**25**"I have spoken these things to you while being with you. **26**But the Enabler, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and remind you of everything I said to you.[3]

**27**"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; it is not like the world gives that I give to you.[4] Do not let your heart be distressed or intimidated.[5]

**28**"You heard me say to you, 'I am going away and I am coming *back* to you.' If you loved me you would have been glad that I said, 'I am going to the Father,' because my Father is greater than I.[6] **29**I have told you now, before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe.

**30**"I will no longer talk much with you, because the ruler of the world is approaching;[7] actually, he has nothing in me.[8] **31**Rather, I habitually do just as the Father commanded me, so that the world may know that

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[1] Like, wow—did you get that? We have always been taught (correctly) that the Holy Spirit indwells the true believer, but here the Lord says that the Father and the Son can be at home with us as well. That is all three persons of the Trinity! There is a condition, however—we must keep Jesus' word, which is really the Father's (next verse). The indispensable evidence that we love God is to obey His word; this stimulates His love in return. There is evidently some sense in which we influence the manifestation of His love, at least. The answer to Judas' question is that the 'revealing' is one on one, and is triggered by one's obedience. So the world is out.

[2] In verse 23 "my word' is singular, here "my words" is plural; I take it that these phrases are being used interchangeably.

[3] We understand that this activity of the Holy Spirit would be especially prominent during the writing of the Gospels. They complement but do not contradict one another.

[4] The world can offer peace of a sort, for a time, with a price tag, but it's an illusion.

[5] Satan will certainly use the world to try to intimidate and distress us, but how we react is up to us. We can decide to "let the peace of God rule in our hearts" (Colossians 3:15).

[6] How does that work? Well, if you really love someone you are more concerned for their well-being than you are for your own. For Jesus to return to the Father would certainly be better for Him. (And because He sent the Holy Spirit it also became better for them, and for us.)

[7] Like Jesus said a few hours later to the soldiers in the garden, "this is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53). Satan was 'approaching' to do his thing, to perform his part in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus.

[8] This is **important**! Satan had absolutely no hold on Jesus. At no time had Jesus done anything that could give Satan a finger hold or toehold in His life. Whenever we sin we give Satan such a hold—and the oftener we repeat a given sin the stronger that hold becomes, until it becomes a stronghold. If we confess and reject the sin, such a hold can be broken, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

I love the Father.[1] "Get up, let us leave here.[2]

*The true vine*

15 [1]"I am the vine, the true one,[3] and my Father is the vinedresser.
[2]Any branch in me which does not produce fruit He lifts up,[4] and every one producing fruit He prunes, so that it may produce more fruit.[5]
[3]You are already clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.[6]
[4]Abide in me and I in you.[7] Just as a branch is incapable of producing fruit by itself, except it remains in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me.

[5]"I am the vine, and you are the branches. The one who abides in me and I in him, he is the one who produces much fruit, because apart from me you are incapable of doing anything.[8] [6]If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown out, like a branch, and dries up; well they gather such and throw them into the fire, and he is burned up.[9] [7]If you abide in

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[1] Jesus proved His love for the Father by obeying Him, giving us the example.

[2] Some have concluded that they left the upper room at this moment, but I take it that 18:1 states that it was only at that point that they actually left. We must not interpret the Text according to 'western' culture; in Brazil (for example) it is bad form for a visitor to leave before at least two false starts. You start making noises at least half an hour before you actually have to leave. The disciples may well have stood up at that point, but I take it that chapters 15-17 still took place in that room—once they were out walking it would be difficult for all of them to hear Him, and I assume that the Lord certainly wanted all of them to hear clearly.

[3] There is emphasis on "true", which implies a contrast with the false one. I suppose that Jesus may have been referring to Jeremiah 2:21: "Yet I had planted you [Israel, see verse 4] a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?" For a similar idea see Isaiah 5:1-7.

[4] The Greek verb here covers a considerable semantic area. The familiar 'takes away' is one of its basic meanings, but 'lifts up' is another of its meanings and makes better sense here (the cutting off comes in verse 6). People plant (or buy) vineyards because they want grapes, and you can't have grapes without branches, so you don't destroy them without reason. When it's blossom time you go down the rows looking for any branches that the wind and rain have knocked down—a branch on the ground won't produce. You lift them up, shake off the dirt and fasten them up, to give them a chance. I take it that is the picture here—if we have fallen, the Father picks us up, brushes us off and gives us another go. Of course if we never produce, then we are suckers, and He goes 'snip' (verse 6).

[5] I understand that a given stretch of vine or branch only produces grapes once, it is only the new growth that produces grapes, so if you want to increase production you must cut the vine back.

[6] Jesus had been 'pruning' those disciples for two years or more.

[7] From the way this is stated I conclude that although this 'abiding' is a two-way street, it actually depends on us. That is, as we abide in Him He will abide in us—He won't stop first; only if we stop abiding in Him will He stop abiding in us.

[8] We seem to have a hard time getting this through our heads, but our Lord is very clear—all our activism is fruitless. If we wish to produce fruit for Christ's Kingdom we **MUST** abide in Him.

[9] That is what the Text says, 'he' is burned. The direct object of 'gather' and 'throw' is plural (referring to what normally happens to dead branches), but the subject of 'be burned' is singular. The 'he' must refer back to the beginning of the verse, to the one who does not abide in Christ. Few figures of speech fit in every detail. Of course an

me and my sayings[1] abide in you, you will ask whatever you desire and it will happen for you. 8My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit; and you will become disciples <u>to me</u>.[2]

*We love*

9"Just as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you;[3] abide in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love,[4] just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11I have spoken these things to you so that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be made full.[5] 12This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you.[6] 13No one has greater love

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actual branch cannot just decide to jump out of its vine or tree; an outside force must cut or break it off. But we have volition—verbs like 'abide' or 'remain' clearly imply that the choice is up to us; we can indeed decide to leave our Vine, we can stop believing.

Notice again the sequence of events, "if anyone does not abide in me he is thrown out"—a branch that is 'abiding' is not thrown; only if you choose to leave will you be thrown. I am a theologian (ThM) and am well aware that people tend to buy into a theological system, or doctrinal package, and they then impose that system on the Bible—if some passage does not fit, they do whatever damage may be necessary to that passage to <u>make</u> it 'fit'. But I am also a linguist (PhD), and I know that human language is governed by rules—to disobey those rules is a form of lying, and God cannot lie (Titus 1:2), so if in interpreting the Bible you disobey those rules, you make a liar out of God, which is not very smart! In this passage the Lord Jesus Christ gives instruction that is perfectly plain. If the Word of Christ says one thing and your doctrinal package says another, then you had better stop and think. Which holds more authority for you, which are you going to follow, the Word of Christ or your doctrinal package? If you choose the latter, you are an idolater—to place your church's doctrine above the Word of God is a form of idolatry. Idolatry <u>always</u> has negative consequences.

[1] The Greek word is *ρημα* not *λογος*; if a distinction is intended I suppose the emphasis here would be on the content of what He taught. This is how we abide in Him, by obeying His Word.

[2] The pronoun is dative, not genitive, so to render 'my' disciples is not precise; since Jesus obviously could have used the genitive if that was what He wanted to say, then the choice of the dative is significant. In my own experience, not a few have said in my hearing that they were my disciples; I smiled and said 'Thank you', but seldom did I want to claim them (for varying reasons). I take it that here the Lord is saying that He will claim us as His <u>disciples</u> as we produce much fruit.

[3] Wow!

[4] "Abide in my love" is a command, not an option, and the way we do it is by obeying Him. I take it that 'my love' refers to His loving us, so again He is saying that our obedience triggers the manifestation (at least) of His love, in an ongoing relationship. We have probably all heard of 'unconditional love', but I wonder if they really know what they are talking about. It may be that God offers us His love without prior condition, but to enter into that love we have to believe into Jesus, which involves commitment on our part. Love that is not reciprocated becomes frustrated love.

[5] I take it that 'my joy' is not exactly the same as 'your joy'. I can often tell when God is happy with me, and when He is not, and it is directly tied to the level of my obedience. I take it that His joy remaining in us refers to His being happy with us; of course the only way our joy can be full is if He is indeed happy with us (because of our obedience).

[6] Comparing this command with verse 9 it appears that we are to love just like God loves! Help! How can we manage that? Well, maybe that is why we need the Enabler—only under the control of the Holy Spirit can I love as God does.

than this, that someone should lay down his life for his friends.[1] **14**You are my friends if you do whatever I command you.

**15**"I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his owner is doing; rather I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I heard from my Father.[2] **16**It was not you who chose me but I who chose you, and I appointed you so that you should go and produce fruit, and that your fruit should endure, so that whatever you may ask the Father in my name He may give you. **17**These things I command you so that you love one another.[3]

*The world hates*

**18**"When the world hates you, you can be sure that it has hated me first. **19**If you were of the world, the world would be fond of its own.[4] So because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, that is why the world hates you.[5] **20**Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his owner.'[6] If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. **21**Now they will do all of these things to you because of my name, in that they do not know the One who sent me. **22**If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be having sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. **23**The one who hates me hates my Father too. **24**If I had not done among them the works that no one else has done, they would not be having sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.[7] **25**However, this was so that the statement written in their law might be fulfilled, 'They hated me without cause.'[8]

**26**"Now when the Enabler comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of the Truth who proceeds from the Father, He will

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[1] That is how Jesus proved His love for us.

[2] We can be 'horses' (Psalm 32:9), slaves or friends. A 'horse' is a Christian who does his own thing, who does not listen to God—He has to use pain to get his attention. A slave listens, and obeys, but the owner does not necessarily explain the big picture, the dream, the plan. With a friend you share your dream, the big idea. Jesus offers us the privilege of being friends, but there is one little detail—you cannot be a friend without being a slave! I take that to be the point of verse 14.

[3] I understand the Text to be saying that our loving one another is the intended result of the commands, not their content.

[4] The Greek verb is φιλεω, not αγαπαω. Actually, there is little, if any, αγαπη love in the world.

[5] If the world doesn't hate you, perhaps you should stop and take stock. Why not? Are you just like them? Nothing about you challenges their lifestyle?

[6] See Matthew 10:24.

[7] Presumably the Lord is not saying that they were sinless; I take it He is referring to a particular sin—they rejected the full light that He brought, and are now overtly hating Him and the Father. Before Jesus ministered among them, they claimed that they loved God, and maybe actually thought that they did, but the Light exposed what they really were.

[8] This statement may be found in Psalm 35:19 and 69:4. Verses 9 and 21 of Psalm 69 are also applied to Christ in the NT. Notice that Jesus calls the book of Psalms their 'law'.

testify concerning me. 27And you also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.[1]

16 1"I have spoken these things to you to avoid your being caused to stumble[2] 2—they will excommunicate you; indeed, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering God service![3] 3And they will do these things because they have not known either the Father or me. 4Now I have told you these things so that when the time comes you may remember that I told you about them; I did not tell you these things from the beginning because I was with you.[4]

*What the Enabler will do*

5"Now then, I am going away to Him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' 6But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7Nevertheless I am telling you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, because if I do not go away the Enabler will not come to you, but if I do go I will send Him to you.[5]

8"Now when He comes, he will convict the world about sin and about righteousness and about judgment: 9first about sin, because they do not believe into me;[6] 10then about righteousness, because I am going away to my Father and you will no longer see me;[7] 11then about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.[8]

12"I still have many things to say to you but you cannot bear it now.[9] 13However, when He, the Spirit of the Truth, has come, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own, but He will speak whatever He hears.[10] He will also communicate to you the things that are coming. 14He will glorify me because He will take of what is mine and communicate it to you. 15All that the Father has is mine;[11]

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1 It is after the coming of the Enabler that they will testify. In fact, they pretty much stayed in hiding until He came, but then they became bold as lions.

2 Suffering and persecution causes some Christians to doubt God, and even to rebel against Him, and Jesus does not want that to happen to them.

3 Like Saul of Tarsus—he thought he was serving God by persecuting the Christians (see Acts 23:1).

4 While Jesus was with them, they enjoyed His protection.

5 Jesus could only be physically present in one place at a time. The Holy Spirit can be in all believers all around the world all the time—clearly to our advantage.

6 Since to believe into Jesus is the only cure for sin, to reject Him is the ultimate sin—you lock yourself into the consequences = spiritual death.

7 The resurrection was the proof that the Father accepted the sacrifice of the Lamb (Romans 4:25, he "was raised **because** of our justification")—having committed no sin of His own, Jesus could pay for ours. If He had committed sin on His own, He could not return to the Father.

8 If the big boss has been judged, then no one under him will escape.

9 We have no record that He told them those things during the 40 days before His Ascension, so it may have been left for the Spirit to do (verse 13)—although probably a lot happened during those days that is not recorded.

10 Whenever the Son spoke, it was really the Father speaking (John 12:50); the same is true of the Holy Spirit. The Trinity works together.

11 Wow!

that is why I said that He takes from what is mine and will communicate it to you.

*Sorrow to joy*

16"In just a little you will not see me, and in another little you will see me, because I am going to the Father."[1] 17Then some of His disciples said among themselves: "What is this that He is telling us, 'In just a little you will not see me, and in another little you will see me,' and because 'I am going to the Father'?" 18So they said: "What is this 'little' that He mentions? We do not know what He is talking about."[2]

19Well Jesus knew that they were wanting to question Him and said to them: "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'In just a little you will not see me, and in another little you will see me'? 20Most assuredly I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will become grieved,[3] but your grief will be turned into joy.[4] 21When a woman gives birth she has pain, because her time has come; but when the child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. 22So in your turn you are now experiencing grief, but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. 23In that day[5] you will not question me about anything.

"Most assuredly I say to you that whatever you ask the Father in my name He will give you. 24Until now you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.

**Figures of speech**

25"I have told you these things using figures of speech, but a time is coming when I will no longer talk to you with figures of speech; rather I will tell you plainly about the Father. 26In that day you will ask in my name; I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf, 27because the Father Himself is fond of you,[6] in that you have become fond of me and have believed that I came forth from God. 28I did come forth from the Father and have come into the world. I am leaving the world again[7] and am going to the Father."

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[1] Perhaps 0.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, omit "because I am going to the Father" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[2] With hindsight it appears that the first 'little' referred to the less than 24 hours before His burial, when He would be hidden from view. The second 'little' would refer to the forty days between resurrection and ascension, during which they did indeed see Him.

[3] This refers to the first 'little'—upon His death they will **really** be grieved.

[4] This refers to the second 'little'—upon His resurrection there will be joy.

[5] Perhaps the 'day' here is different from the one in 14:20; and yet, even after seeing the risen Lord, they still got discouraged. By the sea shore Peter still asked Him a question, so maybe the 'day' is the same as in 14:20. It was the coming of the Holy Spirit that gave them joy that could not be stolen.

[6] The verb is *φιλεω*, not *αγαπαω*.

[7] Jehovah the Son had visited this world many times during the O.T. period. During the 33+ years of incarnation He changed His abode (John 1:14).

29His disciples say to Him: "Hey, now you are speaking plainly and
using no figure of speech! 30Now we know that you know everything and
don't need anyone to question you.[1] By this we believe that you came
forth from God."[2]

**"Take heart!"**

31Jesus answered them: "Do you believe now, *really*? 32Listen, an
hour is coming, actually it has already arrived, that you will be scat-
tered, each to his own, and you will leave me alone.[3] Yet I am not alone,
because the Father is with me. 33I have spoken these things to you so
that in me you may have peace. In the world you have oppression;[4] but
take heart, I have conquered the world!"[5]

*Jesus prays*

17 1Jesus spoke these things,[6] raising His eyes to Heaven and saying:

**For Himself**

"Father, the hour has come! Glorify Your Son, so that Your Son
also may glorify You, 2just as You gave Him authority over all hu-
manity, so that He will give eternal life to all those whom You have
given Him.[7] 3Now eternal life is this: that they may know You,[8] the
only true God, and the One whom You sent—Jesus Christ.[9] 4I have
glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work that You have

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1 They seem to be implying that before He was confused and needed help; their questions made Him think things through, or some such thing. But now He finally got it sorted out! (If it were not so pitiful it would be humorous.)

2 I frankly don't understand the disciples' reasoning here. How about all His miracles, etc. etc.?

3 It happened that very night.

4 Just so. Any system dominated by Satan will be oppressive, for everybody, but his special malice will be directed at those who serve Christ.

5 Yes, amen! I take it that the 'world' here refers to the world system controlled by Satan. Jesus did indeed conquer it. He lived within that system for 33 years without ever succumbing to it, without ever being tainted by it. Since He conquered the world, we can too! So let's take heart!

6 I take it that 'these things' is cataphoric, referring forward to the content of the prayer.

7 Here is a clear statement of divine participation in our salvation. The whole process is under the authority of the Father.

8 I take it that the reference here is to experiential knowledge. 'Eternal life' refers mainly to a quality of life (more than longevity), and that quality is defined by relationship with the Father. The person who conceives of God as a distant, detached authority figure doesn't really know Him.

9 This is the first recorded time that the Lord used this title, 'Jesus Christ' (in Matthew 16:20 there is 'Jesus, the Christ'—as in over 95% of the Greek manuscripts). He did so when He could also say, "I have finished the work that You have given me to do" (next verse) (He still had a few hours to go, but is declaring His victory). In Acts and the epistles the title is very frequent—it affirms that Jesus is the Messiah. Also, what happens to those who only 'know' the Father, but not the Son?

given me to do.[1] 5So now, Father, You glorify me by Your side with the glory that I had along with You before the world existed![2]

**For the Apostles**

6"I have revealed Your name[3] to the men whom You have given me out of the world. They were Yours and You gave them to me, and they have kept Your word. 7They now know that everything You have given to me is from You; 8because I have given them the sayings which You have given to me; and they have received and known for sure that I came forth from You,[4] and they have believed that You sent me. 9I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom You have given me, because they are yours. 10Actually, all my things are Yours and Yours are mine, and I have been glorified in them. 11Now I am no longer in the world,[5] yet these are in the world, and I am coming to You.

"Holy Father, keep them in Your name which[6] You have given to me, so that they may be one just as we are.[7] 12While I was with them in the world I kept them in Your name. I protected those whom You gave me, and not one of them was lost except the son of perdition, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled.[8] 13But now I am coming to You, and I speak these things in the world so that they

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1 The older I get, finishing 'the work You have given me to do' looms larger and larger in my mind.

2 As it says in 1 Peter 1:19-20, the Lamb, with His blood shed, was foreknown before the foundation of the world. Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:10 and John 1:3,10 make clear that the Son was the primary agent in the creation of this planet. So Jehovah the Son is both Creator and Lamb—before He created He knew that man would rebel and He Himself would have to pay the terrible ransom. From our Lord's statement here I get the impression that as soon as the Son started dealing with this planet He gave up some of His glory. So now He is asking to have it back. Ephesians 1:20-21 makes clear that the Father granted His request, the Son is back where He was before. And He took us with Him (Ephesians 2:6)! Thank You, Lord!! Also, our Lord's statement here goes against any 'Gnostic' type view that has Jesus beginning as an inferior being and working up through successive levels of perfection, or what have you.

3 "Your name" = "You"; a person's name represents that person. This is very clear in John 1:18. Jesus revealed the Father to the world.

4 Over and over again the Lord returns to the theme of their knowing and believing where He came from, His divine origin. So this must be important! Someone who does not believe that Jesus is God cannot be a true Christian.

5 He would still be around for another forty days, or so, but the countdown has begun.

6 This pronoun refers to the name, not to the disciples.

7 I imagine that this will only be fully realized after we are glorified.

8 This is perhaps the clearest of a very few passages in the Bible that might be said to indicate what has been called 'double predestination' or 'preterition', that is, that someone is predestined to be lost. In Hebrew usage (Jesus, a Jew among Jews, was presumably speaking Hebrew here) a 'son' of something is characterized by that something; so a 'son of perdition' is characterized by lostness; the Scripture in question would be part of the Old Testament and hence written long before the person was born. (I have not been able to locate a clear text to that effect, but there are indirect ones.)

may have my joy made full in them.[1]

14"I have given them Your word;[2] and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15I am not asking that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the malignant one.[3] 16They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.[4] 17Sanctify them by Your Truth; Your Word is Truth.[5] 18Just as You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.[6] 19And for their sakes I sanctify myself,[7] so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

**For all believers**

20"I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe into me through their word; 21that they all may be one, just as You, Father, are in me and I in You; that in Us they also may be one, so that the world may believe that You sent me. 22In fact, the glory that You gave to me I have given to them,[8] so that they may be one just as We are one: 23I in them and You in me, so that they may be perfected into one; also so that the world may know that You sent me, and have loved them just as You have loved me.[9]

24"Father, those whom You have given to me, I desire that they also may be with me where I am,[10] so that they may observe my glory, which You have given me, because You loved me before the founding of the world. 25Righteous Father! Indeed the world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent me. 26Yes, I have made Your name known to them

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[1] Although He was addressing the Father, Jesus evidently did so out loud—precisely so that the disciples would hear, with a view to joy.

[2] Yes! Oh praise God! That Word delivers us from Satan's kingdom in every way, including worldview. So it is only natural that Satan's 'world' will hate us.

[3] "The malignant one" is Satan. Satan got one of the twelve, but must not get any more of them.

[4] He repeats what He just said in verse 14, so it must be important. Jesus was not of this world because He literally came from Heaven, which could not be said of those disciples. But in the context of verse 15 the reference is probably to the 'world' dominated by Satan, the system. Their allegiance is no longer to Satan's system.

[5] The Word is what the Holy Spirit uses to sanctify us; it is His 'sword' (Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12).

[6] See John 20:21.

[7] To 'sanctify' something to God means to separate/dedicate/consecrate it for His exclusive use. While on earth Jesus concentrated His attention and energies on a single goal, to execute the Plan, the Father's will. To the extent that we pay attention to the Truth, we will do the same.

[8] What 'glory' was that? In Romans 3:23 I imagine that the 'glory' of God has to do with His essence, His character. The new 'man' or nature that a regenerated person receives is related to that essence/ character. It is that nature in common that makes us 'one'. However, since most Christians seldom allow the new nature to control them, in practice we don't see all that much unity. But in Heaven it will come to fruition.

[9] Tremendous!

[10] He wants His bride.

and will make it known, so that the love with which You have loved me may be in them, and I in them."[1]

*Betrayal and arrest*

18 [1]Having said these things Jesus went out with His disciples across the Kidron ravine, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. [2]Now Judas, the one betraying Him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with His disciples. [3]So Judas, having received the detachment *of soldiers* and operatives from the chief priests and Pharisees, he arrives there with lanterns, torches and weapons.

**Jesus knocks the soldiers down with His word**

[4]Then Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to Him, went forward and said to them, "Who are you looking for?" [5]They answered Him, "Jesus the Natsorean." Jesus says to them, "I am he." (Now Judas, His betrayer, was also standing with them.) [6]So when He said to them, "I am he," they went backward and fell to the ground![2] [7]Then He asked them again, "Who are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus the Natsorean." [8]Jesus answered: "I told you that I am he. So if it is me you are looking for, allow these men to go" [9](so that the word that He spoke might be fulfilled, "Of those you have given me I did not lose even one").[3]

[10]Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)[4] [11]So Jesus said to Peter: "Sheathe the sword![5] The cup that the Father has given me, must I not drink it?"

**To Annas first**

[12]Then the detachment, the commander[6] and the operatives of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. [13]They took Him to Annas first,

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[1] Here is the 'spiral' again; the more we know, the more we love, the more we obey…

[2] Have you ever tried to imagine this scene? Try imagining that you are one those soldiers, and the person you have been sent to arrest knocks you down, just with his word! So are you going to want to try anything against him, really? Hey, I think I would get up and run away as fast and as far as I could! I see two miracles here: 1) He knocked them down with His word; 2) He obliged them to stay there and get on with their job, because it was the appointed time for Him to be taken, tried and crucified. But He made it perfectly clear that He was in control of the situation.

[3] I take it that the Iscariot had not been given to Him by the Father, at least in the sense of 17:6—"They were Yours and You gave them to me". Presumably the Iscariot never belonged to the Father.

[4] John probably knew him personally; see verse 15 below.

[5] We know from Luke 22:51 that Jesus healed the ear, or Peter could have been in trouble. The parallel accounts give more detail.

[6] The word here (*chiliarch*) refers to a commander of a thousand men (or of a cohort = about 600); this could only be a Roman officer of high rank. So how did they get him to come along? Obviously Pilate had been informed and was participating. For a detailed discussion, please see: "Poor Pilate—wrong place, wrong time" on my website: www.prunch.org.

because he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas,[1] who was high priest that year.[2] 14(Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.)

*Peter denies Jesus*

15Now Simon Peter kept following Jesus, as also the other disciple. Well that disciple was known to the high priest,[3] so he went into the high priest's courtyard with Jesus. 16But Peter was *left* standing outside by the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper (f), and brought Peter in. 17So the servant girl, the doorkeeper, says to Peter, "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?"[4] He says, "I am not!" 18Now the servants and operatives had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold,[5] and they were standing there warming themselves. So Peter stood with them and warmed himself.[6]

**Caiaphas interrogates Jesus**

19Then the high priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and about His teaching. 20Jesus answered him: "I have spoken openly to the world. I always taught in synagogue and the temple, where the Jews always congregate, and I have spoken nothing in secret. 21Why do you question me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them. Sure, they know what I said."[7] 22But upon His saying these things one of the operatives standing by slapped Jesus saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" 23Jesus answered him, "If I spoke wrongly, identify the wrong; but if rightly, why do you hit me?"[8] 24(Annas had sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.)[9]

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[1] The bigger reason was that Annas was the real high priest, according to the Law (the office of high priest was for life). He was the power behind the throne, so to say. Caiaphas was the political high priest (that year), for purposes of dealing with Rome.

[2] A careful look at the parallel accounts makes clear that all of Peter's denials took place at Caiaphas' palace, as also all the recorded questionings, etc. So between verses 13 and 15 Jesus is taken to Caiaphas (see verse 24 below).

[3] Annas is never referred to as the high priest by John, so this is Caiaphas.

[4] Everyone there, including the girl, knows that John belongs to Jesus, so her question is perfectly natural, without malice—she assumes that Peter must also. Notice that Peter denies right in front of John! Don't you know that John kept his eye on Peter from that moment on!

[5] It was after midnight in early April.

[6] For a detailed discussion of Peter's denials, please see: "How many times did Jesus say Peter would deny Him?" on my website: www.prunch.org.

[7] The Lord's observation here was perfectly reasonable and in accord with the law. The priest should have produced witnesses, rather than asking Jesus to testify against Himself.

[8] Since everything that was going on was unjust and illegal, I find it to be curious that Jesus reprimanded the man.

[9] The eclectic text, following about 8% of the Greek manuscripts, reads "then Annas sent…", creating a conflict with the parallel passages (perhaps 7% read "but Annas sent/had sent…"). The use of parenthetical comments, or historical/cultural asides, is standard procedure for John; for a partial list see: 1:44, 2:6, 4:2,9,44, 6:4,64, 7:50, 9:14, 11:2,18-19,30-31, 12:1,6,16, 13:2,11,28-29 (there are at least a dozen more). I take it

**Peter again**

**25**Well Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You aren't one of His disciples too, are you?"[1] So he denied it and said, "I am not!" **26**One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had sliced, says, "Didn't I see you with Him in the garden?"[2] **27**So Peter denied again, and immediately a rooster crowed.[3]

## Crucifixion day

*Jesus taken to Pilate*

**28**Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. They themselves did not enter the Praetorium, so that they would not be defiled but could eat the Passover.[4] **29**So Pilate went out to them[5] and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" **30**In reply they said to him, "If he were not an evil-doer we would not have handed him over to you."[6] **31**So Pilate said to them, "You take him and judge him according to your law." So the Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to execute anyone."[7] **32**(This was to fulfill the statement

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that verse 24 here is just one more instance; it is as if at this point John realizes that the reader could think that the proceedings were still going on at Annas' house.

1 We don't know what John was doing all this time, except that he was right there in that compound; I think it perfectly likely that he would talk to Peter from time to time. They knew that John was a disciple, but did not know Peter. Also, the windows of the house were doubtless open (no air conditioning), so they probably heard Caiaphas ask about His disciples. Actually, Luke 22:61 says Jesus turned and looked at Peter, so the window had to be open, and Jesus was near the window but with His back to it. Since Caiaphas was presumably facing Jesus, he was also facing the open window and his voice would certainly carry out to the patio. Their question was not unreasonable.

2 Now here we have a little malice; you can imagine the intonation in the man's voice! Peter goes into a cold sweat. I bet he was wishing he was someplace else. (I wonder if he was still wearing his sword.)

3 In keeping with his usual procedure, John records three denials by Peter that are not mentioned by the other Evangelists, and I would say that the rooster crow here is the first of the two (Mark 14:68, 72). A close comparison of all the details surrounding the denials (who provoked it, in what terms, when, where, Peter's response) shows that there had to be a minimum of six, more likely eight, denials—3/4 before the first rooster crow, 3/4 before the second. Peter was being satanized (Luke 22:31), and it took a look from the Lord to break the spell (Luke 22:61).

4 Aren't these guys cute? They are perpetrating a totally illegal and immoral plot, but they think they are squeaky clean, no problem—but to set foot in the Praetorium, now that would be dirty! If your values are twisted, you are twisted.

5 It seems to me obvious that the hierarchy had made a deal with Pilate; he was waiting. Hey, you do not go marching up to the Governor's headquarters at 5:30 a.m. and demand a hearing; and there is no indication that Pilate came out in his pajamas. He was up, dressed and waiting.

6 Their answer seems a bit petulant. I gather that the deal they thought they had with Pilate included that he would just take Jesus and condemn Him. Pilate's attitude takes them by surprise.

7 Pilate was rubbing salt in their wound, reminding them that they were a subjugated people—he knew they wanted to kill Jesus, so when he tells them to judge Him he forces them to acknowledge their subjugation. (Roman governors were probably not appointed on the basis of being nice.)

that Jesus made, indicating what sort of death He was about to die.)[1]

*Pilate and Jesus*

33Then Pilate went back into the Praetorium, called Jesus and said to Him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" 34Jesus answered him, "Are you saying this on your own, or did others inform you about me?" 35Pilate answered: "I'm not a Jew, am I? Your own nation, that is, the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" 36Jesus answered: "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my subjects would fight so that I not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from here."[2] 37So Pilate said to Him, "You are a king then?" Jesus answered: "As you say, I am a king; for this I was born. And for this I came into the world, to testify to the Truth. Everyone who is of the Truth hears my voice." 38Pilate says to Him, "What is truth?"[3]

**Barabbas**

Upon saying this he went out to the Jews again and says to them: "I find no crime in him at all.[4] 39Now we[5] have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover; so do you want me to release the King of the Jews to you?" 40Then they all cried out saying, "Not this fellow, but Barabbas!" Well, Barabbas was a bandit!

*Soldiers mock Jesus*

19 1So then Pilate took Jesus and had Him flogged. 2And the soldiers twisted a crown out of [poisonous] thorns and put it on His head; they also threw a purple robe around Him 3and started saying, "Hail, O King of the Jews!" And they slapped Him repeatedly.

*"Behold the Man!"*

4Pilate then went out again and says to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you so that you may know that I find no crime in him at all."[6] 5Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe; and *Pilate* says to them, "Look at the man!" 6Well when the chief priests and the operatives saw Him they shouted, saying, "Crucify! Crucify him!" Pilate says to them, "**You** take and crucify him, because I find no crime in him."[7] 7The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according

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[1] Jesus had to die on a cross, but crucifixion was a Roman procedure, not Jewish—they would probably have stoned Him.

[2] But one day, probably quite soon now, it will be.

[3] Apparently the question was rhetorical; he didn't wait for an answer.

[4] Comparing John with Luke 23:4-12 it appears that between verses 38 and 39 here Jesus was sent to Herod. Notice that Pilate declares Jesus to be innocent.

[5] I here follow the best line of transmission, although representing only some 20% of the manuscripts. Upon reflection this reading looks correct—how could the Jews have a custom that placed an obligation on their conquerors?

[6] Pilate's reasoning is not obvious to me, unless the normal procedure would be to get on with the execution. But Pilate is not happy and is looking for a way out; he had received a message from his wife in the meantime (Matthew 27:19). Perhaps he hoped they would be satisfied when they saw how much He had already suffered.

[7] This is the second time that Pilate declares that he finds no crime in Jesus. He is declaring His innocence, so he will knowingly condemn an innocent man.

to our law he ought to die, because he made himself 'Son of God'!"

*Pilate and Jesus, again*

8Hey, when Pilate heard this statement, he was more afraid than ever![1] 9So back into the Praetorium he went and says to Jesus, "**Where** are you from?" But Jesus did not answer him. 10So Pilate says to Him: "Are you not speaking to **me**? Don't you know that I have authority to crucify you and authority to release you?" 11Jesus answered: "You would have no authority over me at all if it had not been given to you from Above.[2] Therefore the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

*The Jews best Pilate*

12From that moment Pilate really tried to release Him; but the Jews kept shouting, saying: "If you release this fellow you are no friend of Caesar's! Whoever makes himself a king is opposing Caesar!"[3] 13Well, upon hearing this statement Pilate led Jesus outside and sat down on the judgment seat, in a place called 'Stone Pavement', while in Hebrew '*Gabatha*'[4] 14(now it was the day of preparation for the Passover;[5] the hour was about six a.m.),[6] and he says to the Jews, "Look at your king!" 15But they shouted, "Out! Out! Crucify him!" Pilate says to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"[7] 16So then he handed Him over to them to be crucified.

*Jesus is crucified*

So they took Jesus and lead Him away. 17And carrying His cross He went out to the place called 'Skull', which in Hebrew is called '*Golgotha*'; 18there they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. 19Now Pilate had also written a notice, and put it on the cross; and the inscription was:

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[1] And not without reason. The conversation recorded in 18:33-37 would certainly have impressed Pilate and left him troubled. Then his wife added fuel to the fire. And now this. Pilate was not a religious type, presumably, but Jesus was impressive! Pilate was in over his head, and knew it.

[2] Pilate represented the Roman empire, the greatest temporal power at that time (whose ruler was supposedly divine), but Jesus calmly affirms that there is a higher power and that He represents that higher power—and Pilate believed Him! Pilate wanted no part of killing Jesus, and really tried to avoid it, but the Jews did an end run.

[3] Oops! Pilate owed his position to Caesar's good graces, and simply could not afford to do something that could be construed (even with a little twisting) as treason. He is beaten and knows it.

[4] This action signaled that he had reached a decision and was about to give the verdict.

[5] If the Jews were still preparing for the Passover, then Jesus and His disciples observed it a day early—which must have seemed strange to the disciples. But as the Lamb of God (not Passover lamb), Jesus had to die on that preparation day.

[6] The Text says "the sixth hour", which in Roman time is six a.m. If it were Jewish time, it would be noon, which will not work here. Actually, it says 'around' or 'about' six—I assume that it was a little after the hour.

[7] Ah, Pilate gets his 'pound of flesh'. He doubtless knew a bit about Jewish culture and religion, including their messianic hopes. In effect the Jews here deny the Messiah—Caesar is their only king! Pilate rescued this bit of satisfaction out of a bad deal.

JESUS THE NATSOREAN[1]
THE KING OF THE JEWS.

**20**So many of the Jews read this notice, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; further, it was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin![2] **21**Now the chief priests of the Jews had said to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The king of the Jews', but that the fellow said, 'I am the king of the Jews.'" **22**Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written!"[3]

**Psalm 22:18 is fulfilled**

**23**Now when the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took His clothes and made four parts, a part for each soldier.[4] They also took His tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. **24**So they said among themselves, "Let's not rip it, but toss for it, *to see* whose it will be," so that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast a lot." That is why the soldiers did these things.[5]

*Jesus provides for His mother*

**25**Now Jesus' mother and her sister, Mary of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene were standing by His cross. **26**So Jesus, seeing His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He says to His mother, "Woman, there is your son!" **27**Then He says to the disciple, "There is your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.[6]

*The shout of victory*

**28**After this, knowing that everything was now accomplished so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus says, "I'm thirsty!" **29**Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; so they filled a sponge with sour wine, placed it on a hyssop, and put it to His mouth. **30**Then, when He had received[7] the sour wine,

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[1] That Pilate put "the Natsorean" (not Natsarene [Nazarene]) indicates that he had researched Jesus. The reference is to Isaiah 11:1; Jesus was David's Branch, the Messiah. Pilate was making a statement.

[2] Comparing the other Gospels, the full inscription was, 'This is Jesus the Natsorean, the King of the Jews'. To put all of that in three languages would require a board of fair size. But why did Pilate use three languages? One would have been enough (it was customary to put the crime over the victim's head). I take it that Pilate was **not** happy, having been bested by the Jews; and as I have said above, I think he was personally convinced that Jesus was a king. By putting 'this is the king of the Jews' he was making a statement, one that virtually any literate person would be able to read, given the three languages.

[3] The chief priests have gotten all they are going to get out of Pilate; he was making a statement, but he was also getting back at them a little bit.

[4] This probably means that Jesus was left without any; one final bit of humiliation.

[5] See Psalm 22:18. John seems to be affirming a cause/effect relationship. The centurion could have claimed the tunic, or whatever, but casting a lot had been prophesied.

[6] Notice that Jesus is still perfectly lucid. As Mary's oldest son, He was responsible for her well-being (we understand that Joseph was gone by now), so He passes that responsibility over to the Apostle John (the author of this Gospel); and John accepts it.

[7] From the word 'received' it appears that He did swallow some. Since sour wine was not used at the Passover, this does not conflict with the Lord's statement in the upper

Jesus said, "Paid in full!!"[1] And bowing His head He dismissed His spirit.[2]

*A soldier spears His side*

**31**Now then, because it was Preparation Day, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews requested Pilate that their legs might be broken and they be removed. **32**Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other one who had been crucified with Him. **33**But upon coming to Jesus, they did not break His legs, since they saw that He had already died. **34**But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. **35**And the one who saw has testified,[3] and his testimony is true (yes, he knows he is telling the truth), so that you may believe. **36**Because these things happened so that the Scripture should be fulfilled: "Not a bone of His will be broken."[4] **37**And again another Scripture says: "They will look on Him whom they pierced."[5]

*Jesus' body is buried*

**38**After these things Joseph, the one from Arimathea (being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews), requested Pilate that he might remove the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave permission. So he came and removed Jesus' body. **39**Now Nicodemus also came[6] (the one who at

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room (Matthew 26:29) that He would not drink of "this product of the vine". All four Evangelists mention the sour wine. There was evidently a pot/vessel full of it (the soldiers were in for many hours of vigil and that was what they drank). The mocking offer mentioned in Luke 23:36 happened before the darkness; the other three accounts after. The offer recorded in Matthew 27:48 and Mark 15:36 was triggered by Jesus' cry, "My God, my God…" The one in John 19:29-30 by His saying, "I am thirsty". I venture to suggest that there was an interval between His despairing cry and His statement—after the cry He may have lapsed back into silence for a bit; He was trying to make contact with the Father. It may be that the sour wine sort of 'wet His whistle' so He could let out His shout of victory.

[1] Matthew, Mark and Luke all affirm that Jesus gave a great shout, but without giving the content. I take it that John supplies that information, although he does not mention that it was a shout. "*Τετελεσται*"—that was what they wrote on bills and promissory notes when they were paid off = 'paid in full'. When something is shouted the individual sounds can be distorted, but John was right there and could read His lips, if necessary. It was a shout of victory: "We did it!" "Finished!" "Paid in full!"

[2] That is right—the cross did not kill Jesus, He just told His spirit to leave. In John 10:17-18 he was very clear: no one could take His life from Him, but He could lay it down (please see the note at John 10:18).

[3] John, the author of this Gospel, was right there (verses 25-26 above), so he could see very clearly what came out of Jesus' side—that the blood had separated was a clear sign of physical death. (I guess we don't need to know, really, just how the separation came about, whether by purely natural processes or with supernatural intervention; in any case, John is emphatic about what he saw.)

[4] See Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12 and Psalm 34:20.

[5] See Zechariah 12:10.

[6] He helped Joseph take down the body, and they transported it to the tomb in a linen sheet (Matthew 27:59).

first came to Jesus by night), bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.[1] 40Then they took Jesus' body and wrapped it in linen strips, with the aromatic spices, according to the burial custom of the Jews. 41Now at the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been buried.[2] 42So that is where they put Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, since the tomb was nearby.

**Resurrection Day**[3]

*The empty tomb*

20 1Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb early, while it is still dark, and sees that the stone has been removed from the tomb. 2So she runs and comes to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and says to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we[4] don't know where they put Him!"[5] 3So Peter and the other disciple took off, heading for the tomb. 4Well the two started running together, and the other disciple outran Peter and got to the tomb first. 5And stooping to look he sees the linen strips lying there; however he did not go in. 6Then following him comes Simon Peter and went into the tomb; and he sees the linen strips lying there, 7and the facecloth[6] that had been on His head not lying with the linen strips, but folded up in a separate place.

**John sees and believes**

8So then the other disciple went in too, the one who got to the tomb

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[1] Do you suppose they just 'happened' to have a hundred pounds of expensive spices lying around? Almost certainly everything had been prepared before hand, including the tomb, on purpose. These men had doubtless received specific instructions and were waiting in the wings to perform their part. Please see `Harmonizing the accounts of the burial` on my website: www.prunch.org.

[2] Isaiah 53:9 affirms that the Messiah would have a rich man's burial, and He did—a brand new tomb (rather large), and a hundred pounds of expensive spices. The body of an executed criminal would normally be treated ignominiously, and I imagine that was what the high priests intended, but the Father made sure that the Son received an honorable burial. Matthew 27:60 informs us that Joseph had himself prepared that tomb, and he did so at a spot near Golgotha. The next verse (here in John) indicates that this was done on purpose, for the reason mentioned. Joseph and Nicodemus clearly did what they did under divine guidance, and of course God knew that the tomb would need to be near Golgotha, etc.

[3] For a harmonization of all the details furnished by the four Gospel accounts, please see: "Harmonizing the accounts of the Resurrection" on my website: www.prunch.org.

[4] "We"—presumably Magdalene is referring to the other women who were with her, as in the parallel accounts.

[5] Pure supposition—she had not looked in the tomb; she jumped to a false conclusion. It is clear that there was no longer a shining angel sitting on the stone outside (Matthew 28:2).

[6] That there was a facecloth indicates that there was not a sheet that covered the body from head to toe (as in the 'shroud of Turin'). This was also true of Lazarus (John 11:44).

first; and he saw and believed.[1] 9(For they did not yet know the Scripture, that He had to rise from among the dead.)[2] 10Then the disciples went back home.

*Jesus appears first to Magdalene*

11Well Mary stood outside at the tomb, crying.[3] Then, while she was crying, she stooped to look into the tomb. 12And she sees two angels[4] in white, sitting one at the head and one at the feet of where the body of Jesus had lain. 13And they say to her, "Woman, why are you crying?" She says to them, "Because they removed my Lord, and I don't know where they put Him." 14And upon saying this she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, yet did not know that it was Jesus. 15Jesus says to her: "Woman, why are you crying? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing that He was the gardener, says to Him, "Sir, if you carried Him away, tell me where you put Him, and I will remove Him." 16Jesus says to her, "Mary!" Turning she says to Him, "Raboni!" (which means 'Teacher'). 17Jesus says to her: "Stop clinging to me,[5] for I have not yet ascended to my Father;[6]

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[1] What did John 'see' that made him 'believe'? He saw the linen strips 'lying', that is, in the form of the body, only there was no body inside them! If someone had stolen the body, as Magdalene supposed, they would have taken the wrapped package (much easier to carry, not to mention 100 pounds of expensive spices) and there would have been no linen strips. If someone had unwrapped the body there would have been a mound of linen strips and spices piled up (how much cloth would it take to wrap up a hundred pounds of spices?). No, Jesus simply passed through the cloth, as He would later pass through the wall, leaving the package like a mummy or empty cocoon. When John saw that he understood that the only possible explanation was resurrection.

[2] But they should have; Jesus had told them repeatedly. But wait just a minute! Where in the OT is there such a Scripture? John wrote this Gospel over fifteen years after the other three had been 'published' and were in circulation, so his term 'Scripture' may be referring to them.

[3] When the disciples took off running, of course Magdalene followed them back to the tomb. But she was winded, and could not keep up with them (actually, in that culture women probably seldom ran, so she would really be out of breath, but she was not about to be left out of the action, either). The Jerusalem at that time probably covered a relatively small area; it was probably no more than half a mile from the house to the tomb, if that, so she may have arrived as they were leaving; if not, they would pass her on the road.

[4] How did John know they were angels? He had just been there and knew there were no human beings around (the guards were presumably gone before the two got there). The angels were in white, but probably not shining, or Magdalene would have been shaken out of her despair. She was so locked in to her sorrow that not even seeing the wrappings collapsed without the body sank in.

[5] That is what the Text says. I take it that Magdalene was an emotive person, capable of sudden 'ups' and 'downs'. From the way the Lord pronounced her name she knew who it was; from deep sorrow she swings to a transport of joy and impulsively throws her arms around Him. Hey, she is **not** thinking of how this is going to read 2000 years later; in fact, she is not thinking at all, just feeling.

[6] The causal connection here seems difficult to us—what did His not having ascended have to do with it? Various suggestions have been offered. My guess is as follows: Magdalene had not heard the teaching in the Upper Room, more precisely, John16:7. "I

but go to my brothers[1] and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father—my God and your God.'" **18**Mary Magdalene goes to the disciples, reporting that she had seen the Lord and He had said these things to her.

*Disciples commissioned*

**19**Then at evening on that first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the middle, and He says to them, "Peace to you!" **20**And upon saying this He showed them His hands and His side. Well, the disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord! **21**So Jesus spoke to them again: "Peace to you! Just as the Father sent me, I also send you."[2] **22**Upon saying this He breathed on them and said: "Receive Holy Spirit![3] **23**To whomever you forgive the sins,[4] they are forgiven to them; to whomever you retain, they have been retained."[5]

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am telling you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, because if I do not go away the Enabler will not come to you, but if I go I will send Him to you." She had just gotten her Master back and was not about to turn Him loose—she was feeling, not thinking. But Jesus had to ascend so He could send the Enabler, which would be better for everybody. She wants to hang on to Him, but He tells her to stop; the old relationships are gone, everything is now new. (Within a very few minutes He will allow the other women to hold His feet, so mere physical contact is not the problem; in fact, He will later invite the disciples to touch Him.)

1 He does not just reprimand her, He gives her something to do. But just who are the "brothers"? Since the angel had told the other women to tell the disciples, I am inclined to imagine that the Lord sends her to His half-brothers, although she started out with the disciples (next verse).

2 This is tremendous! In my own experience (as a missionary, son of missionaries), I have seldom heard a missionary challenge based on John 20:21. The champion is Matthew 28:19-20, 'the great commission', followed by Mark 16:15 and perhaps Acts 1:8; but John 20:21? "Just as… so also"—Jesus is sending us just like the Father sent Him. So how did They do it? The Father determined and the Son obeyed: "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). And what was that will? To destroy Satan (Hebrews 2:14) and undo his works (1 John 3:8). Since Jesus did indeed defeat Satan (Colossians 2:15, Ephesians 1:20-21, etc.) what is left for us is the undoing of his works. For more on this subject see my article, "Biblical Spiritual Warfare", available from my site, www.prunch.org.

3 There is no definite article with "Holy Spirit" and I hesitate to add it. Perhaps we should try thinking of 'Holy Spirit' as a proper name.

4 This is a literal rendering, but I hesitate to change it. The primary reference is presumably to the sins of that person, but it is sometimes necessary to pronounce forgiveness for sins of past generations (see 2 Samuel 21:1-14).

5 That is what the Text says, "have been". The idea seems to be that sins are already retained (as soon as a sin is committed it is on the account); Jesus gives them the prerogative to change that situation, undoing the retaining, as it were. Presumably the forgiving and retaining have to do with the consequences of the sin in this life (not for salvation). I take it that the undoing of Satan's works (1 John 3:8) must reverse consequences (to the extent that this may be possible). Since Satan is involved in all sin, indirectly at least (or so I imagine), I conclude that verse 23 here falls within the competence of anyone who has the Holy Spirit.

*Thomas*

24Now one of the twelve, Thomas (called Twin), was not with them when Jesus came. 25So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "If I do not see the nail prints in His hands and put my finger into the nail prints, and put my hand into His side, I will **not** believe!"[1]

26Well after eight days[2] His disciples were inside again, and Thomas with them. The doors were locked [again]; Jesus came and stood in the middle, and said, "Peace to you!" 27Then He says to Thomas: "Bring your finger here and perceive my hands; bring your hand and put it into my side;[3] do not be unbelieving but believing!" 28Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" 29Jesus says to him: "Because you have observed me, you have believed. Blessed are those who believe without seeing!"[4]

*Why this book*

30Now then, Jesus actually performed many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, that are not written in this book; 31but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have Life through His Name.

**Epilogue**

*Breakfast on the beach*

21 1After these things Jesus, risen from the dead,[5] revealed Himself to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He did it like this: 2Simon Peter, Thomas (called Twin), Nathanael (from Cana of Galilee), Zebedee's sons[6] and two others of His disciples were together. 3Simon Peter says to them, "I'm going fishing." They say to him, "We're coming with you." Off they went and got right into the boat, and that whole night they caught nothing.

4Well when daybreak had now come Jesus stood on the beach; however the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5Then Jesus says to them, "Boys, you don't have any food, do you?" They answered Him, "No."[7] 6So He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat

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[1] Thomas is very emphatic. Jesus is dead and his hopes are too! (Presumably he had watched the crucifixion from a distance.)

[2] Their method of calculation included the day from which the count was made (as they do in Brazil as well), so this is the next Sunday.

[3] Since Jesus had not been there to hear Thomas, how did He know what he had said? We know the answer, but it delivered a knock-out punch to Thomas. Evidently he did not try to touch Jesus, but without further ado said, "My Lord and my God!"

[4] This blessing includes <u>us</u>.

[5] I follow the best line of transmission in reading "risen from the dead", albeit representing only 25% of the Greek manuscripts, at this point.

[6] Recall that they were James and John (the author of this Gospel).

[7] You can bet they are not feeling like making small talk.

and you will find." So they did,[1] and now they were unable to haul it in because of the multitude of fish! **7**Then that disciple whom Jesus loved says to Peter, "It's the Lord!" Upon hearing that it was the Lord, Simon Peter tied on his outer garment (for he was stripped) and plunged into the sea. **8**But the other disciples came in the boat dragging the net with the fish (for they were not far from the land, but about 100 yards).

**9**Then, as they stepped onto the land they saw a charcoal fire in place with fish lying on it, and bread. **10**Jesus says to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." **11**Simon Peter got up[2] and dragged the net onto the land, full of one hundred and fifty-three large fish [!]; and *although* being so many, the net was not torn.[3]

**12**Jesus says to them, "Come have breakfast!" Well not one of the disciples dared to ask Him, "Who are you?"—knowing that it was the Lord. **13**Then Jesus comes and takes the bread and gives it to them, as also the fish.[4]

**14**This was already a third time[5] that Jesus appeared to His disciples after He was raised from among the dead.

*Jesus reinstates Peter*

**15**So, when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus says to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?"[6] He says to Him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I'm fond of you."[7] He says to him, "Feed my lambs." **16**He says to him again, a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?"[8] He says to Him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I'm fond of you." He says to him, "Shepherd my sheep." **17**The third time He says to him, "Simon, son of Jonah, are you **fond** of me?" Peter was grieved in

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[1] I find it interesting that they apparently obeyed without question—there was something about that voice.

[2] That is what the Text says. Well, what do you suppose he did when he got to land, since he obviously got there well before the others. From verse 12 I gather that Peter had not ventured to speak. He is wet and therefore cold, and there is a fire. I bet he went straight to the fire and squatted down to warm himself, but he was too embarrassed to attempt a conversation. So he welcomes a chance to do something and jumps up when Jesus asks for fish.

[3] Like, wow! They were evidently special fish, all large. But why 153? I do not know. The whole thing is supernatural, including the net not tearing.

[4] Notice that Jesus serves them. Well, the situation was a bit strange, and the men probably felt awkward; so He helps them out.

[5] This would presumably be the first appearance in Galilee, following the two in the upper room.

[6] My first impression was that Jesus asked if Peter loved Him more than the others did, but Peter's answer does not seem to fit with that idea. My next impression would be that Jesus asked if Peter loved Him more than he loved the fish (and therefore, fishing), but His use of *αγαπαω* does not seem to fit. The only other option that I see would be that Jesus asked if Peter loved Him more than he loved his colleagues.

[7] Jesus uses *αγαπαω*; Peter uses *φιλεω*.

[8] Notice that He omits 'more than these', so the question has been weakened.

that the third time He said to him, "Are you fond of me?"[1] and said to Him: "Lord, you know all things. You **know** that I'm fond of you!" Jesus says to him: "Feed my sheep. **18**Most assuredly I say to you, when you were younger you used to get dressed and walk where you wished; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands and another will dress you and carry you where you do not wish." **19**(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) And upon saying that He says to him, "Follow me!"[2]

*About the author*

**20**But turning around Peter sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following (that is the one who reclined on His chest at the supper and said, "Lord, who is the one who is betraying you?"). **21**Seeing him, Peter says to Jesus, "Lord, what about **him**?" **22**Jesus says to him: "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me." **23**So this saying spread among the brothers,[3] that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him [Peter] that he [John] would not die,[4] but, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?"

**24**This is the disciple who is testifying to these things, and who wrote them; and we know that his testimony is true. **25**Indeed, there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that not even the whole world[5] could contain the books that would be written! Amen.

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[1] Now Jesus weakens His question still further, using Peter's verb—He is probing Peter. But the repeated command to feed His sheep indicates that Peter is being reinstated.

[2] The first time He said this to Peter had been perhaps 3 years before, also on the shore of that lake [could it have been the same spot?]. Jesus renews His call. But Jesus actually starts walking away, and Peter follows Him (to be followed by John).

[3] "The brothers"—this became a common way to refer to the Christian community.

[4] But John was the last of the Apostles to die, close to A.D. 100.

[5] The world that he knew would not include the Americas, nor all of Africa or Asia, and perhaps not even all of northern Europe (presumably). However, his use of 'suppose' indicates that he is not making a scientific statement.