



The purpose of John writing this “Gospel” is not debatable, seeing he states clearly the overall intent in 20:31, “... these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” It is clear at the outset that John’s focus is on the deity of Jesus and that He was without question the “Christ” (the Promised One and the “Anointed One” of God) and above all this, He was/is the “Son of God.” The purpose, though, was more than informational, it is life defining! John knew that those “believing” would come to know true life, not just future, but now (see also John 5:24, 10:10, I John 5:10-13).

When reviewing the “god-man” characters of mankind’s imagination, it becomes brutally clear how disappointing these characters are made out to be, when they (as “gods”) become “man.” They have no true and lasting “righteousness” (no purity), and any display of it is short-lived. They are weak and susceptible to all the same vulnerabilities and failings we face. Yet Jesus Christ is infinitely above all and is the very person of righteousness and purity!

This Gospel is known to be the latest of the four Gospels and was most likely written around 100 A.D.. One of (if not the oldest) fragment (manuscript) piece is from about 130 A.D. and another larger manuscript (containing all of John 1-14) is from the late 100’s, so its accuracy is highly proven in its relation to the original manuscript. This is important because so much of our Christology and Soteriology pivot off of what is written in this book.

We will see throughout this study the demonstrations of Christ as God, specifically referred to at the start as “the Word” and in so doing, Christ brings about (by His very presence and message) belief and disbelief in those interacting with Him. His miracles are more presented as proving His deity, and more of what He taught in conjunction with these miracles is revealed by John because it fits his intended purpose (Jesus as the “Christ” and the “Son of God”). As this is done, those seeing and hearing him are revealed to be who and what they really are (those believing and those disbelieving), as this Gospel still does today. The Lord Jesus Christ is essential also as John will detail and clarify in 1:18 when he writes that Jesus Christ has “made Him know” (the Greek word being “ἐξηγήσατο”, essentially Jesus “exegeted” God (explains, reveals Him)). John does not deal with a mere man, but eternal Creator God becoming a man and living among those at that time - how would we expect God as man to live, respond, behave and deal with the questions and issues of this world He created? This is what we no begin to delve into and so it is on this exploratory, enlightening venture we begin!

## I. In The Beginning Was The Word and The Word Was God - John 1:1-18

### A. Jesus as “the Word” and His pre-existence - vs. 1-2

1. Why reference Jesus Christ as “the Word?” - this question has been answered in a variety ways, yet typically with much speculation that proves to be more philosophical than it does practical

Others try to make a case that the word for “word” (Λόγος) as the means by which God reveals and fulfills His will (He speaks, it happens) - such ideas seem possible, but John seems to assume his reader will see the significance of this that it is referring to Jesus, and that it is core to what he is writing at the start

This usage is common in the Targums and along with the various other direct references to Jesus Christ’s deity, it becomes inarguable that this is one of the most direct and absolute references to Jesus as infinitely more than man... He was God in flesh

- a. F.F. Bruce generalized the usage of “the Word” as, “...Jesus is the eternal Word or self-revelation of God, expressed in many ways at various times, but finally incarnated into a human life.” J.B. Phillips renders “In the beginning was the Word” as “At the beginning God expressed Himself...” though he admitted this was lacking in being fully accurate
- b. The most substantial explanation is the usage of this term “the Word” is its usage in Aramaic, especially in what were commonly referenced as the “Targums” (which were Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Scriptures that were read aloud in the synagogues in John’s time) - this phrase was often used in the place of what was called the “Tetragrammaton” (the Hebrew name of God transliterated in four letters as YHWH or JHVH and articulated as Yahweh or Jehovah) - this was the formal name of God
- c. For instance, in Genesis 3:8,10, in the Targums Adam and Eve heard the “Word of the Lord walking in the garden” and so “hid themselves from before the Word of the Lord” - in Gen. 17:1 the “Word of the Lord” appeared to Abram and spoke to him (as well as in Gen.18:1-4); in Ex. 3:1-6, 13-15 the “Word of the Lord” spoke with Moses from the burning bush and “Moses hid himself from the glory of God’s presence”; also, in Ex. 12 the Passover night in the Targums it reads, “the Word of the Lord” and the “glory of God’s presence” went through Egypt, and in Ex. 13:21-22 the “Word of the Lord” was going before them in the cloud and

It needs to be ever before our eyes the reality of who Jesus was and Who He is now - this adds the highest weight to what He said and did and our need to give it top consideration

pillar of fire - it would be the "Word of the Lord" that would speak from between the cherubim above the Mercy Seat - clearly this is a reference to God, and John's usage of it is a direct reference to Jesus as being God ("one with the Father" as well as "the Son of God")

d. These and so many more demonstrate the plausibility of this being the best explanation of John's usage of "the Word" - even without this and other explanations of this term for Christ, we still see more than enough proof for the deity of Christ

## 2. "In (the) beginning was the Word" - vs. 1

a. Realizing the importance of this beginning in this Gospel (and to the entire scope of Christology), each of these initial phrases will be handled in detail

b. The first few words "Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος" are necessary to get right, not just because the first verse of John's Gospel has been used to try to diminish and even take away the deity of Jesus Christ, but because it answers (at the start) not necessarily "who was this Logos?" as much as it does "from when was this "Logos"?"

Note that John is not defending the deity of Christ- this is actually presumed in light of the way John words this opening

The beginning is apparently playing off of Genesis 1:1 only, rather than describing what came after the "beginning" he is looking to what was before it- "In Gen\_1:1, the sacred historian starts from the beginning and comes downward, thus keeping us in the course of time. Here he starts from the same point, but goes upward, thus taking us into the eternity preceding time." Vincent quoting Milligan and Moulton

c. In his explanation of this particular wording and the absence of the Greek article before "beginning," Lenski wrote, "In the Greek many phrases lack the article, which is not considered necessary.... But in John's first sentence the emphasis is on this phrase "in the beginning" and not on the subject "the Word." This means that John is not answering the question, "Who was in the beginning?" to which the answer would naturally be, "God"; but the question, "Since when was the Logos?" the answer which is, "Since all eternity." This is why John has the verb ἦν, "was," the durative imperfect, which reaches back indefinitely beyond the instant of the beginning."

d. At the time and point that all things (that we know) began (creation of matter, time and space), the "Word" **was already there**, and as seen in Col. 1:15-20, all was created "by Him"

e. His timelessness (eternality) and His not only being with God, but being God makes it overwhelmingly clear that **all things about Him (especially His teaching and actions) need to be studied closely, realizing His position and perspective are infinite**

## 3. This "Word" was with God and was God - vs. 1-2

"By exact and careful language John denied Sabellianism by not saying *ho theos en ho logos*. That would mean that all of God was expressed in *ho logos* and the terms would be interchangeable, each having the article." RWP Note, "Sabellianism" is modalism (that God is not three distinct persons, just one person taking on different "modes")

So, at this point (with these two verses) we know that before all things (before the beginning) there already was God and with Him the Word - try to conceive of a new reader unfamiliar with any of this, and his/her fascination with such a person- they would desire to learn everything about them

a. Much has been made in "cult circles" regarding the absence of the proper article in this phrase ("ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος" - literally "the Word was with the God and God was the Word" though since "Word" has the article, it is the subject and would be translated first in English, thus "and the Word was God")

b. John, in this sentence is identifying "the Word" as being eternal (having always "been") and since only one could fit this description, the "Word" **is** God (again, not seeking to **prove** that "case" just making it so the reader would know of Whom they were reading)

c. And yet, as indicated by Robertson, the "Word" is shown as being with God while being God and so demonstrating a separate "person" of the Godhead

d. To make it very clear, John restates it "... this one was in the beginning with God"

e. We might phrase it, "This one (the Word) was the same one Who WAS already there at the beginning of all things with (as one with) God"

f. This is given to add emphasis to His eternality - if Christ was created, this would have been the place to clarify that He was created before the beginning of the universe - instead, **John stresses the presence of Christ with God at the beginning of all things**

g. Some have so hesitated with these truths and this text, they cannot imaging "God" condescending to this level, as though it would make Him lesser in their eyes - yet seen with the other qualities of God, such a condescension is truly glorious (for us to behold and come to know that such a One would do this)

## B. Jesus the creator and the "light of man" - vs. 3-5

1. Notice the **deliberate** wording of verse 3 - "πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο" (everything through Him came into being (was made)) - **He** did not "come into being" since He always "was" but all that we have in the creation (everything) was made through Him - vs. 3

see also Heb. 1:1-3

a. See I Cor. 8:2-6 - It clearly describes that "from Him [God] are all things" and yet also, regarding Christ it states, "... through whom are all things and through whom we exist."

b. And, almost as though he anticipated a misinterpretation, John restates it, "καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν" (and without Him came into being not one thing that has come into being)

- c. The idea is strictly limited; “all things” does not have the Greek article, so is not in reference to the creation as a whole but all/every particular (details) of it - “The reference is to the infinite detail of creation, rather than to creation as a whole, which is expressed by τὰ πάντα.”
- d. Simply put (though a concept that exceeds our comprehension) “all that became, came from Him who always was”) - already, the immediate impression regarding our own perspective is one of shameful amazement that we would ever trust our “read” of how we believe we see “all things” over He who made all things!
- e. It should be noted that Jesus (the Son) is not the only creator; the entire Godhead was at work in the creation - see Gen 1:26 (the use of the plural “us”) - the Spirit is referenced in verse 2

2. In Him (the Word) already was life, and this life (in Him) was the “light of men” - vs. 4-5

Apart from Him there is no other life at all - so all life comes from Him

This is part of the idea of Paul in Rom. 1:16-22 - just in being alive (and seeing the life around us in creation), there is a consciousness of God

John reveals what would seem to be an odd picture - here we have light but it is not seen, and yet this blindness is not just the natural state, but is also intentionally guarded so as not to allow light to come in

Amongst men there would be two groups; those who “received Him” and those who didn’t (and the receiving group did so by the “will if God”)

- a. From Him came life (since He already had it; again the usage of “ἦν” (was) is more than a hint of His self-existence) - the word for “life” here is “ζωή” (dzo-ay’) more than just biological life, but all life (livingness/aliveness)
- b. There is one core idea with another resulting application that John emphasizes - all “aliveness” serves as “light,” which we might reference more as “enlightenment” - since there is life (consciousness), it serves as an insight to “men” that there is more to what is seen than meets the eye - this is the basic idea
- b. But it is more than this - this life (that man borrows) only finds true life (purpose and truly “living”) in Him and the life He lived while here on Earth - this life He lives serves as the “light” of men (to lighten the way) - compare to John 8:12 and 9:5,12:35
- c. Building on this, John clarifies that though Christ was “the life” and so His life was “the light of men”, it was not received/accommodated - the present tense is used “the light shines” (it still does) yet the “darkness” (here, used as the antithesis to light) does not “comprehend” it - the underlying word (καταλαμβάνω) does not just indicate an inability to understand, but also an aggression against it (as rather than receiving, it tries to overtake it, or here it would be more like suppressing it) - the result being what is described in Rom. 1:28 ( the reprobate/depraved mind, unable without God’s grace to see the Truth)
- d. The “stage is set” - we have the “main characters” on the stage, that of the “Word” (revealed to be “the life” and “the light”) and men (who are in darkness) - this was clearly more than a struggle between one wise and powerful man against multitudes of other self-righteous men; it was **man against God** (not as much in a power struggles as much as a determinedly stubborn resistance on man’s part!)

C. The witness sent to bear witness of “the Light” and the two resulting responses - vs. 6-15

1. A man “on a mission” - vs. 6-8

Though John (the Baptist) had a special calling/mission, we seek out the same essential purpose ourselves - looking to testify regarding Jesus Christ so that others will believe Him by means of our witness

see Matthew 3:1-11

There is a tendency to focus and rely upon the messenger more than the one the message points us to

- a. The way the first few words of verse 6 are worded, indicate “a man” that came (emerged in contrast to “the Word” who always was), and this man was “sent” (the underlying word where we get our word “apostle”) and so was on a mission from God, and its purpose was to bear witness concerning the “Light”
- b. The purpose of this “witness” (one who openly testifies regarding the validity of something) was to point to “the Light” with the purpose, not of coming to know Him but to “believe through him” (John) - the ultimate point was they “believe” (trust which entrusts)
- c. Making it clear, John was not “the Light,” just one pointing out (and to) Christ and His light, actual/real life - John was sent from God versus impostors pointing to other sources of “truth”
- d. His (John the Baptist) was focused on his purpose - to point to the “Light” and as we see accounts of his message, we identifies the sinfulness of all and the need for repentance
- e. John (the Apostle) wrote this toward the end of his life (near the end of the first century), so apparently there were some still only focused on John the Baptist’s message and had not come to know the full answer (compare this to Acts 19:1-6)

2. The rejection and reception of the “Light” - vs. 9-13

He is the “true light” because He is the source of all light and is light in and of Himself (not needing to borrow or reflect it)

- a. The “Word” identified as the Light is now referenced as the “true light” (ἀληθινός describing what is “genuine” versus “fake” and the truth that is “real” because it reveals the way things really/actually are) - Thayer added, “... opposed to what is imperfect, defective, frail, uncertain”
- b. This is important because Christ was contrasted to false “lights” which (in their seemingly limitless numbers) lead to what is uncertain, false and dangerous

Consider then that any claiming to be “enlightened” without “the Word” are still in darkness and without light, their musings and conclusions are not seen to be what they actually are

Either way, it is evident that any true enlightenment will come in Christ and without Him, nothing can be seen for what it truly is and “how” it truly is

Using their own logic framed and ordered to ignore God (the creator) they cannot see everything for what it truly is, not having the light to see - these are the blind, blind to their own blindness

compare to Rom. 8:18-24

This wasn't written just to point out the depravity of certain Jews, but all of mankind, seeing Gentiles en masse would also reject Him

This answer is key to so much of this Gospel - belief will be stressed and is more than “believing about” but is more dependent trust

All others (the majority) who did not receive Him and actively rejected Him are, in actuality, the oddities (though they are the majority), more so seen in light of the truth of who He is and not in their numbers

It is important to begin with the realization that this is all by the will of God - for as the life of Christ is recounted, it would be “human” to focus on numbers and status versus miraculous associations with faith/belief in Him

- c. The Word as this true light is the source of “true enlightenment” to “everyone” - we know this does not mean that everyone is “saved” as seen in the context before and especially verses 10-11 - it could be understood as “anyone” (in light of those in verse 12 “authorized” (empowered) to become children of God)
  - d. There are some differences of opinion as to how this verse should be read: 1. “...which enlightens every man as he is coming into the world... (as in each person's birth, and that any true light they will ever have is because of the true Light) and 2. “The true light which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world...” (prefer the second)
  - e. This same one (the Word of God, the life, the light of men) was in the world (the “κόσμος” as in the creation/order) that He himself had created (it was His world), and yet this same “world” did not recognize Him - it was His “order” and so all its physical laws and laws/orders of reason found their source in Him and yet so distorted by sin He was unrecognizable by them
  - f. He came to His own creation, and yet was He was unreceived (unwelcomed) amongst His own people (the Jews) - the two words for “own” are “ἴδια” (neuter and in reference to His own inheritance, what truly belonged to Him) and “ἴδιοι” (masculine and in reference to His people to which He was born and had been promised) - vs. 11
  - g. “Into His own world which He created and which was now in rebellion against Him because of sin, He came. The implication is that nature recognized Him, received and paid Him reverence. Nature and her laws were always subject to Him.” Yeager
  - h. Considering first that these Jews of His time (the leaders who were deciding for the majority) were people first and had the “light of men” given, were still **enslaved to sin** and so rejected, mocked and despised this Light of the Word
  - i. Yet, these “chosen of God” people, having the “oracles” of God (see Rom. 9:1-8) rejected Him - they had to deliberately ignore (see past) all the predictions/promises of the Messiah (Christ), seeing and acknowledging only what they instinctively desired (an instinct enslaved to ego, covetousness and blindness)
  - j. All the negative truths just stated are starkly contrasted with “ἅσοι δὲ” (translated “but as many as”) - this contrasts not just the negative rejections of the Lord, but makes the reception of Him **individualized versus corporate or national**
  - k. These now seemingly indefinite and uncategorizable are distinguished as those having “received Him,” this being an indicative active (it's what they did), contrasting to the active rejection of the Word, and so begging the question, “How did they receive Him?”
  - l. It came by means of His “giving the right (power) to become the children of God” and such was evidenced in their “believing in His name” - to believe in the name of another is along the lines of invoking their name in complete trust of association/dependence on them - with this comes the authority (lawfully) to be a son of God (a concept which Paul details in Romans 8:12-17, using adoption as the way to describe how rebellions, lost, blind sinners could become children/heirs of God)
  - m. And such were “born” (begotten) into sonship only “by God” and he places the three “not by's” first to stress that such a “birth” and “right” were not by means of “blood” (not descendancy, so one is not a child of God because of their relationship to an ancestor/ancestors), nor by some physical act/impulse, nor by anything related to the “will of man” (the determination of any man, parents, religious leaders or individuals themselves)
  - n. “But now our evangelist observes, let a man be ever so great, or good, or eminent, for gifts and grace, he cannot communicate grace to another, or to whom he will; none are born again of any such will: **but of God**; of God, the Father of Christ, who begets to a lively hope; and of the Son, who quickens whom he will; and of the grace of the Spirit, to whom regeneration is generally ascribed.” John Gill
3. “The Word became flesh” - vs. 14-15
    - a. The first time the word ἐγένετο is used of Christ is in verse 14 when speaking of His “becoming” flesh - the Word (which already was) became flesh - He was not always in a physical or fleshly form, but at this point in time He became so
    - b. John then elaborates that He lived among them (as in his first hand account) - this was also a point he described in I John 1:1-5 (and also warned against contradicting this point, that Christ came (became) in flesh - 4:2-3) - see also 2 Peter 1:16

Remember the context, that it is “the Word” that became flesh- this eternal One who existed with God since eternity past and where life and the “light of men” comes from

This was core to the reason for writing this Gospel... telling of and the message of “the Word” that “became flesh”

His complete divinity put on complete man (His divine nature also now had a human nature, only without sin)

Notice also that this is the first reference to the Father, now making a contrast to the differing persons of the Godhead- Christ (the Word) as God, and now the Father as God (as being the “begetter” of the One and Only.. the Word)

The specific mention of the Word becoming “flesh” is significant realizing that Docetism was being promoted in their time that Jesus was not actually “flesh” since no “good” could be associated with it - it was a part of Gnosticism that taught that matter was evil, which clearly Jesus demonstrated even the possible redemption of the body/flesh

There have been countless “glories” that have captured the attention of mankind, but none as genuine and glorious as that of the life of Christ - this is one of the concepts we are looking for as we study this Gospel

Truthless grace is presumption and could not be legitimately relied upon, and graceless truth will either promote unmerited pride or despair

His “past tense” message is still witnessing as we desire our testimony pointing to Christ to outlive us

Though John was about 6 months older than Jesus

- c. The word for “dwelt” is ἐσκήνωσεν and could be translated “tabernacled,” being more in reference to a temporary dwelling, but in light of the tabernacle in Exodus, there looks to be a more significant parallel than just a temporary dwelling - more like “God with us”
- d. The tabernacle of Israel’s history was also the “tent of meeting” where God established a physical construction where He would come and indwell, and so have a point where man could meet with his creator and have his sins dealt with
- e. This does not describe God being completely transformed into a man, but more God taking on “man-ness” - see Php. 2:5-8 He “took on the form...” and “... was made in the likeness...” - He did not lay aside His divinity (His “God-ness”) but in His humanity was “emptied of self” (He was not proud/egotistical)
- f. This was the fulfillment of Gen. 3:15, the **first description of the Gospel** and what it would contain in its outworking... the “seed of the woman” crushing the head of the serpent and the necessary beginning to fulfilling Isa. 53:1-12, described as having a “form” and “appearance” and as “a man of pains”
- g. John then elaborates that He lived among them (as in his firsthand account) - this was also a point he described in I John 1:1-5 (and also warned against contradicting this point, that Christ came (became) in flesh - 4:2-3) - see also 2 Peter 1:16
- h. And during His “tabernacling” among them, John and others “beheld His glory” and that not like (nor comparable) to any other glory, since it was “the glory of the only begotten Son of God” - “only begotten” being “μονογενής” indicating, not His being created, but more literally “one of a kind” (the “one and only”)
- i. The first part of μονογενής is “mono” which means single or only while the second part is the word comes from γένος and γίνομαι (the verb form) which means “kind/type” and “to become,” making the translation “one of a kind” or “unique” son more understandable - He is “the only one of His kind” son. This translation is the only way to describe the coming of Christ into this world and in flesh
- j. Either way, though, it does not hinder us when translated “only begotten” seeing that it is in reference to His being born on this earth and never in reference to His existence before coming to this world
- k. The glory of the Word is not just in reference to something like what they saw at the “transfiguration” (Mt. 17) especially since John does not reference that event - so this “glory” is far more than just a “brightness” of Christ at any time, but would be more the glory of His life characterized altogether - it was seen because these “beheld” (ἐθεασάμεθα - to gaze/concentrate) His glory - with so much time spent with Him observing and listening to Him, His true glory became apparent - a passing or casual glance at Christ will not suffice!
- l. This “glory” (of this “one of a kind son”) was described as being “full of grace and truth” - in light of John’s use of the name “the Word” and now the singling out of this combination with “glory” of grace and truth, it looks to be a reference to Ex. 34:6 when God passed by Moses (who was in the “cleft of the rock”) and showed Moses His glory and proclaimed Himself saying, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and **BOUNDING (full) IN LOVINGKINDNESS (grace) AND TRUTH**”
- m. These two traits are needed with the pulling together the actual Gospel - Truth (literally “reality”) is needed to legitimize and reveal/explain grace (that there actually is such undeserved favor), and truth without grace is condemning only (offering no hope)
- n. As we walk through the details revealed regarding Christ, we need to make sure we are looking for the demonstrations/revelation of grace and truth
- o. **To deny Him or not truly know Him is to live a life without any true/lasting “glory”**
- p. In verse 15, John refers again to John (the Baptist) and his “witness” - the tense of “bore witness” is actually in the present and would better be indicated as “testifies” (even though dead, he still does, as Abel’s testimony still speaking (Heb. 11:4))
- q. His message of Christ was that “He who comes after me outranks me because He existed before me” - John (the Baptist) was never guilty of making his message/testimony about himself, but stressed from the start that He was of “lesser rank” than the one that would follow him, and as stated already, John also witnessed that He existed before him

Barnes (on Micah 5:2)

- r. Texts such as this and others (Micah 5:2) point to the eternal existence of Christ - "Here words, denoting eternity and used of the eternity of God, are united together to impress the belief of the Eternity of God the Son. We have neither thought nor words to conceive eternity; we can only conceive of time lengthened out without end. : "True eternity is boundless life, all existing at once," or, "to duration without beginning and without end and without change."

4. Of His "fullness" grace and truth are received - vs. 16-17

The idea of "fullness" here is more than just "enough" and "complete" but is also "inexhaustible"

- a. The word for "fullness" is πληρώματος and was used to describe a "full compliment" of a group to get done what needed to be done (as in a "full compliment" of a ship's crew), and the Word's fullness is made up of grace and truth (picking back up from verse 14)
- b. This is the source from which we all receive (as John and the others of his day) grace (the favor, kindness, enablement) from God - the way it is worded "χάριτι ἀντὶ χάριτος" (grace for grace) pictures the idea that when one "grace" is used, another comes to replace it
- c. It is true grace we need/desire the most overall for from it comes all other of the "goodnesses" of God (His love, mercy, peace, hope and truth) - as it is "drawn from" there is always more to come- no other entity/being could begin to offer such, and if they did it would not be true grace; some have suggested that "grace upon grace" is also in reference to grace being true grace (without cost or deservedness to/of the recipient), and so "grace received as grace"
- d. Everything the Law (of Moses) was pointing to (and indicating) was fulfilled/completed in "Jesus Christ" (note the proper name of "the Word" is used) - the Law included the sacrificial laws (which ultimately pointed to grace in the dealing with sin ("just punishment" being enforced only on another)) - see also Rom. 3:19-20; 5:20-21
- e. But the Law was not the final answer (it pointed to it) - the Law, with its benefits, was a terrifying system overall (as pictured in Hebrews 12:18-29) and yet with Christ (who is superior not only to John the Baptist but now also Moses and the Law) comes grace and truth- not the picture of grace in the sacrifices, but the **actual** outworking of the promised grace and that dealing completely with sin (in truth/reality)
- f. This texts does not intend to condemn the Law and make it null, but it does state clearly the superiority of Christ and His being the complete fulfillment of all of God's will as being far above it - there should be no preference on our part in ever desiring and clinging to the Law more than to the Gospel of Grace and Truth that comes through Christ

Compare to I Cor. 4:7, Eph. 1:6-8; 42:5-10 and John 3:23

The Law was an answer at the time (the will of God revealed and explained) but it was not the final answer and revelation of God and His will

The Law was given by Moses (but it did not have its source in him), but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ because it is of Him (He being full of grace and truth)

There still are and have been since Christ those that will identify with the Gospel of Christ but will endorse a life and faith in the Law more than faith in Christ (or will adulterate the Gospel with lawful requirements to somehow obtain or live up to the Gospel for salvation)

5. Jesus Christ "exegetes" (explains) God - vs. 18

The earliest manuscripts has "one of a kind God" versus "one of a kind son"

Could one (apart from Christ) have ever imagined a relationship with the Creator as Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden?

Based on this, apart from Jesus Christ we could not truly come to know or understand God as we should

- a. No one has ever seen God (ever) - John directly states the fact to point to the singular explanation of God, that being the "one of a kind God" (μονογενῆς Θεὸς ὁ) - Moses never actually saw God (His face), nor those of Israel, but they saw His glory and the affects of His presence
- b. So what is the answer to this statement (that even the atheists of our day see as a substantive argument against the existence of God)? How is He to be known (truly and fully versus partially and at best in a "blurry" sense as those in the Old Testament)? Were Abraham, Moses, David and the prophets to be the closest any would ever get to God?
- c. The answer is (without obscurity) given here - only one truly with God (the Godhead, at the side of God as in the closest of relationships) could explain/describe/communicate Him - this is done by Jesus as He "ἐξηγήσατο" (defines, explains Him and shows the way to Him) - this is where we get our word "exegete" which pastor/teachers are to do with Scripture
- d. The cults, who seek to take away the deity of Christ make it so God, as He was meant to be known, cannot be known (since it is not one of the Godhead revealing Himself and the tri-unity), but is just another created being who has closer access than we do, but not God Himself "dwelling" with us

6. This ends the prologue of John and the introduction to Jesus Christ and who (and when) He actually was and so the highest attention/focus that ought to be given to Him

The humanity of Christ is important to remember and not take away from, but it in no way lessened His God-ness (even in the texts that seem to indicate His not knowing as much as the Father regarding the end)

- a. Fulfillment in life, light, grace and truth are to be found in Him and any/all true understanding of God, His character, His will, purpose and plan will be best revealed in Him - this was the idea included in Heb. 1:1-4
- b. To over-stress the humanity of Christ at the cost of His being God is to allow for us to devalue and lessen the importance of everything Christ said and did - never has anyone lived where every single detail about them was significant an important!

## II. The Testimony of John (the Baptist) - 1:19-34

### A. Who John was not and **what** he was - vs. 19-28

1. It was at the time when John the Baptist's preaching and baptizing had become popular - his message was one up repentance, confession of sins and to not trust in lineage (Mt. 3:1-12) - vs. 19-20

Such preaching was a novelty to some, a spectacle to others, a motivating pursuit of truth and to be right with God - but to the religious leaders it was threatening

- a. To the religious leaders in particular, he was most sternly warning them not to have any religious idea that God in any way needed them - "And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham." Mt. 3:9
- b. John's witness was seen first in his denial of any greatness - he is a supreme example of the first essential aspect of not only glorifying Christ, but of how to keep himself as obscured as possible, being more characterized as pointing to Christ
- c. "The Jews" sent "priests and Levites" (religious leaders/representatives) - there would have been a curiosity and an urgency to go see/hear firsthand John the Baptist's message - religiously they would consider themselves (their "take") as protective of not only their "faith" but the traditions that had reformed it over the centuries (their "reformations" were detrimental)
- d. John came from a priest's family (Zechariah) and he was, in many ways, doing more of the work these other priests were to be doing - it may have been more in the tone of "Who do you think you are?" that these religious leaders approached him
- e. "He confessed and did not deny, but confessed..." as if in saying, "He openly acknowledged, without any embellishment (to save some dignity/glorify for himself), and so did not hold-back in his open acknowledgment" that he was absolutely not the Christ - his focus was not on self!

This was a formal delegation sent to ask questions to determine who he was (or more so, who he thought he was)

There was absolutely no motive on his part to bring attention to himself, which is why he is so direct and concise in his answers

2. These religious "experts" then go down their list to see who he would identify with/as - vs. 21-23

It is not probable that they had any notion that he was a legitimate messenger/prophet from God - they likely came to find fault with him as is normal with the self-righteous - they are justified not in their espousal of truth and righteousness, but in their finding flaws/faults in others

- a. It needs to be realized, part of their concern (in their seeking out who he thinks he is) is seen in verse 25 when they ask "Then why are you baptizing?" - this was a significant practice/symbolism of cleansing
- b. They start with Elijah (based off of Malachi 4:5), possibly because he dressed as Elijah was described as dressing (II Kings 1:8) - he was definitive in his answer "I am not" to this and the question as to whether or not he was "the Prophet" (likely in reference to either the promised "Prophet" of Deut. 18:15 (who would be like Moses) or even Jeremiah (as seen referenced in Mt. 16:14) - The prophet of prophets would be the Messiah
- c. Revealing that their pursuit was not one of discovering "the Truth" (but one of reporting who John claimed to be), they ask again so as to have an answer they can bring back to their authorities - but their authorities (though in legitimate positions) had lost sight of their accountability to their actual authority - these may have feared his popularity because they feared losing the respect of the crowd more than God
- d. "They were of the Pharisees, proud, self-justiciaries, that thought they needed no repentance, and therefore could not bear one that made it his business to preach repentance." MH
- e. John actually does not tell who/what he is as much as he has Isaiah say - John references Isaiah 40:3 when he states "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness..." (note the absence of the proper article... just "a voice," but the message was the importance) - he was in the wilderness (not being a part of the "authorized" leadership in Jerusalem) and not being a "convenient" place - yet it was not a deterrent to true truth seekers
- f. The concept in Isaiah (and so here also) was of a messenger announcing the coming of a king, and the need to remove obstacles and to straighten the paths for His coming (it was preparatory, and here the "paths" would be those of the heart and the preparation that of repentance (removing obstacles now seen for what they are))

There was always some onset of a new "heresy" but these themselves were in error and so would not see the truth when it came

Read Zechariah's prophecy regarding his son in Lu. 1:76-80

He was sent to prepare the way for the King, but many had other ideas of what they expected/desired in a "king"

3. "... among you stands One whom you do not know." - vs. 24-28

They were there to question his authority to do and declare what he was, but he admits to no personal authority - that would be upon the Christ, as it is with us also, having no true authority in His work of our own

- a. These that were interrogating him were from among the Pharisees (a group originally formed to defend the traditions and the Law of God from corruption - yet in their zeal they corrupted it themselves in their attempts to defend/protect it by couching it in more laws and traditions of their own making)
- b. Baptisms at that time were ceremonial and associated with purification, and sometimes done to bring in a proselyte into Judaism, but always under the authority (by the directive) of the Sanhedrin - their focus was more on the "authority" of the one administering the practice than the purpose or meaning of why it was being done - repentance

John was stressing the change of heart and the resulting outward expression of it

There have always been those emphasizing all the appearance of "religion" without substance- see II Tim. 3:1-5

We know, having been introduced to "the Word," the validity of this, but Christ would not appear as special among them (based upon what they were looking for in a "Messiah")

It is of no value for us to have the "look" of the working of God in our lives without the actual working - but as we come to realize, His actual work does not attract the praise/recognition of the age

There never has been nor will there ever be His like again - He is the supreme historical point of study - He is perfect in all senses of the word (flawless, complete, thorough)

see also I Cor. 5:7; I Pet. 1:14-21; Rev. 5:1-10

Taking away the "sin of the world" is clearly (in light of other texts and the reality of an eternal "Lake of Fire") not a statement that everyone who ever lives has their sins removed- simply put, if anyone in the world is going to have their sins removed, it will only be by means of Christ - if not by Him, they are "still in their sins"

Read Rom. 5:17-21

- c. Ceremonialism and ritual typically become the core/main focus of the insincere, misdirected (deceived), and/or those seeking only validation of their spiritual state - if all logistics are followed and it is administered in the "right setting" by the right persons, then it becomes the "guarantee" of their standing before God (having followed-through on the "to-do's")
- d. John agrees that he does baptize, but makes it clear that it is just the symbol ("I baptize with water") making a distinction without actually mentioning it - as if in saying what I do is just with water, but there is far more than this that should be sought beyond this symbol
- e. What was looked upon as a high religious rite would only be in the category of "just/simply" without the actuality of what it was to represent - the fulfillment was coming in Christ
- f. With this as their focus, John contrasts it with the authority of Christ - even with baptism being a revered rite, it was no comparison to one who "among you stands" who is so much above John that he is not worthy to do the most humble of services (loosing the shoe of a master to take it off) - nothing in His service should ever be viewed as beneath us
- g. "Those to whom Christ is precious reckon his service, even the most despised instances of it, an honour to them." MH - if we elevate ourselves in our own estimation, we downgrade the Lord and aspects of His work are unimportant (the privilege of it is unrecognized)
- h. This demonstrates (as well as much that follows) how misdirected priorities and keeping our eyes on the lookout for what is "impressive" (in this world) distracts, as Luke included in his account, "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (in contrast to all other baptisms) Luke 3:16
- i. His use of "ἄξιος" (worthy) pictures the scales of a balance, and he would not "carry as much weight" (he would be found wanting in comparison to the Christ)
- j. Making in clear that this was an actual accounting, John adds the location (Bethany, not that of Lazarus but another location) that all this took place

#### B. "Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" - vs. 29-34

1. From here on, John (the Apostle) demonstrates several titles for the Lord; "Lamb of God" (vs. 29,36), "Son of God" (vs. 34,49), Rabbi (teacher) (vs. 38,49), Messiah/Christ (vs. 41), King of Israel (vs. 49), and Son of Man (vs. 51) - He will also be referenced as the "prophet" Moses prophesied would come in Deut. 18:15 (vs. 45)
  - Consider the significance of His variety of qualities/roles - He was God's "lamb" (sacrifice for sins/purification), God incarnate, the ultimate teacher (as God would teach, such was Jesus Christ), He was the promised one specially anointed of God for this purposed perfect life, sacrifice, resurrection and eternal rule/reign; He was also rightfully King of Israel (and truly King over all) and yet contrasted in His humanity as a man, yet one Who would literally speaks for God (as THE Prophet)
2. This statement was far more profound than most could have initially anticipated - vs. 29
  - a. John the Baptist references Jesus coming ("Behold" ("Look!")) as He approached - this would have been after His baptism and after the temptation
  - b. He was "God's lamb" provided for the sacrifice for sin - yet such a sacrifice had to be "without blemish" (and in this case, being the very Lamb of God, He had to be flawless in every possible way, and so "doing all righteousness" in every possible way) to "αἴρων τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου" (lift-up so as to remove the failures, to meet all the standards of God (or to meet any of His standards perfectly consistently)) and so "sins," and those, not of just one or a few people but of the world (which, from our perspective would be the countless failures to meet perfection of countless people; and even just one of these sins being powerful enough (regarding us) to condemn all humanity into an eternal condemnation!)
  - c. We need to realize also that such a removal of sins is also the removal of all guilt (for there are no sins left to be guilty for and so then all condemnation is gone) - sins are not temporarily removed, but ACTUALLY removed! - see also Heb. 10:14
  - d. His "lifting up and removing sins" was by means of Him bearing it upon Himself as God's sacrificial lamb - those focused on a "Messiah" to improve their life situation and restore Israel to world prominence were grossly mistaken, and failing to see the far, far greater victory needing to be won over the greatest enemy of all... sin
  - e. As it was then, so it still is; the reality of sin must be acknowledged if it is to be removed and the imperative "Behold!" is for us all - "Look there, for there is the only answer for sin!"



### 3. And who exactly was this that could fulfill such a role, and can we be sure? - vs. 30-34

With so much “riding” on these facts being true, John is careful to be thorough

It is interesting that in the Targum of Jonathan,” Num. 7:89 reads, “he [Moses] heard the voice of the Spirit who spake with him descending from the heaven of heavens upon the Mercy Seat which was upon the Ark of the Testimony between the two Cherubim, and from thence was the Oracle [*the Word*] speaking with him.”

The “One that sent me” was God - compare John 1:33, 6

Clearly to be “baptized” (immersed) in the Holy Spirit of God is the baptism that is most important - to be “in” the Spirit is an all-encompassing picture of His presence and therefore His work

To learn of Christ is to defer to Him and follow His teaching and example, and not in short “spurts” but ongoing, steady

- a. Having just revealed what John the Baptist stated of Jesus, John (the Apostle) stresses (by restatement) the solid evidence/assurance that could be had that this is the One, sent from God, that was not only truly qualified to serve as His “Lamb” but that He actually did
- b. John had written that John the Baptist testified that this was the “One” he was looking for and now sets it in its full context that **this was Who would be the only one to be looked to as God’s chosen** (His son) - any skeptic would have to deal with these facts and others
- c. John did not know who precisely it would be and that he had revealed to him exactly what to look for - once known, John would also fully realize that He infinitely “outranked” him in position and in ministry- beyond this John also revealed that to have this outward evidence/sign was core to why he “came baptizing with water;” that He might be “revealed to Israel”
- d. John the Baptist “bore witness” (officially testified) that he did see the Holy Spirit “descend from heaven” and this “as a dove” (either as in the form of a dove or as a dove would descend and land)- then an essential detail is also provided that the Holy Spirit “remained on Him”
- e. John the Baptist needed special revelation also to know who the Christ was - it is presumptive on our part to imagine that any of us could “just know” anything truly Truth apart from God’s direct revealing it as such (in contrast to the limitless counterfeits)
- f. There may seem to be some confusion when comparing this text (that John did not “know Him” until the sign after the baptism), when in Mt. 3:13-14 John the Baptist clearly recognized Jesus was above Him - John clearly knew Jesus was uniquely special, but was still waiting for the definitive sign that He as the very one he was supposed to be preparing the way for, and then to point others to Him only
- g. This would be the one (in contrast to John the Baptist) that would baptize “in the Holy Spirit”
- h. So John the Baptist “saw and bore witness” (in the perfect tense so its result was to be realized as ongoing) that this was the “Son of God” - this does not mean that the most important part of this account was testifying to the “evidence” as much as it was to focus upon what He (Jesus the Christ, the Word) taught and how He lived

### III. The First Disciples Follow After Jesus - 1:35-51

#### A. Two of John the Baptist’s disciples act on their teacher’s pointed declaration - vs. 35-37

##### 1. The day after openly declaring Jesus as “the Lamb of God” he states it again to two disciples - vs. 35-36

There is often an apprehension exposed in us when those we invest ourselves in look away from us and to the Lord - some, possessively actually resist this and even resent it

- a. When John sees the Lord walking by (the Greek wording describing this indicates a steady stare), he verbalizes again “Look! The Lamb of God!”
- b. He purposely directs their attention to Jesus - as simple as this description is, it demonstrates a heart/perspective we all must have in any service we are called to for the Lord - it is our highest honor to point to Him and so away from ourselves

##### 2. Trusting their teacher, these two disciples leave John the Baptist and follow Jesus - vs. 37

Would we rather entertain the thought that as we reach life’s end that we would be surrounded with our followers, or that those that followed us are now fully following after Christ?

- a. This appears to demonstrate that John the Baptist had done his service well - no matter the attachments they had with him, they left to follow (completely) the one he had been pointing them to all along
- b. This is the core objective (and ought to be the driving desire) of any servant of the Lord - if those that follow after our teaching/influence turn their life direction and focus to Him, it should be the greatest thrill of all! - there will be times when we are left as they follow after the Lord
- c. One of these first two is named (Andrew (vs. 40)) and the other is not named - this leads most to assume it was John (the Apostle)

#### B. “Come and you will see” - vs. 38-51

##### 1. The time to act was now - vs. 38-39

Trying not to read into their intention, it looks as though they wanted to know where He would be so as to talk more with Him later

- a. Jesus, knowing they were following Him, turned and asked “What are you seeking?” - He, as He so often did, asks a question as to intent - this is helpful since so many do not consider what they are really looking for or are too timid to reveal it at first
- b. We are not sure why they answered Him the way they did, though at face value they wanted to know where He lived (where He was staying)
- c. Jesus instructs them to “come and see” - there was no need to ponder it further, and His invitation was immediate (He is always open to those genuinely seeking the Truth)

This is what disciples do - they are not casual learners, but ones who dedicate their time and ambitions to learning

- d. His reply is interesting in that He invites them to see firsthand (not just where He lives but ultimately all that He would say and do) - their interest was more than what could be dealt with in passing - they wanted to talk, ask questions, listen and then learn
- e. They stayed with Him all day - the attention to the detail of it being the “tenth hour” lends to the consideration that the unnamed disciple was John (the Apostle) - if so, his first impressions of the Lord were lasting

## 2. “We have found the Messiah!” - vs. 40-42

It needs to be remembered that Andrew had been a disciple of John the Baptist and had already been learning, so this was not the unlearned, undiscerning impulse of a gullible man

- a. The immediate impact of Andrew was to go and find his brother (Simon Peter) - the excitement was genuine (to this learner/disciple, so not necessarily one who was a novice to learning) so he was inwardly compelled to go tell his brother
- b. The first one Andrew located (Peter) he is only shown to have stated “We have found the Messiah” (the word “Εὐρήκαμεν” picturing something “happened upon” after a search) - they found what they had been looking for (though they did not know the full magnitude of what they had discovered!) - they had yet to come to truly know Who/what the Messiah truly was
- c. John defined (for his readers) what “Messiah” meant when he used the word “Χριστός” meaning “the Anointed One” - the Lord Himself claimed as much in Luke 4:18-21 when He read from Isa. 61:1 and declared that at that moment, this had been fulfilled
- d. Jesus essentially prophesies of Peter’s future in revealing that he would come to be known as “Cephas” (which translated into Greek was “Peter” (rock) - it would be what Peter was used to reveal/declare in Mt. 16:13-19, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” and would then be associated with this foundation (the rock) and that, not in honor of him but in the truth of Jesus the Christ
- e. Jesus likely had not been told his name and not only used Peter’s current name (Simon) but then told him what his name would be - already demonstrating His omniscience
- f. Some question John’s account and that of Mathew and Mark - the basic answer is that John reveals the initial encounters with the Lord while the others describe the final (formal) call - it is probable that the disciples did not fully to commit to follow a stranger

To be “anointed” was to be specially chosen

It is important to not associate “Peter” as being “the rock” since it wasn’t about his significance as much as it was the significance of the truth God revealed to him and then how God used him - better to be known/associated with God and His Word than even our own name

## 3. “You will see greater things than these” - vs. 43-51

John is the only one that provides details of this Philip - of the few things recorded of him, the most significant looks to be his bringing Nathanael to Christ (literally)

- a. John (in his Gospel) does introduce us to many people, but their part is to showcase Christ - we are not impressed with these men as much as we are with the One they were impressed
- b. Philip is described as being one that Jesus “found” (same word used of Andrew to Peter regarding Jesus) - here we have the Lord seeking and finding (and as we learn in John 17, Jesus in His prayer to the Father acknowledges that the disciples had been given to Him (17:6))
- c. Philip was apparently ready and one whom Jesus was coming for, so when He said “Follow me” he did (and John makes mention that Philip was from the same city as Andrew and Peter) - Bethsaida was in Galilee and it is believed all the disciples except Judas (who was of Judea) were from Galilee (not considered the most prestigious as Judea - see Jn. 7:52) - it was Bethsaida later denounced in Mt. 11:21 because they ignored/disregarded the great works done before them (fearing the “norm” and the costs of going against it)
- d. Having been “found” by Jesus, Philip finds Nathanael summing-up to him who they had found/discovered - he described Jesus as “the one of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote” (which was a very accurate summary) - but it was the next statement that made Nathanael question; “Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” - this is another example of them knowing that Jesus was exceptional in Himself, but they did not know the extent of Who He really was! - each would need to “Come and see” for themselves (there would be no vicarious faith!)
- e. Nathanael, a Galilean himself (and so despised), despised/belittled Nazareth as being a place where nothing good could come from (we see that Jesus Himself was rejected in Nazareth in Mt. 13:53-58) - but **God is not limited by these things and should not be limited in our thinking as to how and where He can work His power and demonstrate His glory**
- f. Philip’s answer was the best that could have been given in response, “Come and see” - this was the same answer given to Andrew and the other disciple (likely John), and for Nathanael to be convinced/converted he needed to go and see for himself - to assess the rightness just from his general experience/knowledge would have been lazy and irresponsible

So, Bethsaida is honored in these being chosen by Christ to follow and learn of Him and then condemned because the majority rejected all the signs/evidences specially given them

All of this took place in “normal” settings and environments and, though many knew the prophesies of “the Christ” they were looking for exceptional circumstances

Prejudice might be proven (at times) to have been correct in its assessment, but prejudice in and of itself is of no value until the actual truth is seen/discovered

The “truly an Israelite” could have been designed to mark the “Israel” side versus the “Jacob” (deceiver) side and to demonstrate how an Israelite ought to be characterized as one seeking for the truth even by getting passed base prejudice

To truly be without guile there must also need to be no self-deception (no internal thinking “games” to justify to self something that is wrong)

The term for “Son of God” would come to later be understood more literally, so Nathanael may not have realized how true his statement was - many had (and still do) an assessment of Christ as being profound, but never seek/allow such an impression/insight to go beyond the scope of their imagination

Possibly some may resent or fear such personal insight into their thoughts/heart

Those who are more immediate “converts” (believers) have so much to look forward to than those who are in a constant state of skepticism

Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of this picture of Heaven being connected to the Earth

The term “Son of Man” is a great example of humility being exalted - this is a term Jesus used of Himself - in an of itself it would be considered a lackluster title

- g. Jesus knew Nathanael before he reached Him and knew what he needed to hear at the moment (as well as those standing near Him) - we do not know exactly why Jesus said all that He did to Nathanael but we do know it was life changing
- h. Jesus references him as “truly” an Israelite and one in “whom is no guile” - as if in saying, “Here is what an Israelite should be” - this was not mockery/sarcasm since it was true of Nathanael, and a compliment like this was an actual assessment of his character (not a form of flattery used so as to encourage) - The Lord always deals in truth
- i. Jesus also identifies Nathanael as one who is without hypocrisy and one who was genuinely honest and trustworthy - the word for “guile” is δόλος picturing the use of bait to lure or trap something or someone - “guile” is a word for deceit (even though they may be technically right, their motive, wording, tone are used to misdirect or hide)
- j. Nathanael was genuinely taken with the insight of Jesus asking, “How do you know me?” - this is a key question (not just for him but for all of us) - His “knowing” is more intimate and limitless than ours of anyone or anything! Nathanael knew that the Lord knew at least something about him, but the Lord confirms it to him when He mentioned “I saw you” and that before Philip called him to come and see - the Lord saw him when alone (in private)
- k. We do not know the significance to Nathanael of being “under the fig tree,” but it thoroughly impressed this scrutinizingly honest man (judging by his response) - he immediately references Jesus as “Rabbi” (teacher, highly honored one) which is to be expected since the other disciples were looking to follow Him (as their teacher), but he then rightly identifies Him as “the Son of God” and “King of Israel”
- l. Nathanael had to be impressed that Jesus saw him and likely knew his thoughts, and such miraculous insight (or sight itself) into him was enough for him to truly believe (versus those, who with many greater proofs, refuse belief/trust in the Lord- it is of the will more than proof)
- m. The Greek word commonly translated in the form of a question “do you believe?” is actually present indicative active, so **it is a declaration not a question** (and could even be taken in an excited sense as in “you believed!” It will never be the amount of “proof” that creates faith
- n. “Thou hast believed because I have made thee feel that I have sounded the depths of thy heart, by means which pass understanding. There are profounder abysses than the human heart. There are powers at my disposal calculated to create a more tender and inspiring faith, one which shall carry thee into other worlds as well as through this.” Pulpit Commentary
- o. There is so much more to look forward to as if in saying “You haven’t seen anything yet!” - those given to doubt have no idea what they are missing, finding more comfort and reverence/respect in their doubts than in the pursuit of a higher object of faith than themselves
- p. Jesus confirms with “Truly, truly...” a certain fact of what will be seen - what Jesus describes here looks to be similar to Jacob’s dream of a ladder reaching to Heaven (Gen. 28:10-17) - though here, the angels are ascending and descending on the “Son of Man” - we have no account of Nathanael seeing this, but realizing Jesus is the one stating this, it happened (and it not needing to be while he was alive on the Earth) - no matter what is seen here (how spectacular), it will pale in comparison to what comes after!
- q. Here, Jesus also references Himself as the “Son of Man,” a term/title that would not have been considered “grand” accept it be seen in light of Dan. 7:13-14 and the “Son of Man” being given “dominion” and that an everlasting one

#### IV. Jesus Begins His Public Ministry with a Miracle and a Temple Cleansing - 2:1-25

A. John continues to give “witnesses” to Jesus as “the Word” - “And His disciples believed in Him” - vs. 1-12

1. A great deal has been written on this text and many take the route of allegory, looking to read into the particular meanings and pictures representing the old era gone and the new has come
  - a. But verses 1-12 describe an actual event (wedding) and a miracle - the point we seek primarily is “Why did John record these details?” - Did he have a hidden meaning or was his detailing of the facts revealing who/what Jesus was and the results?
  - b. Everything He did and said was significant, but we need not try to read into any of it more meaning than is clarified, for in doing so, we might miss the obvious because we were seeking out the “obscure”

## 2. "The first of His signs" - water turned into wine - vs. 1-12

He also honored marriage in His reiteration of it in Mt. 19 and in His use of it in illustrations (e.g. the "Ten Virgins" in Mt. 25)

"The mother of Jesus" was also there - it is highly likely she was a widow at this point and was also likely she was either a relative of those getting married or she was working to organize the wedding with the catering crew (seeing her participation in resolving the issue)

The use of "Woman" was also used while on the cross and was how he addressed her there as well (John 19:26-27)

Mary was either rushing Him or seeking to use Him (or both) which explains the Lord's response to her - this, of course, is not seen this way in Roman Catholicism

Though the core reason we obey authorities is because we obey God - but God's clear will must never be usurped by the will of another

Presuming on God is not uncommon for us but must not be looked upon as an acceptable thing to do, nor that God will ever be forced into anything no matter how good we see it to be from our vantage point - God is not our servant... we are His!

It would be easy for us to criticize Mary in this, but how often do we get frustrated when God does not glorify Himself the way (and in the time) we desire Him to?

This miracle was simply delivered - Jesus gave instructions to get the water and then to "draw it out" and take to the "master of the feast"

It needs to be noted that the "wine" (οἶνος) is not directly comparable to our "wine" today - what they drank then (if intoxicating, was mixed with water and would be significantly less in alcohol content)- "strong drink" (as is referenced elsewhere is more along the lines of our wine today and Jesus would not have been a participant in a "drunken party")

- a. The lead-up to the first miracle (sign) of Jesus is described as being the result of an invite to a wedding (and here, the celebratory feast) - it is often referenced (in our wedding ceremonies) the honor to marriages Jesus demonstrated by attending this one in Cana in Galilee
- b. John mentions the location (Cana in Galilee) twice (vs. 1 and 11) possibly to emphasize where this first miracle did NOT take place (not in a more prestigious location such as in Judea) as well as demonstrating real people and real locations (these accounts were not parables and not "made-up" so as to teach theological truths)
- c. Some try to make a case that the wedding ran out of wine because Jesus and His disciples came, but verse 2 makes it clear they were invited - the reasons why the miracle was needed are not the point - Jesus was never improper, and any hint of it is without value
- d. Verse 4 is a difficult verse to understand, though what was stated was clear - Mary (in verse 3) points out to Jesus that there was no more wine - it is commonly understood that this would have been very embarrassing for the family (of the groom) - Jesus answers (more word for word) "What does this have to do with me and you?" and He calls her "Woman" (though not disrespectful, He makes it clear from His usage of this (rather than "Mother") that their relationship is beyond that now)
- e. This response is in the form of a rebuke, so we may assume there was more to her intent than we know or that, even with her apparently good motive, she was mistaken in seeking to somehow utilize Jesus on her own terms - this looks to be further validated when He also mentions "My hour has not yet come."
- f. Some try to "soften" this dialog, not wanting to see Jesus in any way rebuke His mother, but His relationship to the Father was primary (and is at least peripherally illustrative to us that our relationship and responsibility is above that of our parents or other earthly authorities)
- g. When He states "My hour has not yet come" it is also used later in John in reference to His death/crucifixion (and so the resulting glory) - Jesus does meet the need after stating this, but notice how "behind the scenes" He does it and does not showcase Himself - those that knew the miracle (while it was happening) were the servants, disciples and Mary
- h. Some seek to make a case that this was in reference to the timing that He would perform this miracle and that she had to just wait and be patient; but this seem to stretch the meaning and better to take his reference to His being revealed for who and what He was (and was here to do) would come later and not by means of anyone other than the Father giving Him direction of what should be done
- i. Mary shows no hesitancy or resentment but instructs the slaves to do whatever He tells them to do - to say she expected a miracle is to assume into the text - this was His "first sign" (first miracle (2:11)) though she may have been looking for Him to reveal who He was (since she clearly knew He was significant and now He was beginning His public ministry)
- j. John details the number (6) of jars that were used and filled "to the brim" and in doing so, demonstrates the magnitude of what took place - this was not a few pitchers of water, but were 6 vessels that could hold 20-30 gallons of water, so the result being about 150 gallons of water/wine - interestingly, these were vessels for ceremonial cleansing
- k. The wording of verse 8 does not clarify when the water turned into wine (all the vessels instantly, once filled to the brim or when the servants drew out water into the cups and so was wine when it reached the guests) - ***the change in the physical make-up reminds us He is Creator***
- l. The "master of the feast" (the chief butler, or we might say the catering organizer) is instantly astounded and inquired of the bridegroom as to why the better wine was brought out later - the explanation of how things were typically done references "drunk freely" and this is significant (not in that normally guests were intoxicated and then served the "cheap stuff") because having been used to the taste would not normally notice the lesser grade - but even with dulled taste, they headwaiter knew this was exceptional in quality
- m. This was no "parlor trick" in either magnitude or quality which is why John then identifies it as "σημεῖον" (as sign that is miraculous to identify something as significant/supernatural) and so "manifested His glory" resulting in His disciples believing in Him (trusting Him) - note that His "brothers" are also mentioned as with Him (vs. 12) and are not listed as those believing

B. "Zeal for your house will consume me" - Jesus cleanses the Temple - vs. 13-22

1. "My Father's House" (the Temple) had become a marketplace - vs. 13-17

Jesus would become the Passover lamb, so this time was sacred before God and should have demanded the utmost respect and reverence whether or not they fully realized its significance - reverence was deserved whether or not full understanding was had

Consider that we also must not treat as common what is to be set aside specially for the Lord - this includes our bodies/selves as being the "Temple of the Holy Spirit" which are His - I Cor. 6:19

We do not have a direct parallel today since Church buildings are not the Temple - but the concept should still be honored that a place and overall ministry ought not be looked upon or used to make money

Compare this to the seriousness indicated in I Cor. 11:20-30

Formality for formality's sake is not endorsed/encouraged, but flippancy or being casual when we need to be serious in prayer, worship and obedience is seriously wrong

The second half of Psa. 69:9 is also interesting in light of what Jesus would do, "... and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me."

Coming before God honestly (open) is core to the seriousness we ought to have

Paul summarized the Jews and the Greeks and what they are seeking on their own terms in I Cor. 1:22

So many embrace Scripture and Scriptural concepts until they are called upon to believe/trust them in practice

- a. "The Passover of the Jews" time had come - this time was set aside (sacred) to commemorate the night before the Jews were delivered from Egypt - but the significance of this time was more on the deliverance from condemnation /death by means of the blood on the doorpost
  - b. This was an example of Jesus keeping the Law (it was required that He attend and participate) - it is interesting to realize that not only would He keep the Law in following its ordinances, but also in His **complete fulfillment** what these were all pointing to
  - c. When coming into the Temple area (the courtyard) He came into what would have likely been (because it was Passover) a frenzied marketplace - Jesus referenced it in His rebuke as "ἐμπόριον" (an emporium - a place selling a variety of goods on a large scale)
  - d. The point was not to do away with or criticize the sacrificial system or even the buying and selling of things, as much as it was the dishonor that was shown in conducting such business in a place reserved for the highest of reverence
  - e. It was to be expected that travelers from far away from Jerusalem would need to purchase sacrifices and other items for the Passover - the use of the Temple courtyard for this was the wrong
  - f. He formed a whip of cords and proceeded to drive out all the livestock and sellers and the money-changers - it is miraculous (truly a miracle) that we read of no resistance while He disrupted so many/much - The "Father's house" was never meant to be a "house of merchandise" (a place of business) - Jesus' treatment of it makes it clear that this was an insult and violation of how the entire Temple area was to be used - such distractions needed to be removed so that the business and formality not become the focus (as though it was just something that needed to get done), but that all those coming would remember and honor why they were coming and sacrificing
  - g. This was the first Temple cleansing (here at the start of His public ministry and then later at the end of it), so this was an important demonstration of our Lord's/God's view of how to approach Him and how to treat His institutions and memorials/ordinances
  - h. It is most normal to include in this description that Jesus used the scourge to drive out the animals and the people - rather than react to the thought that He would have been so harsh on these, we should marvel that they were allowed to live (remembering how defiling what was holy when the Tabernacle was setup was handled) - notice the seriousness of treating lightly (presuming) upon the goodness of God in Rom. 2:1-5 (dealing with the self-righteous and the undue confidence they have in their "read" and approach to God)
  - i. Seeing what Jesus did, how boldly and without hesitation He did it, the disciples remembered the first part of Psalm 69:9, "For zeal for your house has consumed me..." realizing the "zeal" (jealous enthusiasm of the place set aside to meet with the Lord and to deal with their sins) was all-consuming of Him and that such behavior and practices could not be tolerated - though often frowned upon in our day, a seriousness and sober authenticity needs to be stressed again in our gatherings as Christians (emotionalism for public display and flippancy, stale formality, and all insincerity should not be deemed as acceptable norms)
2. The demand for a "sign" that would validate His authority to do what He had just done - vs. 18-22
- a. This is distinctly different than in Mt. 21:23-27 where they just asked for His authority (after He had cleansed the Temple again) - here as well as there, the issue was authority not a "sign," and though they demanded a "sign" it would not have made them yield, realizing that Jesus gave them a sign infinitely better than they would have ever dared requested (resurrection)
  - b. The Jews (likely the religious leaders) ask Him for the evidence (His credentials) that allowed Him to take such authoritative action - they would "prove" that the "sign" they would demand must meet whatever undeclared criteria they would determine (which we still see in so many would-be followers of Christ... that He would/must meet their demands on their terms)
  - c. Jesus gives them an answer and the sign to be looking for (so He does not rebuke/correct them for demanding a sign), but the answer would be one they would not understand - Jesus reference of His own body as "this temple" was another verification of His deity (for the Temple was where God's presence was - Col. 2:9)
  - d. The Jews understood His answer as only in reference to the physical temple (which took 46 years to build, and which Jesus could have also built again in less than 3 days)

This statement was “believed” after the Lord proved it in His resurrection

- e. The disciples, though, remembered (after the Lord’s resurrection) that Jesus had said this- it demonstrates the significance of learning and listening to God’s Word even when it may be (at first) unclear, as well as the understanding that trust will always be a major aspect of being a “disciple” (a dedicated/invested learner versus a student only when convenient)
- f. Notice also that they not only believed what Jesus had spoken but also believed “the Scripture”(what had been written in particular of Him (see Psa. 16:10 and Acts 2:31-32)) - this is often the way things will work; God will “prove” His truth (rightness) and we will need to keep this in focus when **again** faced with trusting His Word over what we see/perceive

### C. Jesus knows “what is in man” - vs. 23-25

#### 1. “Many believed in His name” because “they saw the signs He was doing” - vs. 23

These statements were added to point out a significant fact to keep in mind moving forward

As we will see later, even the miraculous will not win-over a sin-hardened heart - only rebirth will do this!

- a. This addition by John should be seen as key, realizing how much he admittedly left out (20:30-31) - many miracles (signs) will be described/detailed, but as this text demonstrates, the “signs” were evidential that He was significant and should be heard; but His message would be the point - all this He did up to a week after Passover (this was the “Passover feast”)
- b. The “many” seeing the signs He performed “believed in His name,” but this was not a faith/belief that was grounded in what it would need to be - many believe what they see, and since they cannot deny what they’ve seen they must “believe” it, but it is not the core indicator of a true, believing/trusting heart

#### 2. While the many were “believing” (ἐπίστευσαν) Jesus was not “entrusting Himself” (ἐπίστευεν) - vs. 24-25

The wording is “διὰ τὸ αὐτὸν γινώσκειν πάντα” (“because to His knowing all” (men)) - He knew that all these “believers” would not continue to believe

compare to I Chr. 28:9

Jesus being “God with us” knows all, so it is futile for us to imagine we can ever hide anything from Him - our lives should be characterized as one of openness before Him all the time

How many times have we experienced where God’s Word has revealed something about ourselves we had not realized? We may not always appreciate this fact, but we need it

- a. His not “entrusting Himself” demonstrates a practical result of trust (entrusting, and so committing/investing special time and effort into something/someone)
- b. As often seen, many have a superficial “faith” and even though sincere in the moment, proves to be fickle (changing loyalties) depending on the moment - the current disciples (to whom Jesus had entrusted/invested Himself) believed more because of what they heard
- c. It is common to see or hear of those that transfer their belief from one thing to another - texts such as Jer. 17:7-10 reveal what none can fully realize their heart because of the innate infection of sin
- d. In the text in Jer. 17, we read that it is “the Lord” that “searches the heart” and now John makes it clear that Jesus needed no one to “bear witness” (give revealing evidence so the inner character of one could be known) of “τοῦ ἀνθρώπου” (of the man) so, here, any person in particular that would ever have approached Jesus
- e. Since, as John reveals, Jesus “Himself knew what was in man” then He could never be deceived or misdirected and we should also realize that He would have known each one better than they knew themselves (for none of us can fully know our own heart without His revealing insight) - imagine how nervous one would be (knowing this about the Lord) to approach Him and find out what was truly in their heart!
- f. This fact about the Lord will be illustrated in His encounter with Nicodemus and the woman at the well (in Samaria) - He would not dialogue with them on their overly cautious and maybe even masked terms (as most do)

### V. You Must Be Born Again From Above To See The Kingdom Of God - 3:1-21

#### A. Nicodemus came to inquire (possibly scrutinize) Jesus, only to be scrutinized himself - vs. 1-4

- 1. Before studying out the particulars of these verses, note first who Nicodemus (and we) are actually dealing with - it is common to find the majority of humanity “coming to God” (in one way or another) only they do it to see if He can and will live up to their standards and scrutiny

compare to Rom. 9:19-21

This is another reminder of why we are so dependent on the revealing Word of God, for we cannot even begin to contemplate how things really are and our absolute need until God reveals it to us

- a. ***It does not nor will it ever work this way*** - we being finite and He being infinite can never “call Him to account” in regards to our “tests of authenticity” to be considered worthy of our obedience and worship
- b. We are not told what Nicodemus was seeking because Jesus answers to the need of Nicodemus and not to his perceived need/question - one of our greatest deficiencies in the pursuit of the Truth is our inability to formulate the correct questions
- c. Nicodemus came to Jesus “by night” possibly (though we are not sure) out of fear - but his fear was not that of Jesus as much as it would have been of his colleagues
- d. One more note on this - Nicodemus came to Jesus to personally inquire further rather than do so in an accusatory manner with others - his (and ours) is personal first and needs to be genuine!

## 2. Nicodemus approaches Jesus knowing He is “from God” but unsure in what capacity - vs. 1-2

The point of significance was that he came to Christ at all versus just assuming what was happening, reaching conclusions that are unchallenged (as many do)

History (even/especially Church history) demonstrates the commonness of advanced learning yet not reaching the most important truths/conclusions (as some reach a level of knowledge and credentials to prove it, yet lack a practical understanding or use of it)

Notice also one of the evidences of His truthfulness as seen even by His enemies in Mt. 22:15-16

- a. His approaching Jesus by night may also have been because that was the only time he could speak with Him alone - since Jesus does not rebuke him we should not either
- b. Nicodemus speaks for himself and unnamed others (“we”), and that these knew for certain that He was sent from God (and this based upon the “signs” He was able to do) - since it was certain He was God-sent, Nicodemus addresses Him as “teacher” and “Rabbi” (not being sure of the magnitude of Jesus’s position, yet showing Him high honor)
- c. Jesus would later affirm (in John 5:36-42) that He was sent from God with “greater signs” and that even though they searched the Scripture seeking eternal life, and that even though the Scripture bore witness of Him, they (others) refused to accept it (truth)
- d. Nicodemus (from what we can see) was a sincere seeker and Jesus would go on to demonstrate that the advanced learning and religious position Nicodemus had, had not brought him the understanding he needed most - see 3:10
- e. Nicodemus knew that “God was with Him” (because of the miracles/signs) and as their history would show, this was a way for a true prophet of God to be validated, but with the purpose to be heard (for these signs were evidence the prophet had a *message* from God)

## 3. The prerequisite of rebirth (from above) - vs. 3-4

The core of the most important truths for us to know are beyond this age and are rooted in what cannot be produced by anyone or any thing but God Himself (for only God can re-create the person, for all else is recycled and has the fundamental flaw as before)

As we come to learn in the doctrines revealed in places such as Romans 5, our nature is dead in sin at our birth and will be seen as much as we live on in life- the change that is needed is a new nature that will then (also) be revealed for what it is in decisions and overall life direction

One of the most “righteous” men in Israel was told he needed to be completely redone

This type of response would be similar to one hearing the Gospel and responding that they cannot “change” (which is actually true apart from being “born of the Spirit”) - there is a helplessness indicated in this

- a. We do not know what was on Nicodemus’ mind but clearly Jesus knew and more importantly, what he needed to hear and come to realize - it is not a stretch to assume it had something to do with the “kingdom of God” (and possibly because he was trying to determine if Jesus was the Messiah) and many believed the Messiah was purposed to establish the kingdom of God on Earth(which He was/will, **but something of greater importance would happen first**)
- b. What Jesus answers him uses the twice repeated word “ἀμὴν” (with absolute certainty as if saying “absolutely, absolutely!”) and the certainty is of Himself (“**I** say to you”) - the emphasized statement of fact/necessity is “unless one is born from above [again] he will not [cannot] see the kingdom of God”
- c. The precise wording is “ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῆ ἄνωθεν” (“if not anyone is born from above (or “from the first” which is the origin of “again” as in going back to the start/origin)) - this is what is required! There is no spiritual, mental or emotional “renovation” that will do - the person must be made anew as Paul described in II Cor. 5:14-21 (a “new creation in order (prerequisite) for reconciliation with God (so as to then see/participate in His kingdom)
- d. Considering the concept of birth (as the picture used to explain this truth), that when one is originally born it looks as though nothing is set and final for their life, and that what they become is yet to be determined by the choices they make - this has a degree of truth, yet one’s nature will be seen for what it is as each grows and reveals themselves in the decisions that are made and the irreversible results that follow
- e. It is important to see also that the Lord addressed Nicodemus directly (“I say to you”), he being a religious leader in Israel and one who would have been consider exceptional in his life and morals - if he needed this, who could think themselves above this need!?
- f. “... by the term *born again* He means not the amendment of a part but the renewal of the whole nature. Hence it follows that there is nothing in us that is not defective.” Calvin
- g. This is what is absolutely needed is one is to be able (have the power (δύναται)) to “see”(ἰδεῖν which is more than physical sight, but includes perception and understanding also) the kingdom
- h. The response of Nicodemus is, at first glance an apparent reaction, for it is likely he understood the usage of a metaphor and responds (no matter how this is looked upon) as an impossibility - certainly a person cannot be physically born again, but from Nicodemus’ understanding neither could someone (especially someone “old”) be “reborn” in such a way as to be “new” (in their inner nature)

## B. Spiritual (the true, inner self, the nature of a person) rebirth only by means of the Spirit - vs. 5-9

### 1. Birth of “water and the Spirit” to “enter the kingdom of God” - vs. 5-6

- a. Once again the Lord makes an absolute statement (and so not to be questioned as to its truth), “Truly, truly...” and again this is directed to Nicodemus (“to you”) that anyone not born of “water and the Spirit” will not have the ability/power to enter God’s kingdom
- b. The questioning of this verse typically focuses on the use/meaning of “water”

Jesus could have said in the positive that one that is born of “water and the Spirit” will enter the kingdom, but He stated it in a way that would exclude those not born “from above... of water and the Spirit”

The idea of cleansing with water (and its necessity) is seen in texts such as Eph. 5:25-27 and the “washing of regeneration” found in Titus 3:4-7

If one was determined to make the reference to “water” to be connected to “Christian baptism” it would still be clear that even with such baptism, the person is not “saved” until the rebirth (of spirit) has occurred - any rite/ordinance is to reflect something of salvation and is not the saving itself!

To this day there is still an astonishment at the reality of what Christ is stating (especially realizing it is in the same context of John 3:16)

It has been long purported that one can simply be told they need to be born again and that at that point it rests upon them to decide for it or against it - this has sometimes been referenced as “decisional regeneration”

“Nicodemus was clinging more and more eagerly to the old ideas of national privilege, of sacramental purification, of soundly taught principles and habits. He marvelled at such representation which took the heart out of all his previous training. The Messianic kingdom for which he had been looking and longing seemed to fade away in the clouds of an utter mysticism, and to vanish out of his power of recognition.” Pulpit Commentary

Regeneration (rebirth) is something we are totally dependent upon - we did not stage our own birth and no one can cause to happen their spiritual birth

- c. Does the use of “water” refer to baptism? This is a common handling of this in this verse, yet the magnitude of its impact is missed, for if this is the case then the restrictive statement “...unless one is born of water and the Spirit...” would indicate that water baptism is required to enter the kingdom, so without it one could absolutely not enter
- d. Others believe it references physical birth, but why would this be necessary to explain (that one had to actually be born first to then be spiritually reborn)? What about those unborn, that are never birthed? Also, this would be essentially stating the obvious and would also go against what the Lord is doing with Nicodemus (directing him away from his reference to and focus on physical birth and toward the needed spiritual birth)
- e. The words “of water and the Spirit” ought to be taken as a unit, in that the reference to “water” is in reference to cleansing and is used in parallel with the Spirit in texts such as Isaiah 44:3-5 and in particular Ezekiel 36:22-27 - as John the Baptist made clear, Jesus was the One coming who “baptizes in the Holy Spirit” - such cleansing is needed so as not to become what they once were
- f. Making the distinction clearer, Jesus reiterates that whatever is “born” (birthed) of the flesh is just that, flesh; and that which is born (birthed) of the Spirit is spirit - nothing associated (or of) the flesh (of us or this world) will save or lend to our salvation - Jesus Christ is the unifier between the two (flesh and spirit) and only His work could regenerate our dead souls/spirits
- g. Only those “reborn” (in spirit by the Spirit) can “see” (perceive, understand, recognize) the Kingdom of God and only those truly cleansed by the Spirit in their spirit (their true essence/self) can ever enter this coming, eternal kingdom
- h. When Jesus tells Nicodemus not to “marvel” (be startled/amazed) that he must be born again (from above), it is with the understanding that “like begets like” (flesh begets flesh and spirit begets spirit) so one born of flesh cannot change their nature - such must come from “spirit”

## 2. Do not be overwhelmed/surprised at the necessity of rebirth - vs. 7-9

- a. There is still an overwhelming sense of the concept (unadulterated) of regeneration and its absolute requirement for salvation - the normal viewpoint (especially of religious leaders as Nicodemus) is that of some predictability, measurability and a process (definable and instigated of the will and by the planning of religious authorities and institutions)
- b. If we did not have some understanding of regeneration and were to be introduced to the command “You must be born again,” and even if it was clarified that this was in reference to spiritual rebirth, how would we expect we could make or ensure such to happen?
- c. The Lord will take this concept and steer the focus off of a forcible or predictable process of religious rites and confessions toward the resulting, undeniable results/effects of a spirit reborn
- d. The natural response to such a command is in line with that of Nicodemus, “How can these things be?” - How is such to happen? For it would mean that it is the resulting work of the Spirit and not that of “mine” (as the cause/source) that is required
- e. The Lord tells him not to be amazed/astonished (as if it is unacceptable or even ridiculous) that this must happen to a person - but, they may deduce, did they not have national and historical privileged, the law and traditions that if followed as prescribed one was guaranteed entrance into God’s kingdom? Traditional, religious dogma resists challenge and correction
- f. Jesus uses the example of the wind; it is heard and its movement is seen - so it is with the working of Spirit of God and His working in any of us and those around us - we cannot predict where He will work and where His influence will go next - but we can see the results of a regenerated spirit! It is easy to treat the concept of regeneration (salvation) as almost fragile because of the artificial means that have been constructed to a salvation of our own making/defining - many forsake and walk away from it, but in contrast to this, those truly regenerated will never walk away and are permanently, inwardly changed in their nature
- g. “So is everyone that is born of the Spirit” - it “happens to them” though this is no denial of the various other means and methods God will use in regenerating someone; but such means/methods must never be confused with the actual cause, for no external means/method can regenerate a soul! Salvation must never be “institutionalized”!
- h. Nicodemus’ response is understandable in light of our instinctive response to the same truth - we would rather regeneration be (at least) a cooperative event - not necessarily because we desire credit but because we desire certainty (evidence produced and defined by us)



One of the core factors/realizations leading to our conversion is our helplessness on our own or by means of anything on this earth

- i. Nicodemus responds, still puzzled, and asks a question still being asked in relation to true “regeneration,” (literally) “How are these things able to be?” - we might state it differently (such as “I don’t see how this can be” or just “I don’t see it”) - yet it all comes down to the point being forced on Nicodemus; that it will ultimately be by faith

C. Receiving the “witness” (firsthand testimony) “believing in Him” - vs. 10-21

1. “You a teacher don’t know?” - Jesus response to the perplexed (possibly unbelieving) Nicodemus was one of almost astonishment, that one who was a “teacher in Israel” (likely one of prominence because of the proper article before “teacher”) did not understand these things - vs. 10
- a. “How exactly would he have supposed to have known such a truth?” one might ask since; at first glance, such a concept as regeneration seems new to Scripture - but consider what the Lord is stating first, that one cannot just be “altered” or improved but that the need is a recreation, and the resulting new nature
- b. All the way back to Gen 3:15 we see that the dealing with sin will need to be another’s work for us (He crushing the head of the serpent), and other texts such as Eze. 36:22-32 where God promises the solution for Israel being “a new heart” and “a new spirit” (nature) - then those like David in Psalm 51:10 and his recognition of a “new heart” - see also Eze. 37:1-14
- c. Yet rather than have regeneration most (instinctively, to preserve some of sinful self) seek (religiously) only reform

There was never to be a “rehashing” of a person but a recreating and this being “from above”

2. Only the One who has “descended from heaven” is to be believed - vs. 11-13

Even if someone has experienced, perceived and seen something that has convinced them of some “truth” it does not mean it is correct - we are constantly subject to error and must seek out the One whose perception and perspective is infinite (for all others cannot see and know everything)

- a. What Jesus states (emphatically) is based upon what “we” know (οἶδαμεν, perceives so is able to recognize) and what “we” have seen (ἑώρακαμεν, to see and so to experience) - the use of “we” is not certain as to why the Lord used the personal plural, but could be in reference to He and John the Baptist (who also testified) or to Jesus and His disciples, and it may have in contrasting the authoritative “we” Nicodemus came to Christ with (likely as their representative)
- b. It is true that anyone can use such language to anchor their point upon, but this does not change the fact that there is a perspective better than ours and that the pursuit is to get it (the answer) right (to trust the correct source)
- c. So we need to come to know the one testifying - here it is the one who has seen the “heavenly” having come from above and descended to us (for none ever “descends to Him”) and it is of these truths, these facts, that He and those that are His “bear witness” to its reality
- d. For if one will not/cannot come to accept that which is taught that affects the “earthly things” (that just deals with the things of this life (for good or bad) and where it is heading), then how will one come to grapple with “heavenly things”?
- e. It is true that spiritual birth, though it is “from above,” is done while we are alive on the Earth - if one cannot come to know that what is here (earthly) must be remade, how can he/she even begin to consider the “heavenly things” if they are in their unregenerate state?
- f. His is the only witness we can bank our souls upon, so His message, and His initial point in it that one must be born from above must be trusted/believed!
- g. The infinite perspective of Jesus is the point of His descending from Heaven (the abode of God, Who is eternal and omniscient) and since no one could have ever started from the Earth (of the earth) and ascended up to God, then only He can be trusted (the only legitimate object of our faith) - “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us”

There is a great deal of interest in religious circles regarding “earthly things” that are then refused when it is initially disagreeable - if there is not practical submission/trust how will there ever be spiritual submission/trust?

All “religions” of the world either avoid the idea of rebirth or make it something of one’s own doing

Enoch and Elijah were brought into Heaven, but neither, of themselves, “ascended” there

3. This “Son of Man” that descended from Heaven had to be “lifted up” and believed-in for “eternal life” - vs. 14-15

It is often asked why a serpent was the focus on the pole - it would seem to fit best that it represented their sin and the judgment of their sin that needed to be dealt with - it was not necessarily a type of Christ as much as it was a type/picture of how God would use judgment (on Jesus) to save others

- a. Jesus references an incident in Israel’s history as a point to illustrate what He is teaching Nicodemus - In Numbers 21 we read of Israel’s rebellion against God and His judgment on them of “fiery serpents” to kill them - Moses was told to make an image of the serpent on a pole and those that would look to it would be healed from their deadly/poisonous wounds
- b. We know (from the following context) that the Son of Man being “lifted up” is in reference to His crucifixion (and ultimately, those that look to this in faith will be saved from God’s rightful judgment of their rebellion/sin) - see Jesus’ use of “lifted up” in John 12:27-35
- c. The word for “lifted up” is “ὑψωθῆναι” and is also used of one being exalted, which is included in the idea here, though how it came about is not typically seen as “glorious” (His being lifted up on the cross) - His submission to the will of the Father and His ultimate conquering of sin was the greatest act of true glory we could know

We may be shamed/humbled ourselves by God’s leading us to the display of His glory, not ours

We are to be thinking and living now as those who will live eternally in the next age, true life versus the eternal "second death"

So the answer to Nicodemus' response, "How can this be?" is "...whoever believes in him may have eternal life."

Many go to great lengths to try to harmonize this verse with concepts of predetermined election and others work to explain away the misuse of this verse to make a case for "universalism" - yet it should be taken first/primarily at face value in its context

We know, of course, that there are many who will not even consider God's actual love and the offering of Christ - we need not lessen its magnitude to "protect" other "doctrines of grace" since the text resolves itself with the qualifier of "belief in Him"

Essentially, the trust (faith) is in the love of God and the work of Christ and not the "degree" of our faith/sincerity- as soon as "belief" is made a work, doubts and confusion flood in!

Those "believing in Him" are the result - to make "believing" a work, it would then be subject to change and make the promise and comfort of this verse weak because it still would pivot on something of ourselves that would be constantly subject to change

Based on the context, His primary purpose for being sent into the world was to save it and the secondary consequence would be condemnation for those not believing - see verse 19

It's important to keep it clear in our thinking that the great identifier of regeneration is faith (actually believing) - so though there will be many claiming belief, their actions (over time) will reveal whether or not it was real faith

As just stressed above, faith/believing/trust is the critical point and will be proven for its authenticity by what each does (how they live and what they do)

- d. If "eternal life" and "the Kingdom of God" are together, then the practical sign/means of obtaining it is "believe in Him" - this "ζωὴν αἰώνιον" (life eternal) describes not an endless life in this age, but an age (the next) that is endless - there is also an endless "death" (in unending separation from the goodness of God) - see Rev. 21:1-8
- e. Note that the object Christ referenced (the bronze serpent) that God had used as a temporal salvation later became an idol to Israel and needed to be destroyed - II Ki. 18:1-6 - it is "in Christ" we believe and in so doing we are "in Him" and believing (having faith in) so anything else, no matter how closely associated with Christ or used of God, does not deserve our faith

#### 4. For God so loved He gave - vs. 16-17

- a. Still in explanation of regeneration from above, we're now told the reason/motive for the sending of the "one of a kind Son" - "For God so loved..." - this is a profound statement regarding God, that the first revealed truth regarding why He gave His son was that of love (ἠγάπησεν - basically "a preference" and so an affection for another that acts for the best of the object of their love)
- b. Still considering context, God "gave" His Son to be "lifted up" (on a cross) with the purpose that any who believe in Him (more than "believe on His name" as seen in chapter 2) which is an entrusting of themselves for salvation on/in Him - compare Rom. 5:6-9, II Cor. 5:17-21
- c. Nicodemus was desiring an explanation of "how can these things be?" (as to how one can be "born of the Spirit") and it is "belief in Him" as the source of salvation from sin ("perishing") just as Israel needed to trust God that they need only look at the bronze serpent lifted up on a pole to be spared from the results of their rebellious hearts
- d. This love was for "the world" and not just a select ethnicity (as some in Israel may have presumed) - though there is apprehension on some to say there was love "for everyone" there was, at the very least, a demonstration of love that all who would could consider
- e. As seen at the end of chapter 2, there were (and still will be) basic levels of some type of "faith" in Christ and affection and curiosity regarding Him, but it will prove itself far short of "saving faith" - for this "believe" is also qualified in its tense (present active), it is continuous (in the ever "now") - some may react to this conclusion, but this does not discount some struggle with doubt; just that no other object of faith will ever usurp/replace it
- f. We realize this is a result (the rebirth and its results (which would be belief/faith)) and is the work of the Spirit (3:8) and not that of the one "born again from above" - there is a necessity to explain this since so many have taken this verse independently of its complete and immediate context
- g. This rebirth and the resulting belief ensures one will not "perish" (ἀπόλῃται - to be utterly ruined, "to incur the loss of true or eternal life; to be delivered up to eternal misery" (Thayer)) which is contrasted with "eternal life" (never ending life "of the age" (the one to come in contrast to the temporal one in which we live now) - either our death or the return of the Lord will end this age for us, so we live in light of the one coming and not for the "now"
- h. God did not send His son to condemn the world, that He "so loved" (though as we see in the next verse there will be those condemned, so we do not want to exaggerate the extent to everyone (the unbelieving especially)) - instead, Jesus was sent so that the world through Him would be rescued (σῶζω - delivered, saved from the coming penalty of "perishing")
- i. The primary idea of "judge" (condemn) in verse 17 is that of separation - He came to do the will of the Father which involved daily living perfectly His standard (Law), teaching Truth and then to pay the required penalty for sin - the resulting "judgment" (separation of the saved from the unsaved) will ultimately come later (by Christ as is Mt. 25) but also there would be a separation (practically) in the present between those truly believing and those not
- j. So the mission of Christ was that of salvation, though many will be condemned by the very offer of salvation and the refusal to believe/accept/trust

#### 5. Faith or the lack thereof "in Him" is evidenced in what one does ("works" expose) - vs. 18-21

- a. Anyone believing in Him (Christ, the only "Son of God") is not condemned (judged, so "separated out" from God) but the one not believing (also present tense) is "condemned already" (perfect passive, so they already stand in the judgment of God) - if this is considered in reference to time (as we see it), all are born under the judgment of God and so are "condemned already" needing a savior

As verse 17 clarified, God sent Jesus, not to condemn it, but to save it, but there will be those refusing salvation out of preference for something they love/desire more than salvation

This is the best of news for those believing; they stand uncondemned and this is their condition from then on (for one to stop believing demonstrates they did not truly believe/trust (were not actually persuaded) to begin with))

“The message of the gospel is not that the world is going to be made better but that you and I are saved out of it.” Lloyd-Jones

It's not necessarily the amount of faith/belief one has as much as it is the object of their faith-rightful condemnation before God is our natural “lot” and any other pursuit of salvation/redemption not focused on the work of Christ alone keeps one in their condemned state- there is only one answer/solution!

The word for “evil” here illustrates the hardship people would rather face than face the truth/light

These “hate the light” because they love for things to remain the same or at least *seem to be* what they desire and expect them to be

Mankind, in the pursuit of self-justification and when confronted with the reality of evil (even in themselves) seeks to make themselves out to be the victim - here they are all shown to be willful participants

These verses show that there are really only two considerations when it comes to “works” - those done out of (by means of) self and those done by God

Again, walking in the light and practicing the truth are essentially living in the light of what things really are, why they are, and where they are heading, all based on the Truth - if the truth is believed to be the truth one will live by means of it and for it

- b. Notice the key word in verse 18... “believe” (πιστεύω- trust, being persuaded) - “Already in need of a Saviour before God’s Son comes on his saving mission, this person compounds his or her guilt by not believing in the name of that Son. As with the arrogant critic who mocks a masterpiece, it is not the masterpiece that is condemned, but the critic.” D. A. Carson
- c. It is a profound and fearful declaration in verse 18, yet it is simply put - those “believing” are not standing in judgment (present tense) yet those not believing “have been judged already” (perfect tense (describe a completed action which produced results which are still in effect all the way up to the present)) - they were born (in Adam) this way, so nothing changes
- d. For the believing, “... he is saved from the curse: condemned *by the world*, it may be, but not *condemned with the world...*” MH
- e. Yet to the unbelieving this should be the worst of news, yet they are likely not shaken by it because they are “lovers of darkness” (not necessarily picturing lovers of evil as much as it does being lovers of not having to see things for what they actually are (revealed by the light) and prefer to live their lives in such darkness)
- f. Notice in the transition from the end of verse 18 into verse 19, these unbelievers do not necessarily “not believe” anything (or in anything), they just don’t believe in the name of the “one of a kind” Son of God - they likely believe (in) someone or (in) something, but it is this particular slighting that keeps them in their condition they had at birth; condemnation before God
- g. “And this is the judgment...” (κρίσις- sentence against someone and so a separation (distinction) between the one sentenced and the Law they are answerable to) - the evidence against them being their response to the “light” (the light of the Truth described in John 1) - these refusing to believe/trust Christ do so because they “loved darkness rather than the light,” and the reason this was/is so was their “works were evil”(they prefer their “works/deeds” (what characterizes their life) not be held under the scrutiny of the light and be revealed for what they truly are... **evil** (actually “πονηρός” describing something morally bad and so it is “grueling” and “laborious” “full of labors” because it is determined/stubborn in its error!)
- h. Preferring “darkness,” they prefer anything that validates what they seek (which is why they love darkness, for it seems to offer them protection and concealment in their “evil works” which they do not want to lose) - love of sin makes the Truth offensive and even repulsive
- i. This fact is plainly stated in verse 20 - everyone “doing evil” (evil here being the word “φᾶλος” which describes what is “worthless” and Thayer in his lexicon associates the ideas of “easy, ordinary” with it) hates/detests the light and so (naturally) does not “come to the light” so as not to have their works “exposed” for how evil, worthless and sinful they are
- j. The word “does” [evil] in verse 20 is different than the word for “does” [or practices] the truth- both words demonstrate the true nature of the person (what they do, the one more just out of natural instinct (evil) and the other more deliberately, because it is firmly founded/driven by something other than his natural self)
- k. “The implication is not that men helplessly lie in the toils of wickedness but that, when the saving power of the Light comes to them and battles to free them, they fight the Light, hug their wicked works, and continue to make them the sum and substance of their lives.” Lenski
- l. The one “doing the Truth” (they do not just verbally assent to it, but because they truly believe it, they live it (the normal byproduct of true faith) - and, because they are regenerated (born again with a new nature), their motive for coming to the Light has nothing to do with self-glory - these, because of the new nature, are inwardly driven to live out and stand with the Truth (the Light) because it reveals that all the good (living the Truth) that was done, was “wrought of God” (the original wording being “τὰ ἔργα ὅτι ἐν Θεῷ ἐστὶν εἰργασμένα” (the works that in God have been done (worked))
- m. These verses also demonstrate the core (to the heart) difference between these two groups - those that love their sin and actively seek to shun the true light/truth (even when giving lip service to the “truth”) while those truly regenerated are always “coming into the light” - these stand with the Truth and have an inner goal that God’s grace at work in them being shown as His work and not theirs)
- n. Compare this context to that of I John 1:5-7 (and the evidence being “walk in the light”) is focused on the “practice of the truth” (same wording as in verse 21)

## VI. The Final Testimony of John the Baptist - 3:22-36

### A. "This joy of mine is full" - vs. 22-30

1. The context of this phrase from verse 30 is not one that looks to end with an expression of joy - a religious debate ensues, stirring-up attitudes and ending with a criticism of Jesus - vs. 22-26

It may seem, at first, that these details are unnecessary, but they demonstrate (at least) the significance and profundity of the right response in a bad situation

John adds the clarification that this took place before John the Baptist was imprisoned lest some disqualify this account because they believed John was imprisoned before Jesus began His ministry - with such careful attention, the accuracy is defended (because of the importance of the message)

There is always a dangerous tendency to become more loyal to the messenger than the focus of the message!

Even in our day there are some who would be more loyal to their teacher than even (possibly) the Lord when all is seen for what it is

Some commentators believe that John is countering a sect in his day that were still more loyal to John the Baptist and "his baptism" than that of Christ

In Mat. 21:23-27 Jesus asks the Jewish leaders where the authority of John's baptism really came from - the correct answer was "from heaven" but they dared not openly agree or disagree with it

As with John, all of us should see our core purpose in pointing to Christ (and so away from ourselves, even on the inside (in our hearts/thinking))

see also Col. 1:15-20 where Christ is to have "first place" (preeminence) in everything- this leaves no pride/glory for self (in anything), yet when we steal a little away, now and then, we become dependent on it and come to "work" others for ego boosters

There is no "fullness of joy" when "glory" is directed at us- we feel drawn to it but know inwardly that "self" does not belong in the spotlight - if a spotlight catches us on the stage of life, let it show us pointing to Christ, diverting attention from self to Him

- a. The historical context is quickly laid out that Jesus had moved on with His disciples (from (likely) Jerusalem) to the countryside of Judea - there He "was baptizing" (His disciples (4:2))- these details are given to show all that led up to the last recorded testimony John the Baptist would give of Christ
- b. Religious and spiritual "competition" is often legitimized as a result of a legitimate beginning- John points out that Jesus was sanctioning baptism with His disciples in another area and John the Baptist had also carried on his ministry of baptism - some would make it a "competition"
- c. So, while both groups (under the direction of their leaders) were teaching and ministering (baptizing), the disciples of John the Baptist get drawn into a debate regarding the value of this baptism in contrast to the purification rituals (washings) already in place amongst the Jews - no doubt the disciples of John thought they needed to rightfully defend this baptism of repentance, yet as we see in the next verse (26), it evolved into a resentful questioning of Jesus altogether (as, sadly, many initial "fights to defend the Truth" wander onto other areas of discussion that end up bringing more harm than good)
- d. After their efforts to defend the rightness of their leader's message and baptism, their enthusiasm carried them into a solid, defensive loyalty to him causing them to question Jesus- after all, was not He baptized by John? Now "all are going to Him" (they reactively exaggerate)
- e. Their numbers (in a legitimate, God-ordained ministry) were shrinking, while those of Jesus were growing, and this looks to have caused them concern - as John will point out, the intent all along was to direct all to Christ (and so, away from themselves)

### 2. "He must increase, but I must decrease" - vs. 27-30

- a. As any true teacher/minister of Christ would do, John the Baptist directs them from himself and in genuine humility, glorifies (rightfully) Jesus Christ above himself - it might be natural for any servant of the Lord, in the service of the Lord, to sense some level of success in their work based on the loyalty of their followers to themselves, but this is not helpful!
- b. John immediately redirects their focus to God and His overriding control of all things - first of all, regardless of how they would see/define "success," God was not only the assigner of responsibilities and gifts/callings/opportunities, but also would do what is best with each of them at any time - there is not "one thing" given to any unless it is done so "from heaven"
- c. This is a significant point to remember with anything at anytime that God gives, places us in, or takes away (see also I Cor. 3:1-10, 4:5-7, I Pet. 4:10-11)
- d. He reminds his disciples of his core purpose and identity: he was not "the Christ" but was the one "sent before Him" (which should, as one might expect, end in all focus being on Him) - the herald of a King would not expect attention on himself after the King arrives!
- e. It would seem obvious, yet John the Baptist had to again (John 1:20) state directly "I am not the Christ" only now this was to his followers - it must always be "the Christ" (and not ourselves) that we long to have those (we are enabled to influence) to follow - it is "the Christ" that is the authority, the Savior, the Truth, the One all glory belongs!
- f. Jesus uses the picture of a wedding, distinguishing the bridegroom from the "friend of the bridegroom" - the friend would be wrong to treat the event as though it was about himself and to be focused upon himself - instead he "rejoices greatly" at hearing the voice of the groom (meaning the focus of the celebration has arrived)
- g. His heart being anchored (and focused) correctly was truly fulfilled with the realization that "all men" were going to hear Christ - Robertson noted of this, "Perfect passive indicative of plēroō, stands filled like a cup to the brim with joy" picturing the meaning of "complete"
- h. If we are to consider the opposite (rightful discouragements and disappointments) it would be when others are distracted from Christ (by those supposed to be His followers) viewing life as though its fulfillment is to be found in some form of self-focus
- i. Stating the summation of the matter succinctly, John states a "must" - simply "He must grow and I must shrink (be demoted)" - He becomes preeminent and I fade

## B. "He who comes from heaven is above all" - vs. 31-36

### 1. Even with the best, most reliable, most authoritative witness to the truth, it was not "received" - vs. 31-32

Paul, when referencing Christ coming by means of the Jews (Rom. 9:5), calls Him "the Christ, who is God overall" - His being "above all" is "ἐπάνω πάντων" (on top of the whole) - all should expect to defer to Him

Such, only of themselves can speak only "in an earthly way" and so, no matter how seemingly profound their wisdom/teaching or their gifted, motivational teaching, it will be deficient in regards to the eternal, and their offering of "hope" will not withstand hardships and thorough scrutiny

Many will follow after Christ in intellectual, superstitious, ways and out of curiosity - interest and even "partisanship" does not necessarily prove "receiving"

- a. Jesus Christ, being the "One from above" is, as should be obvious, "above all" - realizing who He is, there could not possibly be anyone or anything considered as being "above" Him (as being more reliable and authoritative)
- b. As in 3:11, Jesus "bears witness" of what He saw and knows (firsthand), yet then (and now) it is (sadly) normal for even the religious (even professing Christians) to entertain some idea of their "right" to question Him and to pick and choose what they will "believe"
- c. So for John the Baptist's disciples to resent the popularity of Jesus was horribly wrong - there will be no possible better perspective, teaching and "way" to follow-after, learn and devote life to - so if earthly teachers/mentors fail/fade or (the opposite) become popular and highly admired, they do not deserve attention and loyalty usurping that of Christ
- d. For, simply put, "he who is of the earth is from the earth" and so their wisdom and experience are limited to this restriction (there is no way for them/us to know what lies beyond this universe apart from "special revelation")
- e. He (Christ) "bears witness" to eternal (beyond/above (and so better than) the earth and its wisdom and experiences) and yet no one "receives His witness" (what He teaches, declares and represents) - this is clearly far more than following, admiring and listening to Him, for many did this - it carries more the idea of taking into one's self, "owning" it, trusting in it (proven in a life set aside (consecrated) to it)
- f. This "no one receives His witness" is in direct contrast to the conclusion of John's disciples that "all are coming to Him" (vs. 26) - not all actually were "coming" and based on this verse, those that were coming were (at least at this point) not "receiving" - there is much more than appearance

### 2. The "sealed testimony" that "God is true" - vs. 33-34

Romans 1:24-28 lays out the downward slope into reprobation, after having "exchanged the truth about God" and reaching a point where they do not "see fit to acknowledge God" they become determined deniers of truth/reality and are given over to a "debased mind"

compare to I John 5:10

Such a concept should force us to consider whether our lives could serve as any type of "seal" (endorsement) or might we be guilty (at times) of responding as though God is not true?

This is fascinating to consider; that here we have God incarnate possessing not just deity but the entirety of the Spirit of God - truly in Him "dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily"! - Col. 2:9

- a. Before considering these verses in this context, it helps to realize that some common words carry more of an idea than the common definitions we must deal with - for instance, here the word for "true" (as in "God is true") it is the word ἀληθής from "α" (not) and "λανθάνω" (concealable, escape notice) providing us an idea of "true" or "truth" as being that which is actual reality - if it is not truly "of the truth" it is not based in reality and so is, at best "pretend"
- b. There is some debate as to precisely who is being discussed in verse 33 when referencing "He who has received His witness" - having just stated that "no one receives His witness/testimony" we have here someone(s) that do/have/will receive it and in so doing, place their "seal" openly and officially acknowledging that "God is true" - a few say it is John the Baptist, others that it is anyone that comes to "receive" Christ
- c. If we consider it being John the Baptist, it fits the context easily (for verse 33) and he clearly did receive the testimony and it would not be a stretch to consider the use of the word "seal" (as an official, authoritative) acknowledgment... he being a prophet of God
- d. There is also a reasonable sense in taking this also to mean "whoever" (anyone) that has received (from λαμβάνω meaning to "lay hold of" and "take") "His witness" (what He has said regarding the things "from above") is essentially placing their "seal" (using their life of faith/trust in His witness), openly endorsing it with their lives/living
- e. And not only should Christ be trusted because He "comes from above" and so is "above all" but also because He, being the one that "God has sent," is the one that "speaks the words of God" (in other words, **all that He says are the words of God**) - see also John 8:21-30
- f. He (Christ) being who He is, is given "the Spirit without measure" - all others had the working of the Spirit of God in them, we have the "gifts of the Spirit" doing the same, but He had it all (it was not meted out to Him; instead the Spirit came upon Him fully and stayed fully)
- g. We see that it was then as it still is that the majority will not receive Him nor His witness, and so will reject or disregard His message, instinctively desiring God to not exist or at least not be true (and so a "liar") - yet we, having come to the truth, would rather "God be true and every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4) for, if mankind is "true" we have no hope for a lasting/eternal hope!

### 3. The Father, out of love for "the Son" has given (once for all) all things in His hand - vs. 35-36

- a. It is the Father's love that once again is seen in giving - having just mentioned that the Spirit was given "without measure" (all gifts and enablement in His humanity)

It is interesting to consider that the Son took on humanity (the flesh) and has not “put it off” - He made it (flesh/humanity) what is its ideal and what we will retain also (because of Him) throughout eternity

Notice the opposite here to “believes in” is not the word for “unbelief” but is **disobedience**- this demonstrates one of the key identifiers to true faith being obedience

It is very important we never lose sight of the original condition of us all when we come into the world - depraved and deserving the wrath of God

- b. No other person has or will ever have such credentials (so any competition or perceived competition with Him is ludicrous) - He (Jesus) is God’s “plenipotentiary” (a person, invested with the full power of independent action on behalf of their government)
- c. “Therefore, having deigned to send us the son, let us not imagine that it is something less than the Father that is sent to us. The Father, in sending the son, sent His other self.” Augustin - compare this with John 14:8-9 - it was the humanity of Christ that received “all things into His hand” in the carrying out of all that was the “will of the Father”
- d. Note also that the word “δεδωκεν” (given) is in the perfect tense, making it clear that this now “having all things in His hand” is ongoing, without end
- e. This being the case, there are only two categories of peoples; “the one” believing in the Son has (has it now) “life everlasting” (perpetual, never ending true life/living) and the one “not obeying” (ἀπειθέω - not loyal, not conforming and so rebellious) and will not see life (what true life is, eternal with God) but will instead have upon him (forever) the “wrath of God”
- f. “The entrusting of the soul in utter moral surrender to the Son of God, is life—eternal life. All cruel suspicions of God vanish when the veil is lifted which sin and the corruption of the human heart have hung over the holiest of all.” Pulpit Commentary
- g. Such disbelief has what it has always had in the life of the disobedient; the “wrath of God” (in the present tense, so such have it right now) - the only hope for this disobedient one living under the wrath of God (and no chance on their own to ever “perceive” (see) life) is the entrusting of their soul into the hand of the one all things have been given

## VII. Jesus, the Singular Source of “Living Waters” - 4:1-42

### A. Jesus departs to Galilee when learning of the attention being directed at Him from the Pharisees - vs. 1-4

#### 1. A change in direction to avoid unnecessary conflict - vs. 1-2

Misdirected passion (turned against other believers and even against the Lord Himself) may need to be faced, but most often are best to avoid (mindless and misinformed religious passion leads to a battle of wills and not the Truth)

Jesus was not interested in drawing crowds, seeing His focus was on imparting the Truth to all regardless of its perceived popularity

Those driven by popularity should not be allowed to influence the ministry of the Gospel

- a. Having just described the conflict within the disciples of John, we see a potential conflict arising (possibly motivated by the enemies of Christ as was evidenced in the “discussion” between John the Baptist’s disciples and “a Jew”)
- b. The report to the Pharisees was in error regarding the actual baptizing of disciples by Jesus- apparently this was a sensitive point since John goes on to clarify that Jesus did not Himself baptize any of these new disciples, but that His disciples did this
- c. There was now an even greater threat to the Pharisees and to their version of their faith - they were wary of John the Baptist because of the crowds he drew and now was even greater under Jesus - it must be remembered that this group was not seeking the truth and whether or not they realized they were actually fighting the Truth, their traditions, influence and even their “life-callings” were at risk if popular opinion drifted from them
- d. Note that these followers (now baptized disciples) did not all stay consistent (the majority walking away when Christ’s teaching became “difficult” (see John 6:59-66)) -in the John 6 context Jesus reveals that only those “granted by the Father” can come to Him, so His focus was not on the people and their opinions/tastes, but on the will of the Father

#### 2. Jesus then decided to leave Judea and return to Galilee (where He had begun) - vs. 3-4

Clearly Jesus was greater in His insight than we, but in His greatness we should see an obligation to always be seeking His provided opportunities of ministry (especially in the “normal,” mundane times of life)

- a. As most do, Jesus set His sights on where He was headed, yet the journey to where He was headed had an opportunity and purpose in an unlikely place and in an unlikely way
- b. The statement “had to pass through Samaria” doesn’t necessarily mean He was obliged to, but that it was the path to be taken to get to where He was headed - John looks to be demonstrating a profound happening in the midst of a normal situation (travel)

### B. “... a spring of water welling up to eternal life” - vs. 5-26

#### 1. Take note of the setting of this account - Jesus (a “rising in prominence” Jew) talks with not only a Samaritan woman (unusual because she was of a group that Jews would not usually talk to and would feel obliged to have no association with them at all) and yet all this in a place of historical significance to the Jews (being land given to Joseph by Jacob and an historical well/spring) and also the burial place of Joseph

The Jews despised Samaritans because of their historical disobedience and intermarrying with Gentiles - this would have seemed to be even a morally justified prejudice to some

- a. There were numerous “strong” reasons why the discussion with the “woman at the well” should have never happened - this may help make the point that common prejudices (even considered legitimate) should not usurp our responsibility to always be looking out for those in need of the Gospel - we are not those “judging” who *deserves* to hear it

As demonstrated by our Lord, we are to see others in light of their need (not as they discern it but as it really is within their soul, especially when lost and blind in sin)

- b. This woman was also likely a woman of disrepute (having had so many husbands and living with a man not her husband), so Jesus even being near her would have been frowned upon by the religious authorities - but Jesus was not there to become close friends (having her remain the way she was), but to convert her with the Truth
- c. "A religious, male, Jewish aristocrat like Nicodemus, or an untrained, female Samaritan peasant who had made a mess of her life - Jesus converses frankly with both, and happily breaks social and religious taboos to do so." Carson

## 2. The leading circumstances of wearied travel - vs. 5-9

This was a place that had degraded through the ages (as far as its historical ties with "faithful" Israel) and would not have been a likely destination for most when considering the best places to share the Gospel

The full deity and full humanity of Christ may seem contradictory but is a good example of an apparent paradox (a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement or proposition that when investigated or explained may prove to be well founded or true.)

G. Campbell Morgan

Jesus knew who/what she was and used the example of a physical need/longing to compare to the spiritual longing

- a. Jesus came to a town called "Sychar" which had been formally known as "Shechem" and was not only within the land that Jacob had given to Joseph (to Ephraim), but was also the burial place of Joseph (Jos. 24:32) - it had a long history with Israel having been the place Joshua reviewed the covenant with the leaders in Israel before his death (Jos. 24), it became a place of idolatry in Judges and later became the residence of King Jeroboam (after being rebuilt when it had been destroyed shortly after the death of Gideon)
- b. And, as we now see in the narrative, it was also the location of "Jacob's well" and so a place Jesus stops to rest "wearied from His journey" - John clearly demonstrates both the deity of Christ as well as His actual humanity (fully God, fully man, though seemingly irreconcilable at times, yet we see as undeniably true)
- c. The "sixth hour" was likely about noon (Jewish time) and so in the heat of the day Jesus asks the "woman of Samaria" to draw Him some water - His disciples were off to buy food so Jesus asks her to give Him a drink - there is no reason to think Jesus didn't ask because He was thirsty, but He also used the opportunity as a point of ministry - we do not read anywhere where He received the drink of water He requested - her need was more important than His
- d. "He gained admission to the soul of a sinning woman, by asking her to do Him a favor." - it was a general point of respect in not only speaking to her, but by being willing to partake of something she would give Him - this is a good example of how we ought not ever present ourselves as above others
- e. The woman seems surprised He would ask for a drink from her (He being Jew and she a Samaritan) since they "had no dealings" with each other - regardless of the physical make-up of an individual, each has an eternal soul and that is what we strive to see first

## 3. Jesus tells the woman what she should have asked - vs. 10-15

We all could (to some degree) answer what we desire, but none (on their own) could rightfully determine what they SHOULD desire

It is the same for us also; God does not need us but uses us for His purposes and this for our own good - we are always the losers when refusing God-given responsibility

We naturally crave water to live and in like there is an internal craving for something to cause us to truly live!

The skeptic and the sincere "seeker" may both ask challenging questions though for different motives (something we need to be aware of when monitoring the attitude of our response)

Many would rather maintain dependence on historically "good" things over that of the eternally best things!

- a. Since the woman could not know what she should ask for (as anyone, apart from special revelation does not know even what to ask for since focus and inclination is always to the physical, and so to the pursuits of temporal satisfaction... including emotional)
- b. Her biggest issue at that moment was more what **she did** not realize (the "gift of God that was right before her, an opportunity of an eternal lifetime, eternal satisfaction)
- c. She did not know who it was that was asking her for a drink (He, being who He was, could have had this need met in many other ways, but chose (because of her need) to ask this of her)
- d. In His gracious revealing of the opportunity she had (and would have continued to miss) He tells her what she should have asked, "Give me a drink" and His supply would be "living waters" (the physical illustration being that of moving waters (a spring) versus that of stagnate/stale water) - **only God could offer such** (see Jer. 2:13, 17:13, Rev. 21:6, 22:1, 17), the genuine eternal living water, being the source of endless (true) life - compare also John 7:37-39
- e. As with Nicodemus, she does not see past the analogy and focuses on His lack of something to draw up water from the well... unless He is speaking of something else (for she then asks almost as though she is realizing He is speaking of something else; something better when she asks "where do you get that living water?" (vs. 11))
- f. If He is referencing another source to something better, she wants to know if He is (or thinks He is) better than "our father Jacob" - this could be taken as a challenging question (as in "who do you think you are?") or a sincere desire to know if He actually is better
- g. Again, as in His discussion with Nicodemus, Jesus stays focused on the need and not her possibly diverting questions
- h. Jacob was "great" in God's use of him, and the Samaritans realized they were also descendants of him and lived in his land - this made this well/spring very special to them and would not think (possibly out of loyalty) that any other source of water could be better

This spring-fed well would have been considered "living waters" - even though its supply seemed infinite, its fulfillment wasn't - the issue isn't amount - as much as it is quality - money is a good example of this; even though one may have more than enough for their lifetime, it cannot satisfy

All sources of satisfaction here are temporary and the same needs will cry for satisfaction again and again

Such is better than a "fountain of youth" for it eternally resides within and provides an endless supply of what truly fulfills

Her focus was on a possible freedom from having to come daily to get water - convenience was what she thought the offer would bring her (or possibly a gratification of her laziness)

We have more than we will ever need for lasting contentment so it's a perspective/focus issue that leads to discontentment - see also I Tim. 6:6-10

Jesus, as the Lamb of God came to "take away the sins of the world" would need to actually deal with sin - core to the Gospel is the forgiveness of sin and the change in nature (born again with a "well spring" of living waters within)

As it still is today, religious or philosophical debates typically act as lures to draw someone into a conversation, or as here, to divert it another direction (away from sinful self)

Notice it is "worship of the Father" and not worship of the location or even of worship itself (as so many religions are prone to do)

- i. Was Jesus greater... even more than Jacob? The answer is clearly "yes!" - based upon Jesus' previous response He was infinitely greater than Jacob, He himself being the very "gift of God"
  - j. Some commentators chide the woman at this point, believing she should have known this was a spiritual reference and was still focused on the physical - we see no rebuke from the Lord, only a patient leading of the conversation to exactly what she needed to hear and see
  - k. He, as the "gift of God" was so by God's grace (also the motive for the gift) - all other "gifts" and "need-fulfillers" will only be temporary (as here, those drinking of these well-spring waters), though high in quality and having a substantial heritage, its consumers would thirst again - there is an unquenchable, inner desire to have lasting fulfillment
  - l. Jesus, now guiding her further into the conversation, contrasts "Everyone... be thirsty again" over against "whoever... never be thirsty again" - everyone (all inclusive... the norm) will drink of this water (from this historical, living-waters well) will thirst again, stating what would have seemed to be obvious in order to offer that which would seem impossible
  - m. The offer is that water "that I will give him" (for there is no other source) will never thirst again, made so by it becoming "in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" - using the Lord's illustration, we drink water and our thirst is quenched but once used up and dispelled, we thirst again (having no internal supply) - as anything that offers fulfillment now is outside us and must be sought out again - He is the source of "eternal living" in contrast to the normal course of humanity leading to "eternal death/dying")
  - n. Now interested, she asks that He give her this water, though she was still focused on the physical (temporal) and not the spiritual (everlasting) - just as so many (even the religious) still seek for - an endless supply of the non-satisfying "temporal"
  - o. Jesus demonstrates a loving compassion for this woman - this was no theological or philosophical debate (though she would soon try to direct it that way) - Jesus knows her need far greater than she knows it (or she thinks it to be) and is about to make it clear His knowledge of her is all-knowing - for it will be her testimony of Christ ("He told me all that I ever did" (vs. 39)) that many would believe in Him
  - p. Many might speculate that, though they are in Christ, they still suffer from a life of dissatisfaction and that they still "thirst" - this is due to the fact they still define "satisfaction" on the wrong scale and related to the wrong things - my body and even thoughts may feel discontent when looking to the "temporal" for fulfillment (and may make the "feeling" of discontentment even more pronounced as we're prodded to what is truly lasting) - see Heb. 13:5
4. Jesus demonstrates His knowledge of her sinful state and yet a profound revelation given - vs. 16-26
- a. Jesus began with a basic request for water, followed by an offer of "living water," all of which would become more profound when she comes to realize He knows her for who/what she is
  - b. Rather than answer her request for the "living water" as she interpreted (viewed) it He tells her to go and bring her husband - she simply responds with a technical fact, that she had no husband (leaving out a great deal of information which would expose her moral condition (her character)) - sin's guilt seeks remedy in concealment, blame or excuse
  - c. Jesus does (technically) agree that she has no husband when He responds "You have well said "I have no husband" (singular) for she "had five husbands" and that she is living with a man (unmarried) so is (lawfully) without a husband - Christ exposes that even though she has spoken literal truth, she had an underlying deceit
  - d. She uses two, often used techniques when confronted with personal sin - she simplified her situation avoiding any negative light on herself, and then proceeded to divert the conversation (here, to a "religious" discussion) - the Lord was not going to deal with her according to her sin (which she might have expected anyone to do) and the Lord used her topic of "where the best place to worship was" to declare to her who He actually was
  - e. She immediately acknowledges that she realizes he must be (she "perceives") a "prophet" (one who speaks for God) - her interest is to get the answer from Him regarding the debate over the true, best place to worship (on "this mountain" (Gerizim) or in Jerusalem)
  - f. The Lord's initial answer is not the straight-forward answer that "salvation is of the Jews" but reveals where it is all heading (where it will end up) - the location of "worship" will no longer be a the focus (rather than "in Jerusalem" it will be "in spirit and in truth")



Even the advantages the Jews had (see also Rom. 3:1-4), they were not enough without the reception of all of what these Scriptures were pointing to - many love the study of Theology but dislike it's application

As then so we still have many focused on a religion and tradition yet not knowing who/what they are actually worshipping

It would seem that the Lord worded it this way because He was the fulfillment but the sacrifice for sin and resurrection had yet to be finished

"True worship" is not defined by us - to be truly worship it must be in response to who He really is and in submission to what He has given and instructed us to do - many can praise Him but do not/will not follow Him

This does not indicate the Holy Spirit Himself, though we know it is His work that regenerates and so enlivens our dead spirits

There are those in professing Christianity whose knowledge and stance on the Truth is strong but whose soul is little or not affected while there are those whose soul feels much but it is inspired by untruths or adulterated truth

Nicodemus and this Samaritan woman demonstrate the two common groups of the religious- the religious informed, self-righteous unregenerate and the religious mis-informed self-righteous unregenerate

Jesus had directed the conversation from the physical to the spiritual, using the reality of temporal thirst quenching to the internal discontent (lack of fulfillment) and landing on not only the answer, but the authoritative source of the answer - the reliable source of the answer is essential to the viability of the answer itself

- g. Consider also the possibility if Jesus would have answered her with just the plain facts of where true worship was supposed to be at that time (in Jerusalem), she could have responded that the Jews forbade them to do so
- h. Both groups, as far as their firm holding to the location of proper worship, would both soon become obsolete (for even Jerusalem would be destroyed some 40 years later)
- i. So, Jesus makes it clear that they (the Samaritans) "worship what you do not know" - the Samaritans only accepted the first 5 books of the Bible (the Pentateuch) and though their origins were similar, because of what they left out, they worship in ignorance
- j. "Salvation" would come by means of the Jewish people, not exclusively to the Jews but to all, from (starting with) the Jews - salvation would "emanate" from the Jews (Rom. 1:16)
- k. "The hour is coming, and is now here" - vs. 23 - the system setup by God with the Jews (and the ceremonies, feasts, sacrifices and the Temple) was fading out and, essentially was (initially) fulfilled with the presence of Christ (God incarnate and so with them rather than in the Temple)
- l. The result would be seen in "true worshipers" (literally those that were genuine adorers, submissive followers) would worship the Father (adoringly serve/honor Him) "in spirit and in truth" for such the Father would have to worship Him - "worship" is a word that has become more focused on praise than it has obedience and servitude (which worship **must** include)
- m. To "worship" (from προσκυνέω describing someone going down on their knees before another in reverence, kissing the hand of the master) is to be done in "spirit and in truth" (stated twice in this text, verses 23 and 24) - both words carry much content
- n. To worship "in spirit" is (as is also clarified in verse 24) not only regarding the non-tangible, but as being "of the soul" (in the "inner self" of who we really are on the inside and not just an external "front"), so it is the occupying "inner man" (the real "me"), describing one whose heart is truly engaged
- o. To worship "in truth" carries the core idea of "in reality," not just the genuineness of ourselves in it, but that it be based upon what is true/real - we realize, based in John 14:6 that Jesus Himself is the Truth and so to worship the Father "truly" it must be in the light of Christ
- p. "Omit the spirit, and though you have the truth, the worship becomes formalism, mere ritual observance. Omit the truth, and though the whole soul is thrown into worship, it becomes an abomination. Thus "spirit and truth" form a unit, two halves that belong together in every act of worship." Lenski
- q. The Father is not "seeking those" who work to come to Him on their own terms and in their own ways, for there are seeming limitless, zealous pagans and spiritually dead formalists, both fighting with each other (and internally) for self-rightness, neither of which God "seeks"
- r. So, going back to her question regarding the debate as to where worship must take place, the "must" was not on where but on "how" (which is commonly seen (erroneously) as subjective (a matter of personal choice/preference)) - God "is spirit" (this is His "essence") and so true worship must be "in spirit" and that "in truth" (notice the word "must")
- s. In response to these profound words of Jesus, the woman declares that she knows the Anointed One is coming (though their idea of Him was flawed, she still knew He would reveal "all things" to them, answering all that needed to be answered and known) - it looks as though she had been led to consider this thought (by Jesus)
- t. Jesus immediately responds by telling her that "I am *He* speaking to you" - He had laid the initial proof of this when He demonstrated He already knew her, and she would later declare, "He told me all that I ever did" in verse 39
- u. He had not revealed this to others (His being the Messiah) possibly because the others would "take Him by force and make Him king" (John 6:15), all of their own initiative and timing

### C. The witness of the Samaritan woman - vs. 27-38

1. The significance in the testimony of this woman was not in her experience as much as it was to whom she was directing others to come and see/hear
  - a. The point in any witness for Christ is that the hearer not be more impressed with the testifier and his/her experience, but that it be used to point to Christ
  - b. The discussion with this woman was interrupted by the return of the disciples who had gone to get food - their initial assessment was that of astonishment (prejudice versus need)

To view others in light of their need above all else would be something Jesus would demonstrate throughout His ministry

2. The disciples were taken aback (surprised) that Jesus (a “Rabbi”) would be talking with a woman - vs. 27
- It was widely known that a Rabbi was not to talk with a woman in public (not even his wife) and certainly not matters of the Law - most did not believe a woman had anything of substance to contribute to such discussions (a prejudice Jesus countered by His action)
  - Yet many conversations we will have (as demonstrated here) are more in the conversing with another, discovering their questions and needs and pointing to solutions
  - The answer to such inequities is not an enforced equality as much as it is a change in thinking and perspective of “the peoples” to value all as being made in God’s image, and having that truth dictate our first impressions - there are always consequences (good and bad) to any philosophy/worldview of life - Jesus contradicted a bad practice, not just speak against it
  - John reveals what they were thinking - they were questioning why He would talk with a woman in public and what He was looking to get out of the conversation

None is beneath us - we are all equal in need before God and to allow self to be elevated in its own estimation is never good

One of the fallouts of many philosophies such as evolution and even “racism” is a focus on what is substantially irrelevant to the core need of people

3. The resulting impact of intimate insight versus that of theological/theoretical insight - vs. 28-30
- Notice the excited urgency of the woman - she leaves her pot to hurry (possibly not to be encumbered going back to town) to tell what has happened and to bring others back with her
  - Her message to those she met is intriguing - she was more taken with the fact that He knew her without having met her previously - she, knowing what she was (morally), was encouraged that He was gracious and actually took an interest in her (He listened and offered hope)
  - Her message was for them to “Come and see a man who told me all the things I have done” - this is illustrative of what we inwardly desire; not just to know the truth or know of it, but that the truth of ourselves (who we really are, what we really struggle with, what we truly desired and all that we lived in fear of) can be faced - at the core it is very personal to us!
  - Her question, “Can it be this is the Christ?” was not intended to question that He was as much as it was to present the possibility to those she wanted to come and find out for themselves - this is an example of what evangelism is focused on - not “trust me, or believe me” but come to Him and see for yourself - people are not “won” to ourselves; they are “won” to Christ
  - Those that she talked with were intrigued enough to leave the town and make the short journey out to hear Him for themselves

This was more than just telling others of some type of “magic trick” and for them to come see it - she knew there was much more to this man which is why she was considering the concept of the “Messiah”

Evangelism is not “trust my take” on salvation, for as it is personal with us so it must and will be for others (not personal in that we define it but that we are affected to the core of our inner most self and are radically changed (regenerated))

4. True “sustenance” - doing the will of God and finishing it - vs. 31-38

- As the Samaritans were gathering to come hear Him, the disciples, having suppressed their shock of seeing what the Lord was doing, focus on His physical need (food in this case, for this is what they went into the town to do)
- The Lord responds to their requesting Him to eat; as with the Samaritan woman, Jesus uses another physical need to illustrate a far more important fulfillment (i.e. fulfilling purpose)
- Jesus response is to tell them what His was, in a sense, to describe a food He has already been eating on (food to eat that they didn’t know about) - this, of course, causes them to wonder if someone had already brought Him food
- His food (not just the substance but the entirety of its fulfilling its purpose in meeting a need for living) was not only doing the will “of Him who sent me” (God the Father) but to **finish it** (τελειόω - reach the end, complete, from the same core word Jesus used on the cross, “It is finished”) - this contrasts those that see doing the “will of God” as participating in intervals rather than staying with it till it is finished
- As far as analogies go, in this case (when it comes to the harvest work of the will of God) do not be like farmers when they say there must be a time in between planting and harvesting (though in their case it is true) - with God’s harvests, do not assume there will always need to be a length of time between the planting of the seed and the harvesting
- Jesus, giving them an example of the “harvest” He was talking about tells them to “Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest...” - we may assume in this context that the Samaritans (here, the “harvest”) were coming at this point
- The potential of lives forever changed should drive us, fulfill us, as it did our Lord - many did not respond as this group (later in Jesus’ ministry), but it did not change His “fulfilling sustenance” (doing the will of God and not allowing predictable norms to dictate the possibilities we look for)
- Our focus is to be looking for God’s working (readiness for harvest) realizing He may have been “working on” someone long before we met them

Hunger and thirst are vivid pictures of desires coming from need - Jesus would use “food” (what is consumed to sustain) to speak of what actually sustains Him

Doing the will of God (as in the day to day happenings demonstrated in this text) is fulfilling (even surpassing the natural cravings) when it is our focus, joy, purpose

Jesus describes a “miracle grow” that there is no counterpart in creation

A heart for others and their actual needs should be what stirs us “to the heart” - we are to look on others, not for how they can encourage us, but how we may encourage them

The thrill of the Lord's work is that harvest can happen at any time and we need not know when and how the "seed" was sown - we just live in the anticipation of His work already in progress

Results (the "fruit" the "harvest") belong to the Lord and we (as these disciples) will participate in either or both throughout our lives - while no "harvesting" is present we expect to be sowing

This is true with many believers - they are drawn to consider the Gospel through the witness/testimony of another, but it becomes their own testimony, and the personal relationship that is born out of it

Note how long after Philip was able to reap where Jesus had already sown - Acts 8:4-8

People desire answers to the deepest questions of life and life purpose but it will involve far more than some intellectual, philosophical answer (which the age has plenty to recommend) - it is the "cry of the heart" that needs an answer to rest securely in!

It looks as though these Samaritans were not given to pride as so many of the Jewish leadership - being "upper class" has issues often not considered (i.e. not having any substantial needs or being self-sustaining)

True honor would be seen in the faith/belief in the message and the resulting conversion rather than the need to see "signs and wonders" in order to believe (and even then, the message was often rejected)

- i. The analogy of the harvest now focuses on the workers (the sowers and reapers) and Jesus tells His disciples that the "reaper" is already being paid - both the sowers and reapers rejoice together - we don't know who is referenced here as the "sowers" other than the Lord is demonstrating a fact that they are to be looking for from here on out
- j. The "sowing" can come in many ways and we could consider that some of this was the initial teaching this woman (and her fellow citizens) had received regarding their past - there was clearly enough that had been learned for them to know of "the Christ" - the "reaping" can be practically seen as those coming to Christ - compare to I Cor. 3:5-9
- k. The proverb Jesus references is helpful to keep in mind; "One sows and another reaps" - the sower can be encouraged just in the "sowing" (the seed) even though he may not get to participate in the "reaping" - we all must not limit our joy to seeing the "harvest" for ourselves
- l. This text is a good reminder to be wary of those who present themselves and their presentation of the Gospel as a **certainty** for a quick harvest - it can and may come, but not because of them
- m. Jesus tells the disciples that they will reap where they have not (themselves) labored - the others have "labored" long before they had (this could even reference the prophets from long ago, or John the Baptist and certainly means Christ Himself in the immediate context)

#### D. The progress of true faith from that of another's testimony to becoming personal faith - vs. 39-42

##### 1. The readiness to believe in the Samaritans - vs. 39-40

- a. The power of a testimony should be neither underestimated nor overestimated - many believed because of the testimony/witness (literally her "word") - this would lead them to come hear Him and then their belief would be firsthand versus secondary
- b. Her witness was that He "told me all that I ever did," and though that is either an exaggeration on her part or a figure of speech, He really did know all she had ever done
- c. These asked Jesus to stay (and He did for two days) - we have no account of Him performing miracles (as they seem to be unneeded) - they "believed because of His word"
- d. It had to have been impressive to this group that such a Jew would come to them and minister to them and teach them - Jesus had just described this opportunity as His "food" (that which He was sustained with)

##### 2. Many more came to believe Him to be "the savior of the world" - vs. 41-42

- a. His "word" was truth and rather than waning, the group and their interest grew
- b. John points out that these other Samaritans believed because they "heard for themselves" - again this is key, not that they "saw" (as in miracles) but "heard" - it is the truth of what is what and why everything is what it is (and where it is all heading) that is needed more than religious sensationalism
- c. Their conclusion was not that He was the best philosopher (though He was/is), nor that He was the most powerful (though He was/is) - they conclude with certainty ("indeed") that He is the one to save the world - they knew (likely instinctively) that the world needed to be "saved" (rescued from itself and all that mankind had done and would continue to do to it)
- d. The world cannot save itself because it cannot deal with the core cause... sin - Jesus had real answers because He dealt with the real issues (not the superficial results of sin that the world seeks to resolve with the best of its "experts") - Jesus truly is the only answer, but so many don't even seem to know the most important question(s)! - see also I John 2:1-2 and John 12:44-50

### VIII. More Honor Given to Miracles than the Creator's Message and to His Law than the Lawgiver Himself - 4:43-5:17

#### A. A prophet "without honor in his own country" - vs. 43-45

##### 1. The contrast between the reception in Samaria and that of Galilee - vs. 43-44

- a. There has been no small amount of debate as to the insertion of John that Jesus had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country - many seek to tie this to the poor reception in Nazareth which is in Galilee (described in the other Gospels), or that it references Judea in general (especially considering the overall resistance in Jerusalem)
- b. The best answer (because it is reasonable and fits the entire context perfectly) is that John points out the differences in the reception in Samaria (likely an entire town came to hear Him and believed) and all this without miracles (other than His knowing the woman at the well without having previously met her)

True faith is most interested in where everything is headed rather than being obsessed with the present- saving faith looks beyond the present

c. Jesus spent two days with the Samaritans and “many more believed because of His word”- these desired the truth and answers and not to have their immediate needs addressed as top priorities (as would be the case in Galilee)

2. When Jesus arrived in Galilee He was welcomed - but the reason given was because some of them had seen what He had done in Jerusalem (miracles) - it was a fascination with what was seen rather than what was heard - vs. 45

note John 20:29

- a. To this day, there is a greater interest in the supernatural power of Christ/God to relieve temporal burdens than there is in His eternal message and purposes in/for life
- b. A welcoming reception does not necessarily indicate a reception of what Jesus was truly bringing - many would have the “supernatural” at their beckon call or to excite them when life gets dull, but few would have His truth redirect and dictate their lives

B. “Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe” - vs. 46-54

1. The faith of desperation - vs. 46-50

It is common for even the self-identifying godless to appeal to God in desperation when their helplessness is painfully before them - but this is not true faith; instead it is more along the idea of “hope” - temporary help was found in miracles while lasting help and hope was found in His truth and who He was

- a. A “royal official” approaches Jesus when He enters Cana of Galilee - many had seen some of His miracles in Jerusalem and (likely) many knew of His miracle of turning water into wine - His reputation was spreading (though the enthusiasm seemed to be motivated with the excitement that they might see more miracles)
- b. This official’s son was “at the point of death” and judging by this urgent request, he had no option but Jesus - his request, in his helplessness, was sincere though he only knew of the reputation of Jesus’ power and likely knew little of what Jesus taught and who He was
- c. This man’s approach to Jesus was one asking for assistance and not as one coming to exercise his authority/rank to force or intimidate Jesus - this was the normal approach people took with Christ when facing a situation beyond their ability - no one dared demand help! (as some have done and believe they may get what they request if they threaten something)
- d. It was at this point that Jesus declares the “normal” prerequisite to have “signs and wonders” in order to believe - there is a natural (seemingly logical) inclination in us all to require some type of “proof” (and that on our terms) in order to trust/believe
- e. As will be seen later, even His miracles could not persuade a majority to follow Him when His teaching became controversial, difficult or association with Him might cost them something
- f. It is instinctive to “walk by sight” in all areas of our lives and a resistance to trust Him completely - how many miracles and what type of miracles would be “enough” to get us to a point where we would believe everything He said from that point on?
- g. The Samaritans believed when they “heard” what He said - this is true faith (trust)
- h. This man’s request became urgent as soon as Jesus said this, so he insists that Jesus “come down” (to Capernaum) before his child dies - the appeal and urgency was more on the need of the child and the perceived restrictive time limit - this man did not know who he was dealing with
- i. Notice how he thought that Jesus had to be present to heal his son - this is an example of how we often pray (request) something of God and narrow its answer to how we believe things must be done
- j. The man “believed the word that Jesus had spoken” when Jesus simply stated “your son lives” (ὁ υἱός σου ζῆ) and the man took Him at His word - this was still a faith, though, that needed validation and it was validated (to the very moment Jesus uttered these few words)

Yet the core of what God would have is trust/belief in what He says - this is where all that He reveals of Himself is leading

This is the problem with man-made faith - it does not know its own standard nor what will satisfy its demands in the future - it may believe today but when faced with a fear it falters or forsakes tomorrow

Jesus would not meet him on his terms but would do above what this man could have anticipated

2. Trust validated and its affect on a household - vs. 51-54

Not only had Jesus healed this boy, but He did it instantaneously and at a great distance

- a. As the man was returning home (which was likely about a day’s journey) his servants met him on the way to tell him “your boy lives” (not that, as some version indicate, he was recovering - so we realize this as instant restoration of health)
- b. Suspecting the greater power of Jesus (than he had expected) he inquired as to the timing and it was at the same time Jesus had told him that his son “lives”
- c. This man “believed” (having pieced the information together) along with his “household” - this belief (as John uses the term throughout this Gospel) indicates true belief and here, it was focused on Jesus Christ - in contrast to this man and his family’s response, others believed Jesus could heal and do other miracles, but did not come to believe Him (truly believe in Him)
- d. The whole family/household had been under the stress of the child’s looming death and so shared in the result of this miracle

There are different types of faith, some more exploratory while others fully trusting

### C. Focus on the Law without consideration of the Lawgiver - 5:1-17

1. John has made it a point to describe the signs/miracles of Jesus to not just validate His authority and genuineness (that He was “the eternal Word”), but to also demonstrate how “He came to His own and His own received Him not” (John 1:11)

Having the miraculous/supernatural “happen” may seem appealing to consider until we realize how it brings to light what lies within the hearts (and the negativity that ultimately comes when God’s existence and authority are actually considered)

This would have been quite a sight to see so many in such a condition in one place, each essentially competing to reach the waters at the right time - the superstition that drew them is common with humanity when considering God’s help (that somehow those that get it are “lucky” - yet “Bethesda” means “house of mercy”)

It is easy to become someone used to being served and to prefer a weakened condition over the obligations that come with good health - there was, of course, a greater healing needed that the Lord alludes to in verse 14

This is also common, where we limit how God can meet a need to a small list of possibilities

Texts such as Jer. 17:21 were used to add to the Law (interpretations) to detail work restrictions - but doing the “Lord’s work” on the Sabbath was never forbidden

The Jews in this text demonstrate the normal tendency in humanity to focus on an outward standard/measurement of “rightness” - this leads to the “outward evidence” becoming the priority over what is actually true- compare to John 7:23

“take up your bed and walk” are the words that Jesus used (in the Greek)

2. “Do you wish to get well?” - vs. 1-9
  - a. In the beginning of this chapter we have the account of the healing of a man who had been an invalid for 38 years and the response of “the Jews” (the religious leaders) to it because of it being done on the Sabbath - their “read” on it was their supposed authority to judge it
  - b. John uses this account (now back in Jerusalem) to relay Jesus’ warning regarding the man’s (who was healed) sin, and to describe Jesus equating Himself with God (in verses 17-18)
  - c. Yet we are told of only one healing (amongst so many) and so we remember miracles were not WHY the Lord came - He singles out one man that had been in a weakened condition for 38 years - we do not know how long he had been coming to the pool
  - d. Jesus, knowing his condition and how long he had had it asks a question that might seem odd to us, “Do you wish to be healed?” - we are not certain as to why Jesus asked him this, but it does make us consider that there would be some that, though ill/infirm, they do not truly wish to be completely healed
  - e. The man, likely realizing Jesus as a possible help, describes his biggest issue as not being able to reach the waters first (someone always is ahead of him) - rather than assist the man by giving him what he wanted, in the way he wanted it, Jesus commands him to stand up, pick up his “bed” and walk
  - f. The power of Jesus’ words is on display in this moment, for there is no gradual healing taking place but complete healing - a man who was unable to walk for almost 40 years not only is able to stand, but to walk and to carry his own bed/mat
  - g. John now reveals one of the reasons he has shared this particular miracle - this was done on the Sabbath (Jesus having done it with so many around, and even commanding the man to carry his own mat which was a “technical violation” of the Rabbinic law on the Sabbath)
3. “Persecuting” Jesus - Jesus is undeterred with the diverting attacks - vs. 10-17
  - a. We are unsure if these Jewish leaders knew the man they saw carrying the mat had just been crippled shortly before - their focus was on enforcing the law (with a particular focus on the outward conformity and not as concerned with the inward reality of the person)
  - b. Even if one could make a case that what this man was doing was a genuine violation of the law, the point of John is to make the case of Jesus being equal with God and so Lord over the Sabbath - but knowing that Jesus kept the entirety of the Law (as it was meant to be kept and understood), it is not reasonable to believe Jesus had this man do something truly unlawful
  - c. “True religion is assaulted most cruelly by the pretense of religion itself.” GBN
  - d. The man who had been healed tells the religious leaders that it was the one that healed him (that made him whole) that had told him to take up his bed and walk - many commentators look upon this man as fearful of these authorities and that he was shifting blame - taken at face value, he was likely just stating the facts (and possibly trusting them to be genuine in their spiritual responsibilities)
  - e. Still undeterred with the profound reality that he had been healed, they stay focused on getting the identity of the one that told him to “take up your bed and walk”
  - f. Those that are in such positions and are hypocritical are often most afraid of competition (that might threaten to unseat them or show them to be what they really are)

Jesus in no way could have been accused of trying to exploit this man or the situation for undue attention - as seen in the following verse, His concern for the man's spiritual well-being was highest

We don't have to know what the sin was, just that sin when yielded to as "master" will always lead to life paths that are worse and will end in eternal misery

see I Peter 4:1-5

One would have hoped that there would have been an interest in Jesus' telling the man not to sin, but the religious self-righteous inwardly love their sin and cling all the more to some type of external evidence of "righteousness" to protect and preserve inner sin

The ever-working since creation applies only to God (and such a stance as the Lord took here could not be taken by us - He was declaring equality with God)

- g. "Thus hypocrites often cover their real enmity against the power of godliness with a pretended zeal for the form of it." MH
- h. The healed man did not know who Jesus was (didn't even know His name) when asked - the key to the relationship with God in Christ is His knowledge of us and does not rest upon the depth of our knowledge of Him - this is again an indicator of grace !
- i. Jesus had immediately worked His way through the crowd and the healed man could not point Him out to the Jews
- j. It is interesting that Jesus finds the man again in the Temple and it's Jesus that finds Him (not the man looking for Jesus) - Jesus says only a few words; "Look, you have become well" followed by a command, "μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε" (no more sin) and the way this is stated it looks as though somehow he would know how his sin had brought him to his being disabled
- k. The reason Jesus gives him is that there are worse things than 38 years of being an invalid (especially considering an eternal condemnation) - it is understandable (knowing human nature) than even after great suffering (as a result associated with our sin) there is still a tendency to return to it when all seem well again - apart from grace it cannot be fully resisted
- l. One of the lies of sin is that when rescued from its consequences, it is "worth the risk" to return to it (forgetting all of its dominating and addictive controls, its promising "freedom" and fulfillment while delivering only bondage and unfulfillment/frustration)
- m. The man left Jesus and went to tell "the Jews" that it was Jesus "that healed him" - this was still the man's focus and he may have thought the religious leaders would desire to know (for the right reasons) - there is no reason in this text to affix ill-will in this man toward Christ (or even possible fear of the Jews)
- n. Instead of exploring more of Jesus and what He taught and who He really was (or could be), these Jewish leaders took on a mission to "persecute" (ἐδίωκον - aggressively pursuing as in hunting down to capture and kill), and John indicates this was what began the process (not just "breaking the Sabbath" in this instance, but because He was becoming (in their eyes) a continuous Sabbath breaker) - they saw this as moral leverage against him
- o. Jesus' answer to the charge of breaking the Sabbath by working was a statement that would be even more offensive to these "religious police" - He makes it clear that the Father never stops working (not being subject to the same command He gave the Jews), and in like manner Jesus does the same (the working of God (God's true work) does not stop even for the Sabbath)
- p. As Jesus would explain in John 7:14-24, doing God's will (God's "work") is the right thing to do always (even on the Sabbath) - He, in a sense, pitted one obedience against another to demonstrate the overriding pursuit to obey God in what is done, not just in what is not done (avoided)
- q. Jesus plainly states that "My Father" has always been (in a sense) working (even when resting from the work of creation) and He Himself then, does the same

## IX. Jesus is Equal (One) With the Father and Has Authority in All He Does - 5:18-47

### A. Jesus explains what equality with the Father actually is - vs. 18-23

This context is a clear description of the deity of Christ and the Lord is detailing it in answer to how He truly had the authority to do and say all that He did

This concept is important to accept because it not only explains a perfectly united equality, but also that subordination does not prove inequality

1. The Jews understood Jesus correctly (in what He inferred in verse 17) that He was equal with God
- a. Now these opponents of Jesus focused not only on the issues with what He was doing on the Sabbaths, but that in His calling God His own Father He was claiming equality with God
- b. Rather than hear Him out, they determined already to work to kill Him - it would normally be understandable to be so reactive to such a claim but Jesus was the actual Son of God, one with the Father and this is partly why John is writing this Gospel
2. We see no verbal response from the Jews, but Jesus responds anyway - vs. 19-23
- a. The issue (for many, and likely these Jewish leaders) is the wrong understanding with "equality" - most look on it as "I'm equal in power and authority so I can do and will do whatever I choose" - yet in His equality with God (as it is in the entire Godhead) their is unity and equality worked out through subordination
- b. Jesus begins, emphasizing what He is about to say with "Truly, truly" (absolutely) that the "Son can do nothing of Himself" - so His equality with God did not indicate His independence from God (and actually it was the extreme opposite - with their equality was a unity of will and direction, revealed to be coming by/through the Father)

- c. This is not a “stretch” to handle this text as Jesus’ declaration of His equality with the Father (God) - as in verse 18, the Jews “were seeking all the more to kill him... “because they knew He was “making Himself equal with God”
- d. So here in verse 19, Jesus is making it clear that His equality with God did not hint of independence and self-will, demonstrated what a oneness of will actually looked like - it was as one watching what another was doing and then doing the exact same thing, and He does it “ὁμοίως” (in the exact same way) - **there is no competition in the Godhead**
- e. Jesus makes it clear why He can see the Father working - the Father loves “the Son” and so shows Him ALL that He Himself is doing; and Jesus does it all - because there is genuine, pure love in the Godhead, everything the one does is in perfect harmony (which is the result of perfect love) - true love unites around something - See Heb. 1:2 (how now God speaks to us)
- f. And Jesus lets them know this was just the beginning - “greater works than these” the Father will show Him (and so He will do them) with the purpose that they would “marvel” - even the unbelieving would be amazed (though confounded rather than believing)
- g. They had yet to see Him raise someone from the dead, yet He tells them this is coming, for as God “raises the dead and gives them life” so also the Son will raise the dead and give them life - giving life is impossible for any created being (for only God gives life)
- h. Their will was/is so much “one” that Jesus could “give life to whom He will” and it would be in perfect harmony with the Father - this describes a “power unity” and not a “power struggle”
- i. Those that seek to accept some of what Jesus taught and stood for but not other parts (yet still considering Him a “good teacher”) cannot grapple with such a text as this - for if what He stated was not true, He would have been a blasphemous madman of the highest sort
- j. Jesus then goes on to claim the highest authority in “judgment” (making final sentence based upon His determination of what “should be”) - in light of the previous verse, Jesus has all authority to give life (in the fullest sense) and to officiate final judgment to those not given life
- k. “He does not make them dead, does not slay them. They are spiritually dead already, and will not be made alive. Here, as in Joh\_3:17-18, the judgment is one of condemnation...” - Cambridge Bible Notes - this was an ominous statement yet those finding moral/spiritual authority in themselves were undeterred (religious and secular) - He will judge the “living and the dead” (separated from God and true life) - notice how this was used to challenge Timothy in II Timothy 4:1-5 (so “preach the Word”)
- l. The reason for this authority is so that the Son is honored as much as the Father - those that say they honor God (the Father) more so than the Son (as in making Him lesser than the Father in any way) do not truly honor the Father - Jews who still reject Christ are rejecting (dishonoring) the Father as well

### B. Passing from death to life - vs. 24-29

1. “Death” is separation from life (true life) - the dead of this earth (physically) have no sense of what is happening now in this world for they are dead (separated from life here), so also the spiritually dead have no sense of true life/living (no sense of the greatness/glory of God) because they are separated from it - vs. 24-27

- a. Jesus is about to use the phrase “passed out of death into life” because the natural state of mankind is actual spiritual death (deadness to true life) - note Eph. 2:1-10 - notice that those “dead” were not unconscious but only to eternal life
- b. This statement is prefixed again with “Truly, truly” that the dead will hear “the voice of the Son of Man” (as in Daniel in reference to the Messiah) and will live (vs. 25) - this is true (as is about to be mentioned in the resurrection) but is also true now here in verse 24, those dead in sin, separated from God, will show the ultimate signs of life in hearing “my word” and believing it - as illustrated in the parable of the sower there will be those that seem to hear and grow but their “belief” (faith) is inauthentic and is stolen away and choked out
- c. Those truly trusting Christ and all He taught have “eternal life” (life unending) - one of the key indicators of this is that such “do not come into judgment” (they, having started in the state of condemnation before God will never return (be returned also) to that state)
- d. Physical life is included in this also - again, with another “truly, truly” (absolutely, absolutely) the time is coming and is even beginning at that point (“and now is”) when those dead will hear His voice (physical and spiritual) and will live - note also verse 28

Many Christians will read of what God is doing and how He says to follow Him but will feel at liberty to do it on their own terms, their own way

The Lord’s explanation is good for us to understand - His focus was more on what God would have done and not on the people (predominately)

This demonstrates that true “greatness” stems from obedience rather than self-rule

Jesus is declaring the same nature/essence since God is His Father, and is also claiming equal power with God (and this out of love in oneness of will)

Jesus left no room for partial following and belief - He tied all of what He did and taught together

Even though many think they are the only ones that can rightfully judge themselves, they are grossly in error - the Father could judge but has given this to the Son

This is why the cults (who deny the deity of Christ) cannot possibly be considered honoring to God because they miss this core, authoritative point

Notice also Jesus’ allusion to this in Mt. 8:18-22, “leave the dead to bury their own dead”

This is not a conditional sentence but an indicative - hearing the word of the Lord and acceptance in faith of it is the first sign of eternal life

Some of the most precious words being “ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον” (he has life eternal) now (not just in the future)

Life is temporary here and we are all accountable to our Creator, the Lord Himself - so Jesus brings to focus the accounting in the end

Some have and will claim to know the "God of the Bible" yet differing from all that Jesus taught and revealed - if Jesus is not believed, God the Father is not believed

All other sources that are sought after for any life meaning, fulfillment and direction are incapable of providing it for none of them are the source!

compare this to Eph. 1:15-23

see Heb. 4:14-16

It is true that we do not have (as believers) a "blind faith" but neither do we expect that faith will be the scrutinizing everything the Lord reveals as though it is subject to our acceptance of it - once we understand what it says, we accept it even though it may be difficult or beyond our present comprehension

Compare John 6:37-40, I Cor. 15:42-58 and then Rev. 20:11-15

This is as serious as it gets! To disregard the Lord in any way is the highest of risks at any time! - Realize also that these will be condemned because even now they are condemned already (born into it and in disbelief) - John 3:17-21

The important thing to consider here is whether or not the witnesses were considered trustworthy and whether or not their witness would be believed

- e. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can cause those spiritually and physically dead to hear His voice and, when all things are ended as regards this age (the Judgment), only those having heard Him and believed (a belief/faith that characterized their life/walk) will not face judgment (their judgment having been taken in full by Jesus Christ Himself, the Judge!) - see Col. 1:9-14
- f. Note also that hearing and believing are linked - if there is hearing but no believing (faith) is does not transfer them from death to life - many "religious" people associate knowing with believing, but this is not "saving" - notice also this "belief" is "Him who sent Me" (that He (the Father) bears witness to Jesus, all He says and does and is the one that sent Him)
- g. As to the source of life ("aliveness" and all true life/living) it is from the self-existent One, God (here, the Father and the Son) so Jesus, He being God incarnate, in His humanity was "granted" to have life in Himself (and so would be even as a man, a life-giver) - God does not receive life; all others get their life from Him (no other is self-existing, self-sustaining and so no other is "self-purposing" or self-determining) - vs. 26
- h. He (Jesus) as now having "life in Himself" then also has the authority of ultimate, authoritative judgment (for the creator (source of all life) is the true judge of all life) - vs. 27
- i. Jesus has been given authority (He being called here "Υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου" (son of man, man's son)), He, not only being God but being one of us, will be our judge - think of the significance of those who were opposing Jesus were trying to stand in judgment of the Judge of all!

## 2. Don't be seized upon with an "analysis paralysis" (inactive with incredulity) - vs. 28-29

- a. The first words of verse 28 "Do not marvel at this" might seem unreasonable to most and in most contexts, but here it is an imperative, because many will fight such faith that confounds them (it seems too much to believe) - such paralyzing responses put off (fight off) a submissive yielding - for see what's coming next (where it's all heading)
- b. As almost saying, don't let this overwhelm you as being too much to believe, for there is much more to be revealed that is coming and that will be done (in the outworking of this power)
- c. For instance, something even greater is the picturing of the outworking/result of this authority and power - the time is coming (has yet to come, as distinguished from verse 25) when those not just spiritually dead but all the physically dead will hear His voice, and upon hearing Him will come out (rise from physical death... so their bodies are resurrected)
- d. All will be judged by the same standard (as all judgment will be done) by what they have done (what characterized their life; their works) - those distinguished by "good" are raised to the "resurrection of life" (and such because of faith in what Jesus said (verse 24) do not come into this judgment - those distinguished for being who/what they actually are because their life output was "evil" (φαῦλος - a word that means "worthless" so it may not be called "evil" by some but before God it is of no true value) to the "resurrection of judgment"
- e. All the dead will be raised to their eternal ends (each is everlasting) - those in Christ to eternal life and those judged according to their own works (and so worthless because they are, at their best, self-righteous) to eternal condemnation/damnation - see Mt. 25:46 and II Thes. 1:8-9 for two texts that describe the condemnation as eternal
- f. Note also Paul's defense before the Governor, Felix; his case and included the resurrections of both the "just and unjust" - Acts 24:1-21 (and because of his stance on the resurrection he was on trial) - it is abhorrent to human nature to be faced with the idea of final judgment
- g. In contrast, it is the hope throughout life to realize what eternal life will be and that it, as our inheritance, is already ours - see I Peter 1:3-5 and Rev. 21

## C. Disbelieving the "witnesses" of Jesus (and so a refusal to come to Him to have life) - vs. 30-47

### 1. The witness of God (the Father) - vs. 30-32

- a. It was common to expect that claims as profound as those of Christ would need to have verification (support) from other sources (other witnesses)
- b. Jesus, facing this and verifying that if His witnesses was "just of Himself" about Himself, then His testimony/witness would not be "true" (not trustworthy) - see also John 8:17-20
- c. Jesus reiterates that He can "do nothing of my own" - this also is an answer to those who try to push forward in theological debates whether or not Jesus could sin - clearly He could not (unless one desires to posit the idea that the Father would consider such a notion) - see verse 19
- d. Jesus, as should we, did not seek His own will - His will was to do the will of the Father



Simply put, "My judgment is just" - His ongoing and ultimate final judgments are correct, right and cannot legitimately be deemed wrong in any way - no other "judgment" of anyone else can claim such!

This is one of many texts that demonstrates that disbelief is more an act of the will than it is actually a lack of "evidence"

We may not even know at times that our wills are at the core of why we refuse to believe/trust God - see vs. 40

John the Baptist was sent to serve as a witness, pointing to Christ for mankind's sake, but not for Jesus' - see John 1:7

Even those that would say they condemn themselves don't have that right

As illustrated in the Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13, Luke 8) there are some religious encounters/experiences that enthusiastically respond but other "cares of life" choke it out

see Mt. 11:9-19 where Jesus describes the response of the people to John the Baptist

Note also these works were not just begun, but included the accomplishment (finishing) of them - many begin works for/of God but do not finish them

Jesus had already revealed that He heard the Father (directly) and this witness would be personal to Himself mainly - others did not have to believe it for it to be true - sadly, some doubt what they once believed, not necessarily because they find fault, but because others doubt it - they trust the doubts of others more

- e. Jesus deals with the concept of a "witness," not just for traditional validation, but to demonstrate that even though there are "legitimate" witnesses," many will not accept them, either because they just don't desire it or because they trust other witnesses more
- f. Some might ask, in light of all this, why then is it significant that judgment is given to the Son if the judgment (anyway) of the Father - in answer to this question, the Pulpit Commentary answered, "It lies here, that the Incarnation is perfect; that the manhood has not obliterated the Divinity, nor the Godhead absorbed the manhood, of the Christ. The human consciousness of the Son becomes the basis for the Father's judgment, which is uttered thus absolutely and finally through human lips."
- g. There is "another who testifies of Me" - Jesus went on to clarify, that (as seen in verse 37) is the Father - the Jews had sought out the testimony of John the Baptist (seen in the next verses), and though they had this, the miracles and other "witnesses" (proofs) they refused to believe
- h. Many feel safe in their disbelief using "lack of evidence" as their justification, but it is revealed that the core issue is the heart (the soul/spirit) and in that, the will of a person that refuses to accept any "proof" because the alternative (belief) holds them then ultimately accountable and they are no longer "master of their own destiny" and definers of their own life's worth

## 2. Four witnesses to who/what Jesus was/is - vs. 33-40

- a. This listing of witnesses is detailed by the Lord to counter the objections by the Jewish leaders who recognized themselves as the authorities to judge and what "right" judgment really was - yet the proofs provided were not the sort and manner that met what they were looking for
- b. **The testimony of John** - serving in an official capacity here as a witness, John the Baptist was one they sought out to see what he had to say regarding Jesus - this was not who Jesus referenced in verse 32 seeing He Himself was "not receiving testimony from man"
- c. Jesus intent in saying all this was "that you might be saved" - John testified to the truth also for this purpose (to point them to the one that could save them from what they all rightfully deserved; condemning judgment) - but when one is essentially their own judge, it is not possible to reach a righteous conclusion (and so they will not (willed not) be saved)
- d. Jesus calls John the Baptist a "lamp that was burning," picturing not just a light but one that lights a way because it was set aflame (was lit) itself for this purpose - there was an initial attraction to this "light" as John was declaring the coming Messiah - but these did not like what/who the Messiah truly was (in contrast to their perceived ideas of what He was to be) and they were unenthusiastic when the light shown them for what they actually were... hypocrites
- e. Their rejoicing in the light was "for a season" (and so it is with those that only "give it a try")- it is interesting to realize that there is no mention of any uprising against Herod when he imprisoned John the Baptist - possibly the political/secular intimidation was stronger than the religious one - religious zeal is sometimes just from reaction and not transformation
- f. **The testimony of works** - vs. 36 - Even more important and significant that the testimony of John regarding Jesus was the testimony (of the Father) by means of the works that He gave Jesus to do - every work of Jesus was of the Father (not just the miracles, but the teachings, His graciousness, His forthrightness, and His work of redemption on the cross)
- g. All of these "testify that the Father has sent Me" - each and all the works combined point to Him being sent of the Father to do the Father's will and it was more than just miracles, for others did these, but His message and completely flawless character in all He did demonstrate, His being of God - objectors were dealing with God Himself!
- h. **The testimony of the Father** - vs. 37-38 - Jesus now directly states that the Father Himself, the one that sent Him, "has borne witness of Me" - He has done this by His word (which will be stressed in the upcoming verses), as just mentioned He also demonstrated He sent Jesus by means of the works He did (and Nicodemus knew this in John 3:2) - the Father had also borne witness audibly (at the baptism of Jesus and on the Mt. of Transfiguration, though these are not likely the main focus here, which occurred (likely) later)
- i. Yet even with such witnesses, they were unswayed for the fundamental reason they truly did not know the Father - they had never heard Him (audibly nor in all His revelation) nor had they ever seen Him - Jesus had, in the fullest sense seen and heard the Father, and knew Him completely - these knew of the Father, but it was not personal

This starkly demonstrates the difference between mere knowing/knowledge and true belief/faith - its integration into life/living/thinking is core to its purpose - it's the difference between abiding just in the mind and not the heart also

It is likely the result of having added so much tradition and superstition and other religious baggage to their studies and thinking, that it clouded out what should have stood out to them - the plain meaning would have done them well, but their rationalistic priorities and additives to make the texts more useful and "religious" adulterated it to such a degree it hid its core contents

To come to Him for life is to come in humility and with no other hope but Him - all else is constructed in futility

This is quite the revelation of their true selves - they are, though presenting themselves as at the pinnacle of godliness are godless in their core - why would Jesus seek the praise of those that do not seek the glory of God - why would we?

This also could include the groups that come in the names they have made-up for themselves (groupings)

People have an instinctive desire to follow after those who have a priority and a pursuit of this age and all of its "trimmings" - if one is focused on God's eternal glory and our fulfillment in it, that just doesn't "sell"

This addictive, natural life focus is blinding to the paths of actual "glory"

see Mt. 6:1-2

Moses was already "accusing" them in what he had been used to write - they knew his writings but did not understand them - bias towards self has a blinding affect, so that even while learning, there is no genuine comprehension of the purpose/main focus

- j. This was all most evident in that they did not "have His word abiding in you" for if they did, they would have believed Jesus since it was the Father that sent Him - they, in an intellectual and vocational sense, knew God's Word but it was not a part of who/what they were
- k. Instead of the Word living in them, "They locked it up with sacred care in ark and synagogue, but it found no home in their innermost life, and had no real power on their practice. They could take it up and put it down. It was something outside of themselves." Ellicott's Commentary
- l. It is key how Jesus sums up this statement - the reason they do not believe Him is because they do not believe the one that sent Him (the Father) - they clearly believed in God but did not actually believe God
- m. The testimony of the Scriptures - vs. 39-40 - Jesus points now to their "searching" (ἐρευνάω - diligent pursuit and scrutiny) the Scriptures, which would normally be a good thing, and in their searching they believe they would have eternal life (either just by the study of it that they will gain some credit for eternal life, or that they will come discover how to have it)
- n. The Scriptures "bear witness" (testify) of Christ yet, with all these witnesses, they were unwilling to come to Him for life - even with their knowledge of the Scriptures they did not recognize their Messiah and the actual answer to eternal life (that all was pointing to)
- o. Notice also the usage of the word "think" ("you think that in them you have eternal life") the underlying word being δοκεῖτε which fits our idea of "thinks" in its reference to personal opinion - it was a pursuit of eternal life as it fit within their "take" on things
- p. Because of this, they refuse to come to Him (which is the only way to life) - humanity summarily accepts all "ways to life" except that of coming to Jesus for it - it will tolerate (over time) just about anything except what it means to come to Him for life
3. The obstacle/wall of the pursuit of glory from man and the glory of men - vs. 41-47
- a. Jesus was not motivated as they were - they refused to come to Him, even for true, eternal life, because they love and so seek the praise/glory from people - notice John 6:14-15
- b. The word translated "receive" is λαμβάνω revealing that Jesus neither sought for it neither would He receive it from them - He being perfect in all ways, was solely focused on the praise of the Father, from the Father and for the Father
- c. After all, why would He seek glory/praise from them when they do not have the love of God in them? - they truly do not love God - vs. 41 - some of these were the same ones referenced in Mt. 23:5 who exaggerated their religious apparel, one part be their "phylacteries" which contained Deut.6:5 (the command to Love God with all the heart)
- d. These were those "diligently searching the Scriptures", assuming that such diligence would lead them to eternal life and would then also lend them the praise of their peers
- e. Tragically, these would prefer and seek to follow (loyally) those that would come "in their own name" while Jesus came in His Father's name - humanity, naturally, loves those that adore themselves in a glorious way! (those that come in their own name) - vs. 43
- f. Humanity prefers those subject and motivated by its own vices - such can be controlled, manipulated to some degree or at least be more predictable - Jesus was a disappointment to them, He not coming to them in glorious splendor - these glory seekers were embarrassed and ashamed of Him - yet how could they then be trusted?
- g. In verse 44 Jesus spells it out in a question form - How could they possibly believe/trust Jesus when they themselves pursue glory from each other? How could they trust someone so unlike themselves (not motivated the same way they were)?
- h. The only true, lasting (unfading) glory comes from God - so what they could possibly receive from each other would be temporal (fading) - compare with II Cor. 10:12,18
- i. Simply put, what one "seeks" drives them and defines/directs their life pursuits
- j. When all comes to final judgment, Jesus (focused on where everything will ultimately end, which ought to be the most influential life director) plainly states that He will not act as "the accuser" (the prosecutor) to the Father, not just because He will be the Judge, for Moses will do this - vs. 45 - imagine the shock of such a statement! The very one they appealed to for authority and their "rightness" would be the one accusing them before God in their error (getting it all wrong) - it is possible they used details (too many details) to cloud the point
- k. They had set all their hope on what they thought Moses meant, missing what he meant

These, as so many self-righteous do, interpreted the Law (writings of Moses) in a way that fit them and not as God gave it (to lead them to Christ)- they were not focused on where it was all pointing, just on where it was at that time and how they could utilize it for their own interests - this is how many see "religion" today

Many will espouse a belief in something but will not actually believe it - many believe in God but do not believe Him

- l. Lenski, quoting Stier, listing what these Jewish leaders actually did not believe regarding what Moses wrote, "They did not believe in the sacred earnestness of the law he delivered, judging the hearts, else their Pharisaic work-righteousness would have fallen to the ground. Finally, they did not believe him when his entire order of priests and sacrifices constantly reviewed the memory of their sins and pointed in shadowy outline to a future real fulfillment, else they would have become through Moses already what the Baptist finally tried to make them, a people ready and prepared for the Lord, embracing his salvation with joy like Simeon."
- m. Even after Jesus said, "...for he wrote of Me" we do not see them asking Him for clarification (through examples) - they did not desire to argue Scripture, just their particular takes on traditions and interpretations - see Deut. 18:15-19
- n. They did believe that these "writings of Moses" were Scripture, so the issue was their not actually believing the words - this being the case, how then could they possibly not believe the words of Jesus?

## X. Jesus The "Bread of Life" - The Separation of True Believers From Unbelievers ("convenient believers") - 6:1-71

A. This chapter gives us two miracles of the Lord followed by teaching that turns away many followers

1. Trying to stay focused on John's purpose for writing this Gospel, we need to ask ourselves why John shares this (and any of the other) miracle and why in this context
  - a. As seen already, the accounts John has focused on have lent to stressing a point of truth/teaching as well as distinguishing between those that are true followers and those that are not (as well as those that are true spiritual leaders and those that are hypocrites)
  - b. This chapter retells the feeding of the 5,000+ and John points out that this is near the time of Passover - he also points (a couple times) to the fact that many were following Christ to see miracles and get fed - and after dealing with food (bread in particular), John recounts Jesus declaration of being the "Bread of Life" (to be consumed)
  - c. This chapter will end in what will look to be a discouraging way, but what looked to be negative was actually very positive and productive
2. Some time after the confrontation with the Jewish leaders in chapter 5 (all of which was "pushed" by Jesus to be confronted openly), John now brings us to what brought on the Lord teaching about His being the "Bread of Life" - vs. 1-7

One of the core points being communicated through these accounts is the insincerity of many of these "disciples" after Jesus reveals that He is what is needed to sustain them forever (in contrast to food)

John clarifies that this is now called the "Sea of Tiberias" - John wrote this toward the end of the first century and the names of some locations had changed

The majority of these were there to see supernatural works (satisfy curiosity or to have some type of entertaining experience)

God will frequently use "impossible" situations (greater than we can handle) to show us our limitations and dependence, and "wow" us with His wisdom and power

Philip's assessment was that they didn't have enough to give enough

- a. Jesus changed the location of His ministering to "the other side of the Sea of Galilee"
- b. A "great multitude" was following Him, and as indicated here, it was "because of the signs He was doing" and because He was healing the sick - also, crowds typically draw crowds
- c. It is at this point in time that John the Baptist had been killed (Mt. 14) and so many more were now following Jesus - Jesus was all the more bold in His presentation which was likely appreciated by His followers... until His teaching became difficult for them personally
- d. John mentions in verse 2 that there were "large crowds" following Him because they saw the "signs" (miracles) - the underlying Greek word is "σημεῖον" and "sign" is the better translation because it was a word to indicate a miraculous event that was to point to the authenticity of someone with the purpose to hear what they would teach - as will be seen, these were more interested in the venue than they were the message and the required dedication
- e. Jesus, seeing the crowds, asks Philip a question with the intent (as John reveals) to "test him" - since they were "coming to Him" Jesus proposed they feed them - so how was this to be accomplished? It was clearly impossible at first glance (to mere humans)
- f. It is believed He directed this question to Philip because he was from this area, though Jesus already knew what was about to do - He "tested" Philip, not to learn something of him, but to reveal something of Philip to himself (primarily) - Philip had already seen many miracles of Jesus and heard Him teach - what would his initial thoughts/instincts be in the face of a seemingly impossible need when posed with a question seeking a "normal" approach (money/costs)?
- g. Philip estimates that even with 200 denarii (equivalent to about one half to 3 quarters of a person's annual income) wouldn't even be enough to buy enough to give everyone "a little"
- h. Jesus was about to take "a little" and make out of it (create of it) something of enormous magnitude - the phrase "little is much when God is in it" is proven to be astoundingly true!
- i. Philip needed to see life in light of Jesus' power and not in light of "normal" solutions

## B. Feeding of the multitude with more than enough - vs. 8-15

### 1. "So little for so many" - vs. 8-9 (this account is also in Mt. 14:31-21, Mk. 6:32-44, Lu. 9:10-17)

It is key to see also that both Philip and Andrew offer comparisons, just comparisons to the wrong thing - "things" were measurable (estimable), but they still did not learn to include Jesus in their estimates

note Isa. 59:1-2

It is almost miraculous to consider so little food was found among so many

- a. We are not told (here) why Andrew brought this little meal from a little boy (both ideas of the meagerness appear to be amplified in contrast to the multitude) - his answer is in harmony with Philip - Philip offered estimates in money and Andrew offers a comparison of substance (what they actually had on hand) - but what is this compared to so many!?

• Mark clarifies in Mk. 6:38 that Jesus had them go and see how much food there was

- b. As is about to be demonstrated, Jesus is not limited in His ability, so to anticipate **how** He should meet a need is also something to approach with reverent trust/anticipation
- c. The boy's lunch (which is the only food identified) was made up of five little loaves/cakes of barley (typically considered to be the bread of the poor) and a couple fish (used for making the barley bread "savory")

### 2. A miracle of creation - vs. 10-13

John identified earlier that this was partly for the "testing" of Philip, though all the disciples would benefit from seeing the Lord, once again, face the impossible with the impossible!

In Mark 6 we see that they sat down in groups of 50 and 100 and just the men were 5,000 (the estimate including women and children would be about 15,000-20,000)

Ungratefulness is an evidence of moral decline (see Rom. 1:21 - note also Rom 14:5-8 where even though there are differing situations, thankfulness is to be present)

Or was the quantity growing from the serving resource (basket?) the disciples were using?

Many, when blessed with excess resources, become extravagant and wasteful - all the leftovers would be used later - whenever God provides more than enough we must not assume it is without an upcoming purpose

- a. "Jesus superseded the law of conservation of matter by creating a great amount of bread and meat for the multitude. This law, considered one of the most basic and universal laws of physics, states that matter (or "mass") can neither be created nor destroyed." Henry Morris
- b. Having had the two negative responses from His disciples, Jesus has them seat the multitude - it might have seemed as though they should have been sent away to go get food and prepare for the night, but Jesus having waited till a seemingly most inconvenient time to meet a need, meets the need abundantly, miraculously!
- c. Before the miracle (before there was anywhere near enough food) Jesus has them seat the people (to be prepared to eat what was not yet prepared) - we read of no resistance, just compliance (as it always should be when following any direction from the Lord - obedience leading to a better understanding) - disobedience seeks anecdotal support for validation
- d. Jesus "gave thanks" for the food, setting the example and following the tradition to thank God for His provision of food (always), even though it was very little (for thanksgiving is based/founded in faith, because any "thanksgiving" that is not is a "gratefulness" based upon self authority and so self determination of what is enough) - note it is stressed again in verse 23
- e. Note it was the bread and fish together that were distributed - vs. 11
- f. In light of Philip and Andrew's initial conclusions, the statement that each had "as much as they wanted" (desired) is profound - not only was there enough, there was enough to fill them to satisfaction (fullness) - again, the Lord is the knower and determiner of "enough"!
- g. We do not know the particulars of how this was worked out, but it is interesting to think on it - was the Lord distributing enough to each disciple over and over again to distribute to each group, or did each disciple receive a basket from the Lord and it continued to grow in content (in each basket) as it was handed out and then stopped when they had distributed enough to each group?
- h. Jesus has His disciples gather up the "leftover fragments" (the literally "over and above" fragments of food) - each had their fill (having taken more than they could use) and Jesus will not have anything wasted - there were 12 baskets filled with the leftovers (John mentions these fragments as being from the "five barley loaves" and Mark adds that they also included the fish - The Lord miraculously created more bread from bread and more meat from meat in massive quantities) - His source of provision is not of this world (Php. 4:19)

### 3. The misinterpretation of the event by the followers - vs. 14-15

To those living for "the now" (the temporal), Jesus was a tremendous disappointment - the promised "answer" was not the answer they were looking for

- a. The crowds interpreted the sign correctly in concluding that this must be "the Prophet" who was foretold to "come into the world" - their response to this correct conclusion was incorrect - they believed the "Prophet" (the Messiah) to come focused upon life as it was and not for the purpose for the life to come
- b. The obtaining of food was a daily task, and the appeal to having someone that could provide it, non-stop was very appealing - they wanted what Jesus could offer regarding their "practical" needs but were mostly uninterested (and later even offended) in Jesus' teaching and method of provision to eternal life
- c. Their response (Jesus perceived, knowing their thoughts and intentions) was to "take Him by force" and make Him king - they would seek to exalt Him on their terms and in their timing

To this day there are many who see Jesus only as a means to their own personal ends- there's an initial interest until they realize they must conform to Him and not He to them

- d. Their interpretation of Deut. 18:15-18 morphed in its meaning to include a kingship of sorts and an earthly rule, more than it did its core imperative; to listen to what He said (and not seek to conform Him to their ideas of leadership and their "most important" things to be done)
- e. These "saw an opportunity" and worked themselves into an urgency of timing (as in it should happen, the way they think it should happen, and it should happen now!)
- f. So, in response, He withdrew from them to be alone rather than cooperate with their seeming offer of exaltation (which was similar to that of the Devil in the temptations in Mt. 4)

C. "It is I, do not be afraid" - circumstantial fear relieved with the coming of Jesus - vs. 16-21

1. This account of Jesus walking on the water is also in Mt. 14:22-33 as well as Mk. 6:45-52 - We're told in Matthew that Jesus sent the disciples on while He dismissed the crowds - vs. 16-17

We should never be resentful whenever we believe God should have shown/proven Himself in a way or in a timing that He did for another

- a. Another of the most profound and unique miracles is about to be demonstrated, yet only to those closest to Him (it would not be showcased) - the disciples were the ones needing to see it, as God still does today where He walks us all through unique/customized life situations to show Himself strong over against our unique fears and circumstances (customized by His sovereign control)
- b. Notice the setting - the disciples went to cross the sea/lake, it was dark and Jesus "had not yet come to them" - this last phrase was an odd way of setting this scene unless we keep in mind John's focus on where it was all heading - Jesus was about to come to them and meet them where they were at, just in a very unpredictable manner
- c. Astonishment at the working of God is often seen as being always good, but there is a sense in which we ought not be too surprised with the demonstrations of God's power and wisdom because we, in faith, have grown to trust Him to be perfectly right in all situations (what He is seen to actively do and even in what He seemingly, passively allows)

One of the points Mark reveals in Mk. 6:52 was the reason these were "astounded" when Jesus did what He did - they had not truly understood (grasped) the power demonstrated in the feeding of so many with so little, because their hearts were hardened

2. From fear to glad willingness - vs. 18-21

It is interesting to read in Mark's account that he mentions Jesus "meant to pass by them" as though He would continue on to the other side just as He was

- a. John simply lays out the circumstances of a wind stirring-up the waters to such a point the disciples were making very little progress - in Mk. 6:48 we're told they were making progress but that it was now early in the morning when they saw Jesus walking on the water
- b. John tells they had rowed about 3-4 miles (about half way across) - they were clearly struggling but don't express true fear until they spotted Jesus walking on the water - the way this is worded makes it as though the walking was a normal walk, so it wasn't the walk that was special as much as it was upon what He was walking
- c. Here was water (what we would normally sink in), and that in mass, overwhelming quantity, and it all being "stirred-up" - the scenario for terror was ideal - there was darkness, high winds over troubled waters and finally, a sight of something that defied their imagination
- d. We cannot explain the physics of how this happened; just that He could utilize or even defy the observable "laws of nature" for His purpose - in Mt. 14:32-33 we see that the disciples realized that Jesus was truly the Son of God, but we also see they had not come to know Him personally enough to look on life with Him as supreme over all
- e. When they saw Him they were afraid (though John does not elaborate on why as Matthew did, letting us know they thought He/it was a ghost) - fear has a way of revealing our superstitions and scary presumptions about life
- f. It all changes when He simply states "It is I" (we read in the other accounts also that He told them not to be afraid because it was Him) - Here was their dear friend (though they had yet to still know how dear) in a fatiguing, almost hopeless situation
- g. Their fear became "willingness" (which is an interesting contrast seeing it reveals that one of the core results of fear is stubbornness/resistance)
- h. As soon as He was welcomed into the boat, they were at their destination (no more effort was needed, the purpose of the Lord had been fulfilled, and so another miracle occurred in an instant where they all were suddenly at the shore)
- i. These miracles were far more than "magic tricks" intended to "wow" an audience - they were "signs" in which the observers were to redirect their amazement/wonder over to attentive learning, submission and obedience
- j. It has been noted that when Jesus addressed them in their fear His wording was simply "I am" (and so, "don't be afraid") - compare to Rev. 1:17-18

Fears and fearful circumstances are to be compared to the Lord and not to ourselves- fear comes when we either exclude Him from our consideration of the situation or we presume ill-intent on His part (both of which are wrong)

They were likely confident in their "read" of the circumstances (and were unanimous)- we need to learn that even in our unanimous doubts, we must never so trust them so as to discount the Lord

Fear and panic beget more fear and panic but the Lord's confident, reassuring response changed everything

We don't need to look on this as a reference to His deity (His "I AMness") but it is fitting to sum up why we do not live by fear... simply because He is the great "I AM" and also why any ruling fear is so wrong to try to justify

#### D. What is the genuine “work of God?” - vs. 22-33

1. Just like the woman at the well, we come to another instance where the Lord Jesus offers something of eternal value and the audience cannot see past their temporal, immediate needs and desires - vs. 22-27

As just seen, the crowd would “forcibly” make Jesus their King (on their terms) - if God does not conform to their demands (often disguised as “wishes”) they will not accept - some would come to believe and accept, yet doing so by not following the crowd

- a. This section will pinnacle in verse 28 when some in the crowd ask what they must do to do the “works of God” (motivated to receive “food which endures to eternal life”)
- b. Jesus will point them to the simple answer of “believe in Him whom He [the Father] has sent,” but such an answer finally explained (Jesus Himself being this “Bread of Life”) will drive most of them away - there is a desire for truth and to have what is lasting (what does not, nor will ever “fade away”) but in the core of the heart of humanity there is the obstacle of pride and self-righteousness which will refuse (to the end to yield) - compare Psa. 106:12-15

2. The curiosity of the crowd (that something miraculous may have happened that they had not witnessed) drives them to find out more - vs. 22-25

John is setting the scene that led up to their initial question when they finally found Jesus - they wanted to know how He ended up across the sea when they saw no transportation He could have taken

- a. The day following the feeding of the multitude, the people were searching for Jesus again, and John points out their observations - they noted that there had been only one boat that the disciples had taken to cross the sea, but that Jesus was not with them
- b. It may seem to always be good when there is a curiosity regarding Jesus, but their motive was self-focused and founded upon the immediate and near future; not eternity
- c. Verse 23 looks confusing to some, but it was added by John to clarify how the crowd was finally able to get to the other side to find Jesus - one thing in particular to note about this apparent statement of transition is the reference to bread they had all eaten “after the Lord had given thanks” - why add this? It may be that this was the very moment the actual miracle began
- d. When they find Jesus, the first thing they desire to be told “when did you get here?” - they felt this needed to be revealed, possibly because they suspected it may have been a miracle and they were very interested in actually seeing the miraculous - such a “draw” can be addictive to those only seeking amazement/experience more than answers and purpose

If so, it places emphasis on the giving of thanks to God as a core part of this miracle (for it was from the Father it came) - gratefulness is a must and ungratefulness a sign of rebellion (Rom. 1:21)

3. Jesus reveals their true motive and challenges them to what they should be “working” for - vs. 26-27

Such examples should help us realize that even in our prayers (and thoughts) we should expect we will need to be led rather than lead

- a. As the Lord had done with the woman at the well, so He does here - He reveals what they should be seeking and prompts them to the right questions - His guidance will steer the discussion to where it needs to go
- b. He begins again with “Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν” (truly, truly), His emphasis stressing His insight into their hearts (motives) is indisputable - He reveals their motive to be physical (practical) fulfillment more than seeing “signs” - they were interested in where this was all going (possibly to their being fed from here on out, as the manna had done) - there is an instinctive desire to be taken care of and that in a predictable way (because of laziness and a wrong approach to dealing with their worry over life’s necessities) - see also James 4:1-10
- c. They were “filled” and were drawn to have it again (but it was a temporal fulfillment, not one that would be lasting - yet many are willing to forgo the future for immediate fulfillment)
- d. The Lord’s exhortation would likely seem odd, but would stir-up another (better) question - most of their lives were spent preparing for the next meal (since their situation was not like ours where we can store-up provisions for months and even years)
- e. Instead, Jesus tells them to “work for” (set their core focus on seeking after) a food that “endures for eternal life” - this was the point of the Lord in Mt. 6:25-34
- f. The source of this eternal fulfillment is the “Son of Man” (the one upon God had “set His seal” not only with the witnesses He had just explained in chapter 5, but even one of the ultimate “signs,” that being the response of true faith to Jesus in John 3:33)
- g. This can only come (be given by) the “Son of Man” (Jesus’ favorite title in His incarnate association with mankind) - He positionally being infinitely above us and yet one of us)
- h. No other has this authority (God the Father’s seal) so no other can provide eternal life (and the means to get it) - plenty will offer it (“life”) with no ability or authority (or genuine insight)

People are constantly guilty of defining for themselves what is truly “practical” and what is not - God knows infinitely better (in quality and timing)

There is the inclination in all of use to resist constant need and dependence - yet such a drive/desire (as illustrated here) can be distorted to see freedom as independence from need and reliance upon God - it is seen as a burden because there is an underlying distrust in God

Preserving the emphasis of the Greek order, “for Him the Father sealed, even God”

4. “The work of God” - that you believe in Him whom He sent - vs. 28-29

Their idea was that of works they could do for God versus the work God would do for them

- a. They latched onto His use of the word “work” (ἐργάζομαι, acquiring something by labor) though they make it plural, expecting a variety of meritorious deeds they can perform to earn this “eternal life” - their wording was more along the lines of “what must we be doing (making happen, manufacture) to be doing the works of God?”

Belief/faith is the ultimate evidence of salvation - it is the entrusting of self into His hands for the saving of us - the process is described in Rom. 10:1-11 - this truth totally discounts any reliance upon the "good works" of self (in any way) for salvation (eternal life)

They may have been seeking not just the same miracle/sign but something even better - they were alluding to something more profound than what He had done the day before (they wanted something ongoing and more along the lines of "coming down from heaven")

After all they might reason, He had been the one to bring-up the reference to food that never perishes (enduring to eternal life (vs. 27)) - even the manna would spoil after a day so this would have seemed an ideal challenge

Jesus masterfully points them to their misconception (poor focus) and redirects in the same sentence to the best sign/solution of all - their need was eternal not temporal

No doubt, many of our disappointments with God have not been His failure as much as it is our "aiming low" in our limited expectations

They struggled with trust and with their limited imaginations - they were still limited in their thinking how God would have to meet their needs

These were focused on physical needs and would show themselves to not be as interested in spiritual (eternal) needs and satisfaction

Their required evidence was inadequate and short-sighted

b. Lenski, describing the people's response to Jesus wrote, "These people imagine that an entire scale of such works, a multiplicity of meritorious deeds to be done by them. Moreover, they imply that if they knew just what these works are, they may with powers and efforts of their own decide to do them... All law works (works of unregenerate men) are the very opposition of faith, for by such works men would climb to heaven on their own merit, without a Savior and without faith."

c. The "work of God" is the belief - this could be looked upon two ways - 1. That this is the work God requires (faith) in Jesus Christ or 2. That this is God's work (bringing belief/trust) in Jesus Christ for eternal life - both fit, one points to responsibility the other to source/outcome

5. "What sign/work will you perform for us?" - vs. 30-33

a. It is unclear if they recognized the focus Jesus had directed back at these questioners, but they seek to focus the attention back to His need to meet their demands of what they deem "needs" to be evidenced (proven) for them to consider this "belief" in Him

— b. They ask Him what sign He will show them to convince them to have faith in Him, but do not leave it to Him to answer - they (in keeping with the desire to see more miracles and (likely) those associated with providing food as He had done the day before) bring up the "bread from heaven" (manna) that God supplied via Moses for their ancestors to eat

c. Note that the fervor from the day before (where they were looking to make Him their king) had quickly waned (faith based in miraculous experiences will not be long-lived) - again, they were looking for Him to prove Himself on their terms in their ways in their timing - to this day people still "test" God like this and justify their defiance or disapproval based upon His apparent failure or inability to live up to their expectations (which typically have some selfish motive intertwined in "religious intentions")

— d. They quote part of a Scripture to Him (Psalm 78:24-25) where it is written "He gave them bread from heaven" - the food He had given them the day before didn't come down (fall down) from the sky - so now they would like to see this as possible proof

e. Jesus' answer is perfect! As He had done already, He reveals their missing the point of a text (at least in its ultimate fulfillment of "signs" God had used before - sooner or later a sign will not suffice since there must come the fulfillment of what the signs had all been pointing to)

— f. Absolutely (truly) it was not Moses that gave them (provided) the "bread from heaven" but was "my Father" (pointing out their focus on the instrument and not the source) and then (still leveraging this example) that even what was provided in the manna was not truly the "bread from heaven" (since its results were temporal) - again, they were "aiming" too low!

g. The true "bread of God" (that truly comes from Heaven (not just the sky)) is "He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" - these religious leaders/influencers could not imagine in their best moments the actual fulfillment of God's promised purposes

E. Complete, never ending satisfaction in Christ - vs. 34-40

1. Jesus is the "Bread of Life" completely/permanently fulfilling all need - vs. 34-35

a. Those listening to Jesus' description of the bread that the Father gives, that is truly from Heaven, ask that they might be given this "bread" and that "always" - this addition of "always" still shows that they thought of it as they did regular bread or the manna; that it would need to keep coming in regular supply to satisfy their daily needs

b. Jesus openly declares to them that He is ("I am") the bread of life (the one that comes down from Heaven by the Father) - the reception of this "bread" is for those that "come to Me" and the result being no more hunger (ever) and those believing, no more thirst (ever)

c. Just as the water Jesus used in chapter 4, so also here the food He provides will be as that "spring of living water" (in chapter 4) that illustrates an endless supply within - hunger and thirst are two natural cravings related to actual need that we can all identify with - yet Jesus fulfills completely the deepest "cravings" (true needs) of life overall

2. Jesus' guaranteed results - vs. 36-37

a. Jesus, while telling them of the true "life giving bread," also tells them that though they are looking right at Him and have seen what He has done so far, they do not believe

b. This belief (confident trust and reliance upon Him, all He would do and teach) was the key to having this bread of life - this belief must become what they truly are

see Eph. 1:3-4 for the timing of those whom the Father chose to give to the Son

- c. At that moment, after Jesus had revealed their true motive for seeking Him, He makes it clear that His objective isn't a certain number or to maintain a crowd following Him, but that all that He was to receive from the Father were guaranteed to come to Him
- d. "All" (the whole of all those given to Him (Jesus)) were going to come to Him (this coming with belief and reliance) and when they do, "the one" (now focusing on each individual in the "all") will in no way ("οὐ μὴ" - no, not ever) "cast out" - from our perspective, we realize there will never be one rejection of those truly coming to Christ - note the upcoming verse 44
- e. Jesus was not driven by concerns for statistics of success, since His focus was completely on doing the will of the Father (being the supreme example for us) - false teachers would have all "come to them" and stay loyal to them even if their followers are not genuine

### 3. Jesus' motive and "mission" - vs. 38-40

This reiterates what our drive ought to be - we can become wrongfully discouraged when we do not see the results we expect to see around us, yet as Jesus demonstrates here, the results are the Lord's... our goal is to remain faithful trusting Him with the final outcome

Notice again that Jesus reference a "whole" (grouping) when He says He will "raise it up and then in verse 40 He will raise him up on the last day - His loving work is exhaustive and categorical but is then also personal (one-on-one)

- a. The group He was addressing would have likely thought He would have been susceptible to their "impress us, on our terms" approach - yet Jesus was not seeking their approval and sanction, but was only seeking genuine belief/trust in Him and what He was there to do
- b. He begins verse 38 with "I have come down from Heaven" being the "bread from Heaven" and in His coming He Himself did not have another (competing, differing) will from the Father
- c. He was sent to fulfill the will of the Father just as He later sent off His followers after Him to do His will and His work - at the heart of evangelism is attentive obedience, seeking those responding in belief and not focused on those rejecting, offering resistance and opposition
- d. The will of the One that sent Jesus (which Jesus did without the least failure) was that He would "lose nothing" of all (those) the Father had given Him - this is in direct reference (ultimately) to death, for all would die but Jesus Himself will raise them up on the "last day" - yet it is what is beyond death (the judgment) that Jesus saves us from
- e. The outworking of the will of the Father is described in verse 40 - it is not just those "looking" on the Son (seeing Him, hearing Him and even being impressed with Him), but those believing in Him with the result being "eternal life" - notice also where security in salvation relies - it is on Christ and not us (this is the saving faith) - compare Col. 3:1-5; I Pet. 1:3-5

### F. Jesus answers the grumbling doubts of the Jews and clarifies what true faith in Him is - vs. 41-47

#### 1. No one comes to Christ except the Father "draws him" - vs. 41-44

Compare this response to Jude's description of such in Jude 1:14-21

The attention to "implicit bias" has become popular in our time and references an "unconscious bias" formed within without necessarily being aware it's there - this is the case with all humanity against God in preference to sin/self - humanity will never be able to effectively deal with such until sin/blindness is dealt with - till then one flawed bias will replace another flawed bias (depending on popular trends of "morality")

- a. The Jews were grumbling among themselves (γογγύζω - whispering discontent to others attempting to disguise disagreement... "generally of smoldering discontent") - this is common amongst all humanity where we feel we are safe to disagree inwardly against God or His truth - there is no such "safe space" to mull over a rebellious strategy to win-out against Him!
- b. Their core issue with Jesus was their earthly, firsthand knowledge of Him - for how could He say that He had "come down from Heaven" when they knew His parents? - they could not see around what was visible to them in their bias (having an "implicit bias" against God and His Messiah (His answer to the true enemy; that being sin))
- c. What they knew (superficially) regarding Jesus was enough for them to justify their disagreement with Him as far as His being the "bread of life coming down from heaven" - something beyond themselves would be needed to get them past this unscalable bias/blindness
- d. Jesus tells them not to "grumble among yourselves" (knowing their thoughts and attitudes) and tells them directly the issue - He makes it clear that it is impossible to believe what He is saying and then to "come to Him, unless the Father draws him"
- e. Their core issue was that He made Himself to be better than Moses (and better than what Moses provided in the manna) - from their vantage point, their disagreement was moral and highly religious (defending their Scripture and their interpretation of it)
- f. In verses 35 and 37 Jesus mentioned the need to "come to Him" (this in belief/trust), and now He makes it clear why these Jewish leaders/influencers could not accept what He was saying (and is about to make it even more difficult to "swallow")
- g. There has been an ongoing debate as to the idea behind the Father "drawing" someone, many taking the stance it has the idea of "wooing" - but the word for it is "ἐλκύω" typically used for "dragging" (as in "dragging nets" and is used also of an internal "pulling," and must be seen as effective and not just an "influence with a possible outcome," seeing that Jesus uses the same word in John 12:32 where He takes about "drawing all men to Himself")

This must also be in reference to an "effective drawing" seeing His guarantee of raising these in the last day - none of this is presented as potential but as assured



Again, this is in response to their grumbling, and they were grumbling because they could not understand and so accept what He was saying - this is much more than just an intellectual grasping of truth

- h. The “Father that sent Me” is the one that also does the guiding/leading to Christ - there is never any sensible reason to ever view this process as coercive, that someone might be forced against their will to come to Christ while others, who long to come are unable - as is revealed in the next verse, this is done through the “ teaching ” of the Father, so the mind, will and emotions are all involved/convinced in this process
- i. It's all the work of God... the Father leading and teaching and the Son (Jesus) raising them “up on the last day” - notice also how personal this is - the Father “draws him” and Jesus will raise “him up on the last day” (the destination is set and the “raising” pointing to this complete work over death itself)

## 2. Taught of God resulting in true belief - vs. 45-47

We need to keep in mind the context of why Jesus is answering this way (their grumbling because they just “don't get it”) - The focus is always brought back to faith (complete trust) in God's saving work on our behalf and even the result (belief) reminds us that it will always be on the basis of faith that we are saved (and this faith being His work, not ours) - why would this discourage us for who among us can make themselves truly believe?

- a. How (by what means) will these be “drawn” by the Father to the Son - He Himself will “teach” them as Jesus refers them back to Isa. 54:13 (which refers to the end results of God fulfilling the entirety of His promises to Israel) - the one (of many) results focused on is the being “taught of God” - notice they need to be taught, as no one will reach this on their own
- b. Everyone (without exception) who has heard and learned in this way will evidence it in their coming to Christ (which, as clarified by the Lord earlier, entails belief in Him) - JFB commenting on this concept wrote of the coming to Him, ... “with absolute certainty, yet in the sense above given of “drawing”; that is, “As none can come to Me but as divinely drawn, so none thus drawn shall fail to come.”
- c. Notice also that it is not just the hearing but the learning (it becomes a part of them, which is what learning is... integration) - the coming to Jesus is about to be expounded upon in a vivid fashion, illustrated as in one eating/consuming food
- d. This teaching of God will not be the type of “teaching” they were used to (where they visibly see and hear the teacher) - for no one has seen God (the Father) except the One that is “from the Father” - only He has seen and heard Him, so don't expect a training like that of this world (for God would use His word and His indwelling Spirit to guide us (teach us) into all truth - John 16:12-15)
- e. Mankind is inclined against this type of training as they prefer to not only see and hear for themselves, but also prefer to be the evaluator (judge) of its “need” and content (which often finds the subjective use of the word “ relevant ”)
- f. It is, no matter what, absolutely true (truly, truly) that “ὁ πιστεύων ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον” (the one believing (trusting/entrusting) has life eternal) - the tense of “has” (present) is key, in that this assurance is that the believer already has this eternal life!

Even in the understanding that we will assuredly be taught is held to in faith

This is why, to the “natural man” this is all unacceptable - he wants to see, hear and “do” else he will not believe/accept (and so will not entrust himself into God's hands by fully trusting in the work of Christ ALONE)

## G. The “assimilation” of Jesus Christ as the “Bread of Life” to live eternally - vs. 48-59

- 1. This text has been one of the more difficult texts to deal with because of the metaphors used and because of the many varying interpretations and applications

This is important because this is what is happening here in chapter 6 - this chapter cannot be taken independently to make a point (such as using it to make the “Eucharist” legitimate in the bread being the actual flesh of Christ and the wine His actual blood- to do so is to miss the entire point of why it was put forward)

- a. The context needs to be considered carefully to “stay on track” throughout this teaching - we need to consider the leading chapters to this point, such as the reference to being “born again” in John 3, the water that makes one never thirst in chapter 4, passing from “death to life” in chapter 5 - These all used something in the physical realm (as distinct from the spiritual) to illustrate a spiritual concept
- b. We know for certain it was intended to take “spiritually” because of Jesus' clarification in verse 63, “... The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life” (they are “spiritual” and as such are the true means to true life (eternal)) - it is also clear that there is no instance recorded in the NT of anyone ever actually eating the physical body of Christ nor is it ever encouraged in this way
- c. Speaking of “life,” it seems like there would be a clear indication of anyone reading these texts that when Jesus talks of “life” and never dying, He has a completely different idea of life/death than most do - physical death is not the actual death and physical life is not the truest life
- d. Here we are still in the context of the feeding of the 5,000 and the desire of some to see and get more like it - the inclusion of manna Jesus uses to transition to true life, and the cause being something beyond what sustains life here (in the physical sense) - bread that is eaten (assimilated) sustains life for a while longer, but there is another “substance” that if “assimilated” results in eternal life/living

Jesus uses the “concrete” (that which is understood physically in its relation to physical life) to illustrate the same concept in a spiritual sense to make clear the need for something truly lasting for true life unending

- e. It should also be remembered that this audience was familiar with the concept of eating the flesh of the sacrificial lamb at Passover (that which was used in dealing with their sin)
- f. Notice also in these chapters how Jesus is not looking to make the teaching and concepts fit the natural thinking of the audience, and notice that some of the audiences (like this one) don't ask and inquire further as to His full meaning (most just react and complain)

2. “ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς” (I AM the bread (food) of the life) - vs. 48

There are other sources most will seek out for fulfillment in life, but all of them are limited within the temporal (in time and ability) and cannot bring genuine (real) contentment - most will have a lowered definition of “contentment” and will just settle (and then argue that everyone else should also)

- a. Jesus states it again (first clearly stating it in verse 35) building now on the truth/reality that He is the source of complete, unending sustenance - His being this living “bread” is the focus here of what believing in Him is to be - as one would seek out physical bread/food to gain strength, maintain life, and fulfill a genuine need, so Jesus is that source for life sustaining and life fulfillment
- b. We must not miss that this is not “life” as could be subjectively defined, for that would (typically) be focused on more of an existence than true living - see John 10:10 where Christ reveals Himself to be “the door” to truly “abundant life” (literally more than enough, overflowing life) - see also I Pet. 2:11 and the preceding verses describing the qualities of this living

3. The pursuit only of temporal life fulfillment leads only to death - vs. 49-51

So if these truly want the best of signs and to be provided for, forever, they are to pursue the “Bread of Life” - and, as restated in vs. 40, after physical death He will “raise them up on the last day” showing that eternal life is not negated at physical death

A sin-blinded world has redefined “life” for itself to keep itself convinced it will somehow find fulfillment/contentment in it and its temporal pursuits

- a. Jesus points them back again to the miraculous bread from God (manna) that their fathers were given (that these had just referenced as an ideal “sign”) - yet, even though miraculously provided, they still died - Jesus continues to point to that which actually deals with death and not just that which just puts it off
- b. The true “living bread from heaven,” if “eaten” will cancel the negative, “not die” because it (the Lord Himself) has life within Himself and the consumer will (the positive) “live forever” - still playing off of the analogy of food which is consumed to stay alive, only here the “food” and “life” are spiritual (above this physical life) and so have lasting (eternal) results
- c. As the “living” bread, He is the life-giver (again, true life in contrast to “just existing”) and this is of greatest interest to those whose lives are controlled (as so many today) by the fear of death and dying (see Heb. 2:7-15)
- d. How was Jesus this “bread of life”? He, by giving His “flesh” (His body, and so His life) provides “life of the world” - this is the very thing the world is inclined to reject (not desiring true life, but (sadly) a “life” filled with the all the “deaths” associated with sin and its results)

4. “Unless you eat... you have no life in you.” - vs. 52-59

As evidenced in their general response in the end, even though they disagreed, they were agreed that they could not agree with what, no matter how they looked upon it, was absurd to their personally defined “morality” and religious sensibilities

Once again revealing that His reference to “life” is something far more than consciousness

It is the ultimate fulfillment of the adage “You are what you eat”

This is not describing nor instituting the “Lord’s Supper” though the Lord’s Supper pictures the same thing

- a. It’s at this point “the Jews” were arguing with each other (the root Greek word for this being “μάχομαι” describing a more intense conflict) - the dispute was focused on “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” - so some thought it was to be taken as eating His actual flesh while others would have been taking it metaphorically - yet even the latter were offended at its meaning (because it pointed to their utter dependence upon this man for life)
- b. Though they were resiting how Jesus presented and illustrated this need, as seen earlier (in 6:27-29) the real point of contention was that of belief (which it will all come “down to” for everyone in the end) - the declaration of unadulterated Truth either unites or divides
- c. It was not so much the eating (and eating of flesh) that was so offensive as much as it was His pointing to Himself, His flesh... and even if they could somehow see past this flesh being that of a man, they could not see past Him (for He did not live-up to their idea/ideal because of their earthly/temporal focus and priority)
- d. Jesus does not back-off the analogy, but again pushes further the point with “Truly, truly” that if they do not comply (believe) “you have no life in you” - vs. 53
- e. The answer, as seen in this vivid analogy, would be in the assimilation of “the Son of Man” (Jesus as the God-Man, in our stead, for us fulfilling ALL that was needed in restoring what was lost in Eden) - to eat (consume) food is to not only devour it and by it make it a part of us, but to also receive what is needed to stay alive - here, it is a once (for all time) consumption that brings with it true life and that, unending
- f. In light of the sacrificial system and the consumption of the sacrifice, Jesus’ flesh and blood are “true food” and “true drink” and those consuming it have eternal life and will be “raised-up on the last day” (indicating again that physical death was still expected but followed by true life (unending))

The word "assimilated" is a very good description of what the life of one truly "in Christ" is characterized by

This is all essential to grasp and accept since all other "life" is not true life, and so lacks the true insight of what life/living is

Just as food can be poisoned, so the inclusion of anything else "into Christ" as the answer is deadly poison

Pseudo life is dictated to by death (in one way or another) while true life is independent of death and so is not obsessed with "staying alive" since true life cannot be taken away in Christ



Per the Lord, it is done "in remembrance of Me," He being the only source of life and the need to become who/what we are

How was this offensive? At its core, Jesus' message was focused on the heavenly (versus the earthly) and on the eternal (versus the temporal, the "now") and to those living for the "now" and what is of this world, it is highly offensive to direct them to trust and pursue (and live for) something else

see John 8:39-47

The word for "offense" is "σκανδαλίζω" describing something being ensnared/trapped, so here it is in reference to their disbelief/mistrust, which they chose to follow since it was deemed more reliable (trusting more in their doubt)

- g. "True food" and "true drink" (true in fact ) are so in that they not only bring true life but sustain life completely (in contrast to the temporary life sustained by food and water)
- h. And, as with food that is consumed, it becomes a part of us ("abides in" as it is in verse 56), only here it goes far beyond the metaphor of food in that this "whoever" abides also in Christ (we consume and are consumed (enveloped, become part of)) - see also John 14:15-27 for more of a detailing of what this "mutual, inter-abiding" entails - reference also John 15:1-11
- i. Verse 57 is not repetitious as much as it is an enlargement of this entire concept - true life cannot come from the creation but from the creator, and here we are told that the Father is the "living Father" (also then the "Father of life") so the one that sent Jesus (as not only "Son" but "Son of man," our representative and so our only source of true, eternal life/living) - see 5:26
- j. Everyone "consumes" something for life (to live) and most (as were in this crowd in John 6) are only focused on the "here and now" (or just the immediate future) - all who come to true life will do so only "because of Me" (it is an exclusive answer, accommodating no other option/way)
- k. Summing up this section (here in verse 58), Jesus reiterates the inferiority of the manna that their fathers ate, seen in the reality of death (later) to all those that ate it - Jesus as "the bread that came down from Heaven" is the source to "live forever" - so focus needs to be redirected beyond this world/age and "life" truly defined and found in the assimilation (and so being assimilated into) of Christ
- j. Think about how much of the consideration of death (and the fear of it) becomes a tyrannical leader/dictator in the life of so many - yet, when the true source of "life" is found, there is a freedom to truly live, even now in a world obsessed with all things "death" (and so scrambling to redefine what "living" is so as to have some sense of life)
- k. These things (as pointed out in verse 59) were said while "in synagogue" in Capernaum- it has been noted from several sources that the synagogue in Capernaum (which was excavated) had in the ruins a stone that had a pot of manna carved upon it - they honored (at best) the symbol of what God would later, infinitely bless them with, but sadly would have still been satisfied with the symbol, to the loss of the fulfillment
- l. The participation in the Lord's Supper is the symbolism of this concept and why that time is to be treated with utmost respect; yet there are many who partake of the physical elements, seeking some "means to grace" by means of the act, yet without its inward reality (they are not in Christ and Christ is not in them) and so they are not saved by it

#### H. Life, true life is to be found in "the words that I have spoken" for they are "spirit and life" - vs. 60-71

##### 1. Faith/trust to see past natural (normal) offenses by considering the source and future - vs. 60-63

- a. A large number ("many") of His followers (disciples, those more than just sporadically attending His "talks" but had become dedicated in following and learning from Him) were sensing themselves crippled with what they had heard, finding it unacceptable to be heard
- b. So not only were "the Jews" finding fault with Jesus and rejecting His teaching, but now also His general group of "loyal followers" had become resistant
- c. Their assessment was two-fold - first it was viewed as "hard" or "difficult" (the underlying word being σκληρός (where we get our word "sclerosis), describing something hardened from being dried-out and so was harsh, abrasive and even violent, detrimental)
- d. Second, it was perceived to be unacceptable ("who can listen to it?") - few will follow after someone who was once popular who is later, popularly rejected - their assessment was correct from a "natural man's" perspective; it is offensive (and so a point to stumble over) in hearing not only the truth of who Jesus is but the complete dependence upon Him and so complete trust in His words and work
- e. Jesus knew (within Himself) that they were "grumbling" as well - this is different than our assumptions based upon what we can see, for Jesus truly knows the heart (better even than the person themselves) - so He directly asks if this offends them (literally, causes them to trip and become ensnared (in their own doubt) and so ends the following of Him)
- f. Then the Lord said something even more startling! He asks them (if what He has just said about Himself being the Bread of Life coming down from Heaven) if they are offended now, how would they (might they) be when seeing "the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?"

Jesus had many followers because they wanted to see much of what He did and what He taught, but the deeper and more detailed He was the more they realized they no longer liked Him... mainly because He was not living up to their own hopes/ desires (which were tied mainly to this earth)

Whether it is believed or not, He is coming again - see also Acts 1:6-11 - Jesus was not offering them a neatly wrapped package, easy to accept and live with, but something that would require true and complete/ undying trust (faith) for all of them in Him

To be "carnal" is to live by the drives and general desires of the flesh/body (and all the senses (thus, the term "sensuality")) - true life is to be found in the spiritual

Our focus is then not only to be on our spirit, but on its source of true life, the teachings of Jesus

"...their faith was not a living faith, or of a spiritual kind, but a mere historical and temporary one, and was feigned and hypocritical..." John Gill

As seen already, Jesus was not driven by (nor motivated by) the response of the crowd when it came to His speaking the truth

This is important for us all to know, not in just the avoidance of seeking to be people-pleasers, but also not to expect God to be intimidated with our potential reaction to His will at work

These responses are in contrast to the few that remained, and yet even one (Judas) looked to be one of the faithful few

- g. The entire concept of Jesus having come down from Heaven (as being eternal) and now being in such a seemingly lowly form, to then now be imagined (which is where it is all actually heading) to later be ascending back into Heaven (where He was before) - such would be even more unbearable
- h. If they would come to dislike Him now, in His present state (as "Son of Man"... as if just one of them), and then to top it off also despise His teaching (utterances ("the words that I have spoken")), how could they possibly accept that He speaks absolute truth and will reign?
- i. The other possible application of this verse (62) could be that if they were offended now with what was uncomfortable and hard to accept, how would they expect they would respond later when they realize who Jesus really is and see Him in His final exalted state? To see Him "where He was before" is more than the disciples saw, since they only saw Him ascending into Heaven (Luke 24:51), so it includes more than even that - will there not be a great regret of those that feared more their temporal discomfort when they realize what they traded their eternal state for? (living for the "obvious now" rather than "risk" the living for and accepting the Lord and then suffering the loss of what they thought they currently had)
- j. Each of us is truly more spiritual than physical which is why Jesus states "the flesh profits nothing" - so to truly have life it will be found in "spirit" (the essence of life, for without spirit no flesh lives) - the "spirit" is our true self (the "inner man"), our thoughts, "heart" and the part of us that has any "life" at all - so it (spirit) is where life/living is sourced so one must not set the "flesh" as the authority of life direction and purpose
- k. So Jesus sums it up by saying, "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" - literally, His "utterances" (ῥήματα) deal with the spirit and so are true "life" - note this also discounts the idea of the actual consuming of His flesh (for that would be just "the flesh") - so it is, in a sense, that His words (all of them) are the life ("wonderful words of life!")

## 2. Yet there were (and are) those who do not believe - vs. 64-66

- a. The sad conjunction at the start of verse 64 describes the common (majority) response... "but" or "on the contrary" (the exception to this), there are those who do not and are determined to not believe (having a faith/belief/trust in something else, based upon another's "utterances" or ideas/ ideals)
- b. "They understand Jesus well enough; they see what His ῥήματα bring; but this is what they do not want and will not have. They seek earth, and when heaven is urged upon them, they turn away in disappointment; in fact, the more they are made to see heaven in Jesus, the more they determine not to have it." Lenski
- c. John clarifies that Jesus "knew from the beginning" precisely those who did not believe (and would not believe) as well as even Judas who would betray Him - so why even do what He did and why even speak "the words of life" to them? - this is one of many demonstrations of Jesus' unique knowledge of all those around Him (He knew their heart (in the present) and as seen here, He knew their future responses)
- d. Jesus' answer to this is in verse 65 (reiterating verse 44) as the answer/response to those not believing (not accepting it and so choosing to walk away) - Jesus was focused solely on the Father's will and the declaration of the unadulterated and unrestrained truth, regardless the actual or possible response of the crowd
- e. Here though, the wording is changed a bit; in verse 44 He stressed the necessity of the Father "drawing" him and now He states that no one can come to Him unless it is so "granted" (given) by the Father - so the objective in any declaration of the truth is to expect only God's work in it (whatever it might be, **even the disbelief of it**)
- f. Hearing the truth (even of their own anticipated response) "many" withdrew and no longer followed (walked with) Him - the precise wording is they "ἀπῆλθον εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω" (departed to the back/backward) having no more enthusiasm and no expectation of Jesus being what they thought they were seeking

## 3. "To whom should we go?" - vs. 67-71

- a. After stating that Jesus already knew who believed versus those that didn't, Jesus asks "the twelve" if they also desire to go/leave - this demonstrates the necessity of our determining this (thinking on it) for God already knows us more than we know our own heart

Pater addresses Jesus as "Lord," so even a possible consideration of going elsewhere would still be subservient to His instruction/direction of where to go

We can wonder how many would answer by their actions that they have other sources for "words of eternal life" or at least "words of life"?

Though these other disciples had an interest in spiritual, eternal things, when it became too difficult in the "now" to follow Jesus, they left Him

This may be the point where Judas' superficial loyalty had waned, though he stayed with Jesus - Judas may have been driven by the potential popularity of Jesus

Yet, knowing this, Jesus still chose him as a close follower, for even His enemy would fulfill the Father's perfect plan

- b. The reference to "the twelve" does seem to indicate they were all that was left - this might be part of the reason Jesus' "brothers" in the beginning of chapter 7 try to advise Him to be more public with His miracles and to leverage the upcoming "Feast of Tabernacles"
- c. Since so many who had seemed to faithfully follow Him had left, wouldn't they also? After all, most people are crowd followers and typically run from what is unpopular, lest they be seen as extremists - Peter's response though, demonstrates what true faith looks like - Peter asks a rhetorical question, "to whom will we go?"
- d. Peter's "case" for staying was the realization that Jesus is the one with "the words of eternal life," so why would any other source be sought? - all this, even though they also would have difficulty understanding some of what He would teach and do, but such is true faith; it (faith) follows, trusting even when not fully comprehending and believes that answers/understanding will come when needed
- e. There might even be others who claim or actually have "words of eternal life" but they are not, as Peter knows Jesus to be, "the Holy One of God" - He not only has the authority over eternal life, He is the only means to it - the believed what He said in verse 63
- f. Notice also, Peter identifies them as being more focused on eternal life than just "life" as it is and will be now (in this age) - most of these other "disciples" discovered that their focus was actually on the here and now more than their (proven to be) secondary focus on the hereafter
- g. Peter's confession is also interesting in his use of the idea of "coming to know" who Jesus was - faith that is real will grow with exposure to what Jesus taught while pseudo faith lessens the more it comes to know the actual Christ of Scripture
- h. Jesus identifies that He is the one that chose them to be His closest disciples - so even the seeming credit Peter gave himself and the others in staying with Him, it was His will and choosing that they follow Him - and yet, even amongst the most dedicated of His followers, one of them was "a devil" - this, now long after the fact, was identified as Judas Iscariot
- i. Judas would "betray" Him (the underlying word picturing a handing over of someone to his enemies, and many others in many ways would also seemingly, closely follow the Lord only to later betray Him to the enemy (side with the agendas of His enemies)
- j. This is a good example of why we are not prone to forsake the Lord when it looks like the majority of seeming followers turn against Him or just grow stagnate in the cause

## XI. Jesus Teaches Openly And Is Challenged While At The "Feasts of Booths" - 7:1-53

### A. The world hates Christ because He exposes its works as evil - vs. 1-9

Even though He had many followers leave Him, and even though Galilee was not looked upon as a place to gain prestige and recognition, Jesus still ministered there

- 1. After the feeding of the 5,000+ and the confrontation in Capernaum, Jesus continued in Galilee - vs. 1
  - a. It is commonly believed that there was between 5-6 months in between what John was detailing in chapter 6 and now the start of chapter 7
  - b. We are told that He would not "walk in" Judea because of those looking to kill Him - Judea being the hub of the leadership of the Jews and under a different (political) jurisdiction
  - c. "Observe, He did not sit still in Galilee, nor bury himself alive there, but walked; he went about doing good. When we cannot do what and where we would, we must do what and where we can." MH

see Deut. 16:13-17 - all males were required to attend three feasts and this was one of them

The way this is worded, it is commonly believed to be His physical brothers

We don't know their motive in offering this advice, though to most (even today) it would seem reasonable - but Jesus was driven by something altogether different

### 2. Worldly counsel from Jesus' brothers - vs. 2-9

- a. John sets the scene as being shortly before the "Feast of Tabernacles" (or "booths" or "tents"), a major feast celebration to be held in Jerusalem, commemorating the time when Israel lived in tents in the wilderness - Neh. 8:16-18 demonstrates a celebration of this in Nehemiah's time
- b. Jesus "brothers" come to offer Him advice on how to best use His powers to gain and regain a following - if we assume the majority of His former Galilean disciples stayed away and that His following in Galilee was not what it used to be, then the first point made by His brothers would seem well-intended
- c. The brothers see what they believe is an obvious opportunity for Jesus to seize upon - they point out the disciples in Judea (apparently a good number still loyal to Him versus those in Galilee) - they believe that if these "see the works you are doing" they would follow Him and likely HE would grow in popularity (after all, this was a time when the entire area would be crowded) - for how would He ever expect to be "known openly" if He is "in secret"

For not only do most want “miracles” they demand them on their own terms and in their own time

compare to John 18:19-23 - the core issue was His teaching

The stressed point of “not even” (οὐδὲ) did His brothers believe in Him shows how many would have deduced His ministry faltering

Practically speaking, this dealt with the expected impact of their arrival versus His - the world did not hate them as it did Him and so the attention He would draw would need to be handled with precise planning

This then is why it is not possible for the world to love true followers of Christ - it will hate Him and so must hate us (unless what we say and portray is not truly of Him) - see John 15:18-27

This does not mean that the world will not hate some of its own internal, competing divisions - but even in this, each seeks the temporal in some way which will unite its separate “causes” (each, individually) against Christ

The “world” will come to insist on some compromise to be accepted and “allowed” to be at peace with it

see I John 3:12-13 and Rom. 8:3-8

Jesus understood perfectly the precise working of God (in every detail, God being omniscient, omnipotent and sovereign (all-ruling)) and so very exact to each event and when it was to happen

see also Isa. 46:8-10

- d. If Jesus was going to be performing such miraculous works, should He not look to “show Himself to the world”? - clearly people had been impressed with these miracles and would continue to be so - there was the absence of any reference to His teaching (which was so offensive, it even overpowered the crowd’s interests in miracles)
- e. Their idea of working “in secret” was to be working where there was less chance of greater numbers of people attending - for to have more people must always be better, they assumed
- f. Their core issue though was that they did not “believe in Him” - they seemed to believe in what He could do, but they did not (as so many others) believe Him (who He was, what He stood for, what He taught) - it was this way toward the beginning also - see Mk. 3:13-21
- g. Jesus, as He had indicated before, was focused on the Father’s will (and so His timing) and in this instance it was not “my time” which He contrasted with that of His brothers where it made no difference since their time “was always here” (it was indeterminate as to its importance... that is, the timing of their decisions)
- h. The Lord reveals the underlying reason (for this waiting, and why He was different than His unbelieving brothers) - “The world cannot hate you” - why? Because they were united and of the same heart/purpose (at least at this point), for the world might mistreat and neglect itself, but it does not hate itself! The “world” is in contrast to the true, spiritual realm of God and His eternal purposes versus the temporal, physical (of the senses/feelings)
- i. Jesus makes it very clear that “the world” hates Him and why... because He bears official testimony, (μαρτυρῶ) witness against the world that its works, deeds, efforts are evil (and so their results will be) - He is then hated/detested because the world (the overall “system” and order of this age) believes it defines the rightness and wrongness (and so the value) of its own works - Jesus affirming the opposite makes Him the enemy!
- j. The “hatred” from the world will take on many forms and will be framed in various ways (as it seeks to justify/moralize this particular hatred) - it (the world) will emphasize how this truth does not lend to world/societal unity, how offensive and “judgmental” it is to call what it endorses as good as being evil/wrong (especially the agendas and deeds it deems of highest moral good - such will be deemed worthy of rejection, condemnation, punishment and death)
- Many will even use the seeming innumerable divisions of competing ideas to make a case that there can never be only one truly “right” truth
- k. Remember who Jesus is addressing and the topic at hand (from them) - He is talking not only to His earthly brothers, but to religious, practicing, ‘faithful to the traditions’ Jews - yet, even in this, they are “of the world” - the hatred of the true truth will be different and will out-do all the other things the world will end up hating over the centuries
- l. Jesus tells His brothers to go ahead to the Feast - His timing though had to be precise, and He was following (in detail) the will of the Father which included timing - some translations have Jesus saying “I am not yet going up to this feast” though “yet” is not in the original - “I am not going” is in the present tense, which in light of the following verses, demonstrates He meant He was not going at that time - His timing of going was what He meant
- m. When saying, “My time is not fully come” it was not in reference to His “hour” (referencing the crucifixion) but the timing of His going and arriving at the feast
- n. Phrases such as this from our Lord should remind us to trust God’s precision in all things in our lives, day to day - we (obviously) cannot comprehend the details of how this all could (or is) happening, just that it is and so live trusting His scheduling (and assigned “work load”) for us
- o. So He remained in Galilee continuing what He was to be doing and this in contrast to the seeming “missed opportunity” by not taking full advantage of the Feast of Tabernacles in the timing and way suggested by His brothers

## B. “Judge with righteous judgment” - vs. 10-24

1. Jesus will end part of His statements in this section with a challenge for those listening to discern (judge) correctly/rightly

We need to trust that our perceptions are significantly limited and that God’s is not (and what we, in true wisdom, seek to look on life from His perspective (in faith)

- a. This might seem like an idealist command (many arguing back that most believe in some way their “judgment” of situations is right and accurate) - this is because so many were judging Him and His actions/teaching based on their own perception which was ultimately based upon appearance (what they thought they saw and heard)

There needs to be a “judgment” of what Jesus was saying by living it, obeying it

- b. Jesus will point out the necessity of doing (applying/living-out) God’s will (in verse 17) and then the need that others not base things off of their “own authority” (verse 18)
- c. Jesus will demonstrate that their judgment is inconsistent but they do not see it because they base it on the majority opinion and cannot (will not) see past it

## 2. The debate over Jesus - Is He good or is He a deluded deceiver? - vs. 10-15

It may be that these Jewish leaders sought Him out to attempt to intimidate Him, seeing He had not been back to Jerusalem for a while - such seek to use fear/intimidation to avoid a substantive debate

- a. Jesus, after remaining in Galilee a while longer (against His brothers’ counsel), goes up to the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem and yet non-public (“as it were, in secret”) - His secrecy was not out of fear of death but more a matter of timing and faithful obedience to the detailed leading/directing of the Father

It is common to have groups attempt to work out their differences openly hoping to have something solid to place their opinion and possible trust/faith - yet this would not be the way to faith for that would only come through (as seen in verse 17) a trusting obedience (all-in faith to seeking and doing God’s will)

- b. There was already much chatter about Him taking place before He arrived - “the Jews” (religious leaders) were looking for Him and asking where He was - per the context later (verses 21-23) there was still a remembrance (and so a focus) of the healing of the crippled man at the Pool of Bethesda (and that on the Sabbath)
- c. There was an ongoing murmuring (quiet debates and complaints over their disagreements) among the people - some thought Him “good” (a general assessment of His usefulness to them) while others saw Him only as an imposing impostor seeking to lead the people astray - His miracles were looked upon (typically) as “good” in having an impressive and practical value, but His teaching (as the opposition seemed to note) was deemed deceitful/misleading
- d. The conversations had to be quiet and in secret “for fear of the Jews” - there would be a general sense that each would need to side with the religious leaders (for their own welfare and safety) but an open, formal decision from these leaders had not yet been reached
- e. Some have pointed out the form of “spiritual slavery” these people were under (in their required conformity), but it needs to be remembered that these “leaders” were also held captive for fear of popular opinion - compare this to John 12:36-43

Two popular ways to control groups would be intimidation and bribery, neither of which is a legitimate path to the truth

- f. Popularity (acceptance in groups) was never Jesus’ point of focus but simply doing the will of the Father regardless how well it was received or interpreted by others - “truth seekers” are often revealed to only be those seeking validation of their opinions/feelings
- g. Sometime after arriving, Jesus went up into the Temple (about the middle of the feast) and taught - there were no miracles or fanfare as His brothers directed Him to do, simply teaching
- h. The Jews “marveled” at His teaching - judging by the context, this may not have been an admiration but as if to marvel at His presumption to not only openly teach, but to do so in the Temple and that without formal credentials

Lies, misdirection, error and deceit utilize the strategy of formalizing content and certifiable credentials to guarantee its propagation and to formulate a formal way to discredit opposition without needing to work through the details

Both groups were judging Him by the wrong standards and Jesus is about to lay out the only way His teaching could be proven to be “from God”

- i. If it was a marveling of admiration, it was because He was so well versed in the Scriptures (“γράμματα οἶδεν” - “the letters or Scriptures knows”) - if this is the case, it also speaks badly of those who prided themselves as knowing (and having been credentialed) being unable to counter Him with a Scriptural rebuttal - they often used tradition and non-Scriptural resources
- j. Their core point was that He was “never educated” - the underlying Greek describes a “never learning” but was used to describe not having validated learning through one of their accredited institutions - this is not added to discredit formal education, but it does indicate that it is not a sure way to validate a person’s Scriptural trustworthiness

Sooner or later we will need to answer opposing arguments with a thought-out response rather than a quick appeal to one’s lack of (or wrong) credentials

## 3. The needed “will to will” to do God’s will ... to know the validity of Christ’s teaching - vs. 16 -18

Formal religions of all types tend to seek out affirmation of structure and core beliefs specially focused on certain sections of Scripture (if Scripture at all) - popularity is fickle and so religious thinking/teaching will often follow trends to appear to remain relevant and authoritative

- a. In response to their disqualifying conclusions regarding His teaching, Jesus readily admits that His teaching was not His own, so it was not a concoction of His own making (as many self-credentialed people have) - He credits the Father (the One who sent Him) - He had no desire to be like them and His approach to Scripture was not like that of the Jewish religious establishment - “These wise Jews, Jesus intimates in His answer, have certainly heard aright: the entire doctrine of Jesus is totally different from the arid refinements and empty distinctions of the rabbis, and it is plain to any man who has ears to hear, that Jesus has never “learned” from such teachers.” Lenski
- b. Jesus was opposing/contradicting a long traditional line of teaching based upon the Scripture, but that had been so added to over the ages, it had lost its truth to diverting practices (applications) and endless elaborations that had become equated with Scripture authority itself
- c. So how can His teaching be validated? This is a fair question that ought to be asked of all teaching (especially that which deals with the soul and eternity)

Religious thought/teaching is not the only category that becomes affected by tradition and trends, if it truly declares that it deals with life purpose and beyond life, then it ought to be the most scrutinized

There is an assumption of God (His existence and personhood as well as His authority) - those seeking another "god" or a counterfeit God of the Bible will not truly believe Jesus because it is not really THE God's will they desire/seek

There are other "signs" pointing to the truth but they are not personally settled until implemented - see Jn. 10:37-38

Everyone ultimately pursues what they desire (what they "want", what they "will to do" or wish to have) - if self or any other than God dictates this, Jesus teaching will never be seen as "God's Truth"

"Glory" could also be in the form of self-accolades (to self)

In light of this context, the one teaching of his/her own authority seeks to have others' high opinions of him/herself - here, Jesus was revealing the Truth truly verbatim from the Father for the betterment of the admiration of the Father in others

The challenging issue here (in this text) is discerning the various presentations of God's Word - look for motive

People will normally desire to have their self-image bolstered and will get quickly strategic to divert discussions when their wrongness is about to be revealed

This is an example of law-breakers seeking to use the law to punish those they call law-breakers - note Rom. 2:12-13

Many ill-informed people often demonstrate such by jumping (immediately) to the most extremes they can imagine - one must be "crazy" if others can't see it, right?

The Sabbath was not a day set aside for displays of self-aggrandizing displays of personal holiness but for mimicking God in His goodness

- d. Jesus' answer was and still will be unappealing to the skeptic (who seeks out "proofs" and other ways to verify accuracy, authority and dependability/reliability) - for, Jesus informs, only those willing to do God's will, will be able to come to know that Jesus' teachings are of God
- e. Young's Literal phrased part of this as, "... if any one may will to do His will, he shall know..."
- f. The will must be yielded, desiring to do the will of God first... before knowing "for sure" - at first glance this might look like "blind faith" but it is based upon what Jesus taught and did
- g. Truth is truth regardless of what others think/conclude, but it is not truth "to us" (personally) until it is obeyed (lived, followed, experienced) and we come to see it firsthand for what it is
- h. "...finite and fallen human beings cannot set themselves up on some sure ground *outside* the truth and thus gain the vantage from which they may assess it. Divine revelation can only be assessed, as it were, from the inside." Carson
- i. This was all truth (of course) because Jesus was actually seeking only the Father's will, so ALL of what He taught would point to and lend to this as a genuine pursuit - Jesus ultimately points to the core issue... the will, which is what it is and needs something outside itself to properly mold it, inform it and direct it (as in making/remaking it new)
- j. For, as Jesus goes on to clarify, anyone who wills to be an authority to themselves will be characterized as seeking their own "glory" - they are those who literally "speak from themselves" (their opinions or "takes" on spiritual/philosophical matters) need them to be their own (subject to their personal agreement) so they may have the glory - this is particularly directed at false teachers and impostors - God and His word have often been used as a means to boost the ego of a supposed teacher or messenger of God
- k. The key is seeking the "glory of him who sent him" (the authority, in this case, God Himself) - the "speaking" is controlled by what is actually sought - is it the absolute, objective truth (of God and His word) or some variant or alternative that leads - in picturing the word "glory" it helps to know that its root comes from "δοκέω" which means "to have an opinion" (and so refers to what is seen/perceived - we must realize, though, Jesus was not seeking (necessarily) the admiration of the people immediately but later (either by later submissive faith realizing His rightness, or stubborn neglect/disobedience realizing His rightness when it is *too* *late*) - note also I Peter 4:8-11
- l. Those not "in it" for their pride's sake are typically trustworthy (and absolutely so with Jesus) not being "unrighteous" (at their core/motive) - this does not mean that all those who are "sincere" and truly humble/selfless in what they declare, for Truth is also discerned for its content
4. Do not discern/judge (reach a final decision) according to appearance - vs. 19-24
- a. Jesus seems to shift topics, though He is actually directing the discussion to the core issue - many will seek to "keep-up appearances" which will include the apparent need to divert discussions of a convicting/pointed nature (truth) as was done here by dealing with Jesus' lack of credentials to be teaching as a rabbi - this still happens even in regular conversations
- b. Jesus knew the core issue that was really on the minds of "the Jews" (that made them feel authoritative and "in the right" to stand against Him) - they were still utilizing the healing of the lame man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath as a clear act of unrighteousness
- c. Jesus' initial point is that, though they outwardly revered the Law of Moses, yet inwardly were driven to break it in their seeking to kill Him - see John 5:15-18 - Jesus also mentioned "...none of you keeps the Law" (though they stand for it when it suits them)
- d. When Jesus openly asks (making His point), "Why do you seek to kill me?" there is an immediate reaction (from "the crowd") associating Him with having "a demon" (being possessed or closely influenced by one) as they would again in 10:20 when He again references His death - this Jesus disregards
- e. When Jesus reintroduces the healing of the lame man of the Sabbath, He points out how "one work" caused them to "marvel" (only here this marveling was that it was done on the Sabbath) - they had become obsessed with their final conclusion framing it as being openly, blatantly wrong - they were using a diametrically opposed standard/authority of judgment
- f. Jesus quickly and efficiently makes the point of "lawful good" being done on the Sabbath and here it was circumcision (a law religiously followed even if need be done on the Sabbath)
- g. Yet for Jesus to make a man "entirely well" ("whole again") on the Sabbath was deemed wrong



Circumcision actually meant something and was more than just a ritualistic law to be carried out

God's Law and Word was never meant to be used to compete within itself, for it all was intended to point to true righteousness resulting in righteous works - see also Luke 6:6-11

- h. Teaching by example, Jesus walks them through this one instance of their judging superficially (by appearance) - He first demonstrates their focus on the Law of Moses (here regarding circumcision) and yet it pre-dated Moses, having already been established in Abraham (and the Patriarchs) in verse 22 (it being the covenant sign of their being God's people)
- i. The next consideration of their practice was their circumcising on the Sabbath (since it was to be done on the eighth day - Lev. 12:3) so it clearly outranked the Laws regarding the Sabbath (and especially their added details of all that was permitted/not permitted) - yet Jesus' making the "man's whole body well" was something that made them "angry" (a unique word for anger (χολάω) describing bitter hatred, being enraged) - they were not judging/discerning the intent/purpose of the Law if they thought it forbade doing good (what is right) on the Sabbath
- j. So discerning judgment (not judgementalism) is commanded, but it must be "δικαίαν" (just, right in the sight of God so God's view must be sought primarily before reaching a conclusion by what one just sees/perceives)

### C. "You will seek Me and will not find Me" - vs. 25-36

#### 1. Some of the people question whether the leaders actually know if this is the Christ - vs. 25-26

Crowd pleasing or crowd appeasement was never the mission of Jesus - He would keep on-point regarding the truth from God to be declared and the truth of each situation He dealt with - He was no flatterer nor "game player"

- a. Even though some (in verse 20) responded with a mocking criticism ("this man has a demon") when He mentioned there were those seeking to kill Him, others (those actually of Jerusalem) realized it was true, and marvel that He is speaking openly
- b. The boldness of Jesus stood out to them (that He was clearly not driven by fear/intimidation of these threatening authorities) but neither was He controlled by them, even by staying on topic in their trying to control/steer the dialog to their advantage
- c. These realized the "stakes" (the leaders were seeking His death) - yet they were confused that anyone would be so bold to speak as He was, so possibly (they reason), maybe they (the leaders) have come to realize that Jesus actually is the Messiah and that is why Jesus is willing and able to speak as He is

#### 2. You think you know what you know, but you don't really know what you don't know - vs. 27-29

They did not expect the Christ to come in a practical manner as just one of them, among them - surely it would be more spectacular than this!

- a. Even though these Jerusalemites were open to the possibility that their leaders knew Jesus to be "the Christ," they (or at least some of them at this point) determined He could not be, based upon a traditional thought that no one would really know where the Messiah would come from (for there was a spiritualism associated with their traditions)
- b. They determine He cannot be the Messiah because they know where He comes from, and since they believe that when the Messiah really comes that no one will know where He comes from... so He cannot be the Christ - see John 6:42 and Mark 6:1-6
- c. Jesus essentially explains how both ideas can be true at the same time - He acknowledges that they do know where He came from (as far as His humanity is concerned), but they were not aware of the One that sent Him (so they did not truly know where He came from) - vs. 28
- d. The issue was not in knowing where He came from (about Him), but that they did not know the One who sent Him (the Father/God) and since He is true (truth) they could not reason to a correct conclusion since they were missing this essential information (truth)
- e. If Jesus is not trusted, not believed and is then disregarded, they cannot ever know the Father (as in Jn. 14:6) and so would not/could not come to Him - the danger in being a finite being is the "not knowing" (the inability) of knowing what we don't know (especially when it comes to that which impacts our eternal destiny and what is really controlling the universe)
- f. As stressed many times already, Jesus was "sent" by Him (the Father) so any/all resistance to Him is resistance of God altogether - these critics of Jesus felt as though they (or some of them) could write Him off because of their take on their theology

The usage of "true" in verse 28 may be plainly taken as "real" (genuine), so they (in reality) were not seeing reality in not knowing/understanding God and His purposes - see Mt. 11:27

Jesus is the only way anyone will ever come to know God for He is the only one to have truly known Him (Jn. 1:18)

Such demonstrates one of the dangers of an erroneous view being treated as dogma

#### 3. "Where I am you cannot come" - vs. 30-36

This is still done today where many cornered by His truth will seek out any way to put a stop to the declaration of His truth and will seek to use a pseudo-lawful way to do it

So many people are battling against God and don't know it is Him they are up against

- a. There was still a continued effort to seek Him out and arrest Him (for the opposition had no other way to stop Him, being unable to deal with Him as regards the truth, so their remaining option was to shut Him up)
- b. The reason no one could "lay a hand on Him" to actually accomplish their objective was not because of contradictory circumstances, but (in reality) it was not His "hour" - these would play a part in the very plan they sought to thwart but would (without knowing it and why) have to wait till it was God's time

Faith based in the miraculous may end up lending to true faith (in His words, in Himself as Savior) but there is also a type of belief that something is true (though they may not subscribe to it (as the source of truth and to be obeyed) themselves)

This is all happening about 6 months before His crucifixion - so even though there are plots, even the plots are under the authoritative plan of God

There are many takes on this verse - some saying this refers to the Jews trying to find Him later to kill Him while others say there will be a seeking of Him (as the Christ) when Jerusalem is being destroyed but that they will be too late to get His help - these cannot be true in light of John 13:33

We must not presume current resources will always be in the same way and amount as they currently are

Many critics of Christ were ultimately shown to be the fools they were when their belittling imaginative "put-downs" ended up having an element of truth in them, God so above their thinking that He could make great and glorious what they saw as little and with no possibility of ever being significant

The issue, as is to be seen, is the greater identity with physical thirst/hunger/needs than there is to the spiritual - the core of all our overwhelming issues is within the soul/spirit and physical solutions can only, at best, mask these pains

So many jump at the opportunity to get these springs of living water but balk at the reliance/trust in Christ

- c. Even though there was objection to Jesus by the authorities, many of those in Jerusalem at the time believed in Him (at least to some degree) basing it on His "signs" and the greatness and number of them - it seemed fairly clear that He must be the Christ
- d. The Pharisees heard what was being said ("muttered," as in the whispers of the crowd) and this caused them to send some of their officers to arrest Jesus - they could not deal with Him in truth (or the challenge of their "truth" (their version)), so they used the next option they had... authoritative force - He was looked upon as their enemy (so much so that the Pharisees were joined with the Chief Priests who were mostly Sadducees and even though they were philosophically at odds they were united again Jesus)
- e. Jesus, apparently knowing what was happening, once again keeps His focus and message on the One controlling everything - there was a movement now to arrest Him (and kill Him) and Jesus acknowledges His time with them is "little" and that will be followed by His return to "Him who sent Me" - the time was "little" because of God's purpose not man's
- f. Jesus makes it clear the issue (for them) of the remaining time being short - for when He is gone they will no longer see Him; they will no longer be able to find Him, for where He is going (where He will be) they will not be able to come (not as they are - see Jn 13:36 & 14:2)
- g. Time is altogether short in light of eternity, and for these privileged to be with Him in person, there was quickly coming a time when they would no longer see Him - for us also there is a sense in remembering to avail ourselves of the opportunities of the Lord's teaching and encouragements for there will be times when we will long to have them as we once had them
  - There will always be an available comfort of the Lord for believers, but as was seen here, there may be time of special opportunity of learning/preparing that should be appreciated while they are available, for there will be times when we (as these) would seek them out again and will not (this side of eternity) find them as we once had them
- h. "The Jews" did not follow/understand His meaning, and judge His meaning based on their own misconceptions (as is still so often done in religion) - to some, these words were dreadful (as seen again in their application in 8:19-24) for some would never see Him again at all (as a possible Savior) for they would die "in your sins"
- i. There would be those with whom this would only be temporal (for they would go to Him), but here would be others (who rejected/refused) that would end up fitting the description of the lost opportunity with "wisdom" in Proverbs 1:24-33
- j. Ironically, what they intended as a criticism against Him (that they could only imagine that He would leave Israel and teach to the "dispersion" (scattered Jews) and possibly find even there that He would only be left to teach the Greeks) - it ended up that the Gospel did go to the dispersed Jews and then on to the rest of the Greek world
- k. The Jews questioning in verse 36 looks to be sarcastic and belittling - for if they do not understand (especially as a group of leaders), it should just be disregarded (they surmise) - Jesus' response to this is to ignore (offering no answer or clarification to them)

#### D. Divisions over Jesus (who/what He was) overshadows His message - vs. 37-53

1. The openly proclaimed/heralded offer of inner "living water" - vs. 37-39
  - a. Jesus, on the last day of the feast leaves the normal posture/practice of a teacher and takes on more of the role/posture of a prophet - note the response of the people in vs. 40
  - b. Part of the Feast of Tabernacles involved the pouring of water on the sacrifice - the origin of such a practice was not certain though Jesus takes this time to offer a permanent relief from thirst (inner, spiritual thirst) - just as He had offered to the woman at the well (chapter 4) Jesus again offers it with the result of it coming from within ("out of his heart will flow...")
  - c. The difference here was the explanation by John of this being in reference to the Spirit still yet to be given - The Holy Spirit being the well-spring of living waters, quenching what would normally be unquenchable thirsts
  - d. The qualifier is again the necessity to "believe in Me" for such belief is evidenced (seen to be genuine) in complete reliance upon Him and His work and complete trust in Him - it has been common in "Christian" religions to seek after (even diligently) the benefits that are provided via Christ yet with the refusal to actually believe/trust in Him - such faith must be totally trusting and so being submissive to Him completely

- e. There are pictures like this in the OT such as In Isaiah 44:3, “For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.” - Only He can ultimately satisfy (quench the thirst)
- f. It must not be missed also how Jesus began this section, asking “If any man is thirsty” - herein is the great distinction, for some (many) are not thirsty at all and have no craving to hear what Jesus will say and most certainly have no proclivity to believe Him or in Him - the issue today should be more along the lines of a concern that there is no “thirst” (we might say as far as surface level, there is no driving interest) - compare to Isa. 55:1-11

2. Divided opinions become the focus (the inability to gain a consensus) - vs. 40-53

- a. This section includes the differing responses as to their opinions, but no action, no repentant change in the people, no movement of belief toward Jesus - it is common to place the focus upon the comparisons and voicings of opinions (takes) of Jesus while avoiding a conclusion of belief (and so obedience/submission in faith)
- b. Some of those hearing Jesus conclude He must be “the Prophet” (Deut. 18:15) - He was clearly making a profound impression but it was still only one of consideration
- c. “There is contention even in the Church itself about the main point of religion: neither has Christ any more cruel enemies than those that occupy the seat of truth: yet they cannot do what they would.” GBN
- d. The debate becomes more vocal, for some proclaim He is “the Christ” which is quickly countered by others with a rhetorical question, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee?” for (as they quote Scripture) He must come from Bethlehem (He must be of the line of David)
- e. Jesus was “from” both places, being born in Bethlehem yet living in Galilee (Nazareth) as Matthew pointed out in Mt. 4:13-16 - These speculators could have sought out the truth but there is a natural side of people that seeks to leave the most important research to others rather than being driven to get the accurate/definitive answer for themselves
- f. Even those seriously considering Him were divided (they could not unite), though truth is not ultimately determined by human unity - it is good to be united regarding truth but truth will still be truth if we aren’t (so it is a personal matter to be sure which will, hopefully be a unifying influence on others who are truly “thirsty”)
- g. Of all those hearing Jesus, some wanted to arrest Him (the Chief Priests and Pharisees, the spiritual authorities) though at this point they were unable to “lay hands on Him”
- h. The “officers” sent to arrest Him returned to the Chief Priests and Pharisees empty handed- their response (the reason they provide) was their being so impressed with how He talked (not necessarily just the method but by His content) - there will be many who cannot answer back against the Lord but are not convinced either - this illustrates the response of many that are “seekers” who are impressed with Christ but they are not converted
- i. The frustrated response of these religious leaders reveals their true character (thought process and presuppositions) - they react in astonishment that these officers might actually believe (as if it is astounding/absurd) which is a reaction of attitude (which does influence many) - next they ask a questions likely intended to be rhetorical as to whether or not any of the “authorities of the Pharisees” believed in Him
- j. “The matter was to be decided by authority, and not by truth” H.W. Watkins (Ellicott)
- k. Assuming their group was united against Jesus, they determine that the crowd (who would dare debate it) is “accursed” - after all, they do not even “know the Law” (as if it just pivoted off of known knowledge - if this was truly the case, could they not have openly debated Jesus? They knew they couldn’t, yet still felt they were secure in their “authoritative” predeterminations)
- l. Interesting also that these just write the crowd off rather than try to compete with Jesus - the true issue was not a lack of knowledge but a lack of true thirst (for a true thirst would be unstoppable until it finds what will truly quench the unstoppable need!)
- m. When Nicodemus asks (as in a reminder) about the process of the Law and conducting a hearing before judging, he is attacked and mocked (“from Galilee”)
- n. “Ridicule is not argument, and there is no demonstration in a gibe; but, unhappily, this is the only weapon which the proud and haughty often use in opposing religion.” Barnes
- o. They ask him to “search and see” that no prophet is to come out of Galilee, though their assessment of Jesus and His background was severely lacking in accuracy

As seen here there would be many who have no such craving, no sense of such a need and why they are hesitant (at best) and why many are critical or just write Him off

The only ones in this section that were decided and seeking action were the Pharisees - many were impressed, but it stopped there

Some question why John does not correct this error here, but he is only demonstrating the uniformed reactions of the people - something was leading them to their decisions but most of them were already settled either way

Note Luke 12:49-53

Being unable to deal with Him in truth they sought to deal with Him by force

They know enough to hesitate but not enough to yield to the words they were hearing

For how could anyone take Jesus seriously when the religious authorities don’t believe in Him? They did not know that there was at least one in midst that was (likely) believing

Many are still this way today, knowing they cannot argue against God and His Word yet appeal to some other sense of authority/experience that justifies them

Even the experts of the Law and those who ought to be the most conscientious regarding the Law are angry when they are reminded of their own obligation to follow it - this is a common reaction of the self-righteous

If truth is not the pursuit (because of another agenda) it cannot end well

- p. This is a good example of how these religious leaders responded when they had already decided on Jesus and were not up to challenge/scrutiny - Jesus was not from Galilee, there were some from Galilee (Jonah being one of them) and there was a prophecy that the Messiah would be a light in the area of Galilee (Isa. 9:1-2)

## XII. Dealing With Sin - 8:1-11

A. This section of John has a controversial history, not because of its content, but because there is no early (the earliest) manuscript evidence that it was in John's Gospel - none of the Early Church Fathers cover this in their writings and it does not show-up in manuscripts until much later

1. It has become commonly accepted that the account is true, though it was not written by John and many of the manuscripts that have it, mark it off as not being authentic to John
2. Some of the scholarship believe it is closer to the writing style of Luke - we will cover it in our study of John with the belief that it was an actual account (though not written by John)
3. No doctrine or aspect of Jesus and His work is affected by this inclusion or exclusion, for He is portrayed regularly as forgiving to sinners and convicting to the self-righteous

B. Using a woman caught in adultery to "set up" Jesus to try to rightfully accuse Him - vs. 1-6

1. "While the wicked go about to make a snare for good men, they make a snare for themselves." GBN

As seen here, Jesus was compassionate to sinners (especially those seeking freedom from the enslavement to and dominion of their sin)- as also seen here, Jesus was an ongoing conviction to the self-righteous who would cover their sin with the blaming of others in their sins

- a. This is an appropriate conclusion from this next section - there were often attempts on the Lord to trap Him (catch Him in something that would discredit Him) - this setting was one where there was an attempt to pit Him against Moses (the Law) or against Rome (and desperate sinners seeking a way to deal with their sin) - Mt. 22:15-22 is a similar "setup"
- b. Jesus, coming back from the Mt. of Olives, began to teach in the Temple area as was common for teachers - this looked to be an opportunity for His opponents to trap Him in a scenario - from their perspective it was likely a perfect plan - there may have been an excited anticipation since they had not been able to "compete" with Him up to this point

2. The scenario - a woman caught (in the act) of adultery - how would Jesus judge this? - vs. 3-6

Some sins become so common in a society that definitive action against them is looked upon as being harsh and unreasonable

- a. Some of the religious leaders (Scribes and Pharisees) bring a woman caught in adultery and set her in the middle of their group to inquire of Jesus as to how He would have them deal with her - it is often asked as to where the man was and is also frequently noted by those with historical insight into this time that adultery was so common that it was no longer being punished
- b. They address Him as "teacher" (as if to genuinely be seeking His counsel - even the "enemy" can be complimentary and respectful (flattering) to set a trap)
- c. Somehow these knew (or actually did the "catching" themselves) that this woman was caught in the very act of adultery (vs. 4) - this in itself looks suspicious - but, nevertheless, she was guilty and this was an opportunity for these religious deceivers
- d. The Law of Moses is appealed to as to what the clear punishment is to be (there were a couple different scenarios in the Law that dealt with execution for adultery, the one that dealt specifically with stoning was that of a woman betrothed to be married being unfaithful) - see Deut. 22:23-24 (though here the man was also to be stoned to death)

Note that Jesus does not say that she was not guilty nor does He seek to excuse her because of their malicious intent to use her

- e. Their question, "What do you Say?" is to be intended in response to Moses Law (do you concur or do you disagree?) - it is common for opponents to God and His word to setup seemingly simplified questions and answers that leave out key details that must be addressed
- f. Jesus referred to their generation as "adulterous" not just because they had left off God and His Law, but because they were actually adulterous (immoral/impure in thought and action) - sexual immorality is very common in not only secular society, but amongst self-righteous, self-justifying religions (excusing it because it becomes widely acceptable)

The answer would appear to be a simple/direct one, but the situation involved more than this woman, seeing her accusers were guilty as well

If sin is to be dealt with, these would do so by being the first to blame (covering personal sin with the sin (or perceived greater sin) of another/others)

Many are annoyed when not only their scenarios are not given priority but the importance they attach to it (with attitude) is played-down

- g. Jesus responds with what would look to be a casual, unhurried response (writing on the ground) - there is no need to determine what He wrote for it is what He says/asks that is most important - His response was somewhat defiant of their apparent urgency

C. Who can judge sin and inflict final condemnation? How is sin to be dealt with? - vs. 7-11

1. This instance may seem to only involve the plots of the enemies of Christ, but it also demonstrates the dilemma we all have with sin, for even with the Law, to participate in its execution should (in a sense) be heavy upon the executioners themselves because of their own sin - vs. 7-9
  - a. It is not that sin cannot be dealt with, but more so how it can effectively be dealt with/resolved

As is seen many other places in the Gospel, Jesus' opponents came up with very clever ways to trap Him, yet were unable to anticipate His effective answers-many will still formulate such scenarios, but will not seek out His answers and will assume they have Him defeated

Note Romans 2:1-3

It is easy to become so engrossed in a perspective or plan that fits our designs (selfish) that we become unable to see the correct way to look on things anymore - God often uses His Word in such clarifying ways.. if we will hear/heed

God will use judgmental people and official judges, but the judgment that truly matters is the one of the Lord Himself - His is eternally authoritative while all others will have only a temporal affect

Even though there was clearly guilt on the side of her accusers, there was guilt upon her also that deserved execution - it is easy to fall into the thinking that she was somehow "just" because of the evils of others, but she was without excuse/guilty and it needed to be addressed

- b. It was part of the execution process for the accuser(s) to throw the first stone (stressing the seriousness of the accusation and their responsibility in it) - to accuse another of sin is to be done with utmost caution and seriousness (with a focus on handling it responsibly)
- c. It may be that His antagonists thought they had Him cornered, for if He said not to stone her He would be accused of disagreeing with the Law of Moses, and if He said to stone her, He would be insisting on an execution that He did not have a right to do under Roman law
- d. They continue to ask (persist), so He stands and provides them an unexpected response - **Jesus essentially agrees with the Law and orders the execution to proceed** - but He adds an important requirement, that the one(s) without sin (this sin or something like it) be the first to cast a stone - accusers were to start the process, but Jesus is pointing them (ultimately) to their own guilt - He instructs that "the sinless one" should throw the first stone - see Deut. 17:6-7
- e. It seems unlikely that Jesus meant that only a **completely sinless person** would be the only one that could do this (lawfully), for then the judicial process would be unable to function, but in this case, **He** was truly sinless and would have been the only one to be able to meet this requirement in its strictest sense
- f. Jesus stooped down again (still as if in a causal response to their excited fervor) - what may have taken them (in designing a perfect trap) a while to design/plan, Jesus, with one simple statement, leaves them not only speechless, but in a pondering guilt
- g. These, "when they heard it" each (starting with the elders(most prominent in authority) followed by the rest left- some manuscripts included the description of their consciences being convicted (the underlying Greek being "ἐλέγχω," meaning to expose, refute rebuke)
- h. When they had all walked away, all that remained (in this part of the Temple area), the immediate crowd, having dispersed while all other business/interactions continued, Jesus was left with just the woman "standing before Him" (likely not knowing what to do, and believing her fate to be left in His hands)

2. Jesus then stands again (now in a more official stance) and asks, "Has no one condemned you?" and "Where are they?" - her answer is simple and yet significant as she states the obvious, that none were remaining that came to condemn her - note that she references Him as "Lord" - vs. 10-11

- a. Jesus does not condemn her - this is the only way, truly the ONLY way sin can be dealt with that frees the accused from the rightful execution of judgment - Jesus will go on to be the ultimate solution when He becomes the sacrifice (payment) for sin (which brings not only freedom from condemnation and forgiveness of sins, but imputed righteousness (II Cor. 5:21))
- b. It is too easy to excuse and even justify our sin in our own eyes because others sin or sin "worse" in adding to their sin self-righteousness - but we all will answer for ourselves and will not have any leverage if pointing to the sins and injustices of others in our appeal
- c. Being freed from the rightful consequences to sin is not to lead to the assumption that sin may be resumed (a life of sinning) - the word for sin (ἀμαρτάνω) is more than the avoidance of bad living and evil doings; it is more focused on the failure to press-on to active righteousness - so Jesus tells her go "and from now on, sin no more"

### XIII. The "Darkness" Fights the Validity and the Actuality of the Light - 8:12-30

A. Attention is immediately drawn to Jesus' statement in verse 12, "I am the light of the world..." and understandably so - but the majority of this context is the opposition that is immediately mounted when Jesus declares Himself to be this Light

- 1. What Jesus says is true and He refutes the opposition, yet as seen in verse 15 they "judge" (determine) "according to the flesh"
  - a. Some of the key verbs in these verses are "follows me" (vs. 12), "judge" (vs. 15,16), "believe that I am He" (vs. 24) contrasted with "will die in your sins," all dealing with the loftiest of concepts and the utmost focus and seriousness that His words merit
  - b. This section is also illustrative of John 1:4-5, revealing Jesus' life being the "light of men" and it being opposed by the "darkness" trying to overcome it
- 2. Light causes darkness to go away, for darkness is overcome by the light and it is key to note how Jesus is opposed by these religious leaders in their attempts to discredit Him (not dealing with what He said (and even meant), but focusing on His lack of apparent (required) witnesses)

B. "I am the light of the world" - vs. 12

1. Jesus, continuing where He left off in 7:38, openly declares "I am the light of the world", a statement the Pharisees immediately take issue with - they knew its significance and it being another claim to being the Messiah (and equal with God)

One of the key aspects of the Messiah was His being a light to the world/nations(so, more than just the Jews)

Apart from Him the world has no true insight (light) - the blindness of the world is most vividly seen in its being unaware that it cannot "see" (being blind to its blindness)

- a. One of several texts associated with this being Isaiah 42:5-9, where the Messiah is said to be "a light for all the nations" (as in "the world") - compare this also with Isaiah 49:3-6
- b. The key to His being "light" is its contrast to darkness - Jesus makes it clear that "whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness" - darkness (being here the absence of light) is as if walking blindly, for light reveals things for what they truly are
- c. In context of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, this is in reference to the light of the cloud that God used to lead Israel while in the wilderness - it was the ultimate/sole guide
- d. As the only true light of the world, He is the contrast to ignorance and blindness, the contrast to the darkness of evil, and to those in the dark, gloominess of grief/despair He is the light of and to hope

2. The key is the following Him - "We should not overlook the present participle, which implies following Jesus continually. Jesus is speaking of wholehearted discipleship, not of casual adherence. The follower of Jesus will never walk in darkness" Leon Morris

Note the contrast to this seen in John 12:44-50

Having such a life in them, these followers become a source of light also (Mt. 5:14-16)

- a. Such dedicated (proven in their consistency) followers will not walk in darkness because they will have "the light of life" (light for living)
- b. This "following" is not only a consistent following, but one that is close, as in looking to follow every direction (not allowing any straying away from His "lead")
- c. Such followers will not walk in ignorant, blinded darkness because in Christ there is the "light of life" - this is more than seeing it, because it is a possessing of it ("will have")
- d. "If a man makes a false step in life, it is because he seeks other guides in his own thoughts or in subjection to the thoughts of other men...Perception of truth attends its practice. The true journey of this life is here presented as a constant activity; in vii 37, the source of this action is found in constant receptivity." H.W. Watkins (Ellicott)

C. The "true judgment" of Christ in contrast to that of the "judgment according to the flesh" - vs. 13-20

1. The Pharisees immediately respond to discredit Him with *non-compliance with judicial witnesses* - vs. 13

This was likely an attempt to pit Jesus against Himself because of His statements in John 5:31 that His testimony (official testimony) is not considered as "true" if He only bore witness of Himself - but He went on to claim the witness of John the Baptist, miracles (His works), the Father and the Scriptures

- a. They make the assertion that since He is "bearing witness" of Himself then His witness cannot be true - this was not totally correct when it came to the truth - in an official, judicial setting it was demanded there be at least two witnesses to validate a claim - but this did not assure that the claim must be false, just that another witnesses was not found or would not come forward to validate, and so it could not be accepted officially as true
- b. Such witnesses were required in human courts and official decisions/conclusions because there was the expected influence of lies, deception and misrepresentations because of sin - Jesus, as the Light, was above this (though He complied in chapter 5 and will again in this context) - it is incredible to realize that light bears witness to itself except before the blind

2. Their "judgment" was based solely "in the flesh" and nothing "in the flesh" has the ability to truly, fully, and rightly judge that which is spiritual - vs. 14-15

Policies and procedures that scrutinize are needed most of the time when dealing with the things of this life that focus on this side of eternity - but they cannot fully guarantee anything, for only omniscience can do that - there are many competing faiths (religious, philosophical and secular) but only one can be correct/true

- a. This is the issue all humanity and its institutions face - they may be "experts" (geniuses) when it comes to the things of this world (the physical realm, the world order and philosophies), but none can speak with any level of experience when it comes to the realm of God and the spiritual
- b. Since Jesus was more than "just man," even if He was the only one bearing witness of Himself it would still be true - just because something cannot be formally proven does not guarantee it is not true (though formal (and judicial) processes were usually designed to seriously consider what should be considered)
- c. The core reason Jesus knows His witness (even of Himself) is true is because He has lived it all (from eternity past, as stressed in the beginning of this Gospel), but these that are challenging His witness do not know where He came from and where He is going - compare this to John 9:24-34 where the healed blind man offers (in amazement) a counterpoint to these leaders
- d. Jesus points out their fundamental difference (and their flaw) - they can only "judge according to the flesh" (only by what they could discern and see in their limitations and biases) while He "judges no one" (in the manner they do)

These "judges" had already demonstrated that they would not believe or accept Him and His testimony.. no matter what

Such judgment (and even discernment) is instinctive and is often guilty of blinding objective judgment - the "flesh" is a blinding influence keeping self in the way of honest assessments

- e. Their judgment was based on their own "flesh" (including its corrupted focus and other influences) as well as, simply put, by just what they can see - they judged on what they could easily see (appearance) without having sought the witness of what Jesus said/taught
- f. These Pharisees had made an initial, formal judgment in verse 13 concluding, immediately, that His testimony was not true
- g. Jesus, on His own, truly judged no man (not just judging in the same manner as they did, but also truly not judging (as in a definite, final decision with pronouncement) for, as He is about to clarify, "it is not I alone in it" (judgment) in verse 16 (whenever He judges)

### 3. The lawful, true judgment of Jesus (in contrast to the "flesh-biased" judgment of the self-righteous) - vs. 16-20

It is important to note part of the underlying issue - the Pharisees were judging of their own opinion/authority, but the goal was to have it so those "judged" were judged by God and His Law - we are also too apt to see God's Word as support for our condemning judgment when we are always to see it that only God can judge judicially/finally

- a. Jesus had not come (in His first coming) to judge/condemn the world (John 3:17), but His presence and His teaching (and mission) would prove to be judgmental (see John 9:39) and would serve as the ultimate, pivotal point of all future (final, eschatological) judgment
- b. Yet, even if Jesus would judge, His judgment, in contrast to theirs, is "true" (genuine, legitimate), and so fully accurate/correct - for it is not just His judgment, but the Father's also
- c. "In your Law it has been written..." might seem disrespectful to the Law until we consider that the Law was written for them, not for God and so not for Jesus (God incarnate) - this does not mean that He was not under the Law and that He was not out to keep/fulfill it all, for He was
- d. Under the Law, Jesus once again makes it clear He meets this requirement (of at least two witnesses), and realizing who these were, He exceeds it! - we can see though, that it was not justice or righteousness that was being sought by these men, for the Law was only utilized to fit their nefarious purposes

It should strike us as a fearful thing to be those self-deceived in seeking after judgments/conclusions that agree with us - we must be correctable (always) by the truth (and so must be genuinely seeking it)

- e. It is clear that they would not acknowledge His witnesses (Himself and His Father) because they were not after the truth (true, accurate judgment)
- f. There were witnesses, they were just not believed because they did not fit their agenda
- g. When they ask "Where is your Father?" they unknowingly reveal the core issue - they could not perceive what/who was before them - Jesus' answer would no doubt be unconvincing and would seem self-serving to them (which would be the case if it were just a man before them), but it was not - Jesus reveals the issue in that they do not "know" Him or the Father - the word for "know" is "οἶδατε" (from εἰδῶ, to see/perceive and so to come to know by such sight)
- h. We can safely conclude from verse 19 that to know Christ is to know the Father - see II Cor. 4:6
- i. To be without such perception (which is only given and enabled by God's grace) is fatal
- j. Even though His teaching in a very public place (the "treasury") was so contradictory to that of the spiritual authorities, no one arrested Him (seized Him) - though there was such a plot, it could not be done "because His hour had not yet come"

This lack of knowing will lead to many other evils - see John 15:18-24; 16:1-3 contrasted with John 17:3

Life is not dictated by the will of people but by God's - so we do not look on life as being controlled by the "powerful" but by the hand of God

### D. "You will die in your sins, unless..." - vs. 21-24

#### 1. A futile seeking after the Messiah after the Messiah has been rejected - vs. 21-22

Truth and purpose seekers will often feel noble in their categorization as such, but so many will continue seeking even after having been introduced to the true truth and life purpose, but it was not in the form/substance of what they sought, so it is soundly rejected and the search continues

- a. Jesus again says He will "go away" - He will do so (in His own death) of His own volition, for it will not be something forced upon Him - they, no doubt, longed for Him to be gone/go away
- b. When Jesus tells them "you will seek Me," it is in the sense of "Me" as Messiah, but since He has been rejected as such, they will never (cannot) find Him
- c. Because they had the true Messiah (Anointed One) before them, heard Him, saw all His evidences and still rejected Him, they have only one destiny coming - they would "die in your sin" (the singular, categorical sin of **disbelief** which is the source of all other sins)
- d. As such, they would die unpardoned, unjustified, not redeemed and so eternally condemned; for there is/was only one answer for sin(s) and it was rejected/refused/disbelieved
- e. The "this side of eternity" result would be the hopelessness and overbearing disappointment that comes with unfulfilled hope or a "hope" that fails them
- f. Where He was going to end up (after His ascension) these self-righteous unbelievers would not be able to be where He was going - these statements were dreadful, but to those rejecting Christ there is no reverential, and so motivating fear
- g. The assumption of the Pharisees was that He would kill Himself - to a degree they were on the right track (that Jesus meant death and not a change in geographical location) - they would die in sin(s) and could then NEVER go where He would be - the finality of such an end and the warnings that come before it cannot be stressed hard enough

One of the core results of disbelief is confident disregard of warnings leading to a confident defiance until death - note I Peter 1:13-19

2. The reason all of this was true and that they could not come where He was going was a difference in their natures (which cannot be changed by man, only by God) - vs. 23-24

All of us are, at birth, "of this world" which is why rebirth (John 3:3) is required

Each of us is "of" something because we are all "from" something - we cannot change where we are from and, though we might try to disguise or reform what we are "of" (our true nature) we cannot change what we are - this is why Jesus will point them to the only nature-changing power - belief (in Him, that "I am")

Death is setup here and elsewhere in Scripture as the point of demarcation of the finality of one's eternal destiny- true belief must occur during this life

And if this is truly believed, wouldn't we expect it to change how they think/live?

- a. The fundamental reason they could not go where He was going was their "of this earthness" and this world (κόσμος, the order, structure, and so the priorities and purposes of this sin-cursed world) which is characterized and fully infected with sin (unholiness, temporal values, aspirations limited by the futility and limitations of this world under the influence of sin)
- b. They are, in being "of this world" then "from below" versus Jesus being "from above" (beyond this world) and in being so, He was not seeking or living for this world - to be "from below" just referenced this world and not "Hell" (though that is where this world is going)
- c. Their mocking/flippant response (in verse 22) evidenced their nature - as described by Doddridge, "...as if our Lord had said, 'It very ill becomes you to trifle and amuse yourselves with such silly and spiteful turns, when your life, even the life of your souls, is at stake; and to talk of my killing myself, when, by your unbelief and impenitency, you are plunging yourselves into eternal death!' Thus do those passages in our Lord's discourses, which to a careless reader might seem flat tautologies, appear, on an attentive review, to be animated with the most penetrating spirit, and to be full of divine dignity."
- d. Because of their state of sin (ultimately), they were destined to "die in your sins" (now the plural "sins") - this demonstrates the general truth that the state of sin (being of this world) naturally leads to a life of sins - sin ends in death... eternal death
- e. The ONLY hope (the "unless" as in the exception to this absolute rule) is to "believe that I am," indicating more than just that He was/is the promised Messiah, but that He is God incarnate and in so being, the only one deserving and getting our complete trust (entrusting of ourselves to Him, evidenced in a life for Him)

E. "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I Am" - vs. 25-30

1. "You, who are you?" - Jesus is again challenged as being a *nobody* - vs. 25-27

As if in asking "you are who, or what?" - this was important to know since such a directed belief was the only way, according to Jesus, that one would not die in their sins

Verse 25 has been discussed a great deal amongst language scholars because of the difficulty in the wording - the answer we've settled on is the most basic (trying to avoid adding meaning to any of the words)

Jesus points out the priority that usurps the pursuit of correcting the opposition - "He who sent me is true" regardless of what the world will say/conclude, so Jesus will stay "on point"

It is still seen in our day that many fail to realize the magnitude of the Bible being the Word of God (and so its weightiness is lessened)

- a. We believe that Jesus, when using the phrase in verse 24, "... unless you believe that I am..." was ultimately referencing what is called the "tetragrammaton" (the formal name/reference to God) - these Pharisees may have thought, in their mocking response, to have Him finish His answer... as if asking "so, who are you!?"
- b. His answer back states plainly that He is what He has been saying He is from the beginning- this points the issue back to them not to His avoidance of the question - He had been telling them (and showing them ) who/what He really was but they were either blind to it or were disbelieving/rejecting His declarations - this is a good example of the issue being the difficulty in accepting His message
- c. Jesus goes on to make it clear that there was far more that He could say about them which would be "judgmental" (and in their case then condemning), but Jesus also demonstrates here the value and need of staying "on message" and not allowing the condescending, mocking distractions of His opponents to steer the discussions away from the needed truth
- d. So even though He still did not have the backing of the religious authorities (instead their disapproval and disdain), He was unshakable from His God-given (of the Father) objective to "declare to the world what I have heard from Him" - this also then includes the reality that His judgments (conclusions) of them are true, being from the Father - note, this does not mean He will not continue (later on) to say things "concerning them" and "judging" them
- e. Verse 27 demonstrates again their lack of perception in that all He had been saying ("He who sent me") was in reference to God the Father - there can also be the sense that John was clarifying that even if they knew He referenced being sent by the Father, they did not sense the full impact that everything He said to them was "of the Father"

2. The "lifting up of the Son of Man" will be the pivotal point of proof that He does the will of God - vs. 28-30

Jesus uses the phrase "lifted up" in reference to His crucifixion (as in John 3:14 and 12:32-34)

There were some in this group that did and would believe

- a. Jesus had already told this group that they would die in their sins, so how could it be that they will "know I am He" when they crucify Him?
- b. The meaning is that when they have done this all important act (crucifying Him), it will be (not necessarily at the moment they do it) the evidence of evidences that He was who He said He was in His complete fulfillment (in all He did) of the will of God - whenever they come to finally "know" Him for who He is, it will (for unbelievers) be too late



This would be a good example of the reality that just because someone knows something, does not mean they trust (have faith in) it

Those that would truly believe and become true disciples would be few at the start and would be seen for who they are (those beyond the verses immediately about to be discussed)

The only moment Jesus would be left alone was one at the height of His obedience when "forsaken" by the Father when He (Jesus) bore our sins upon Himself - Mt. 27:46

c. It is tempting to try to explain away Jesus saying "then you will know that I am He" that it would only be in reference to some of them since it looks as though all or the majority of these did not seem to think this way - but if we take this at face value, it would not necessarily be a matter of faith/belief, just a matter of "knowing," demonstrating the degree of their defiance against the ultimate of proofs - compare to Rom. 1:18-21

d. As seen later, some would come to know Him for who/what He was and would believe and follow Him - it would also be clear that Jesus was completely compliant and in harmony with every detail of God's will (in obedience to the Law as the perfect sacrifice, and for believers in Christ's example of how all He did was submissive to the Father)

e. Jesus was not alone in His ministry, which is one reason why popular acceptance/support was never a part of His purpose and motivation - though all others would forsake Him and leave Him alone, the Father would not and as such, Jesus always would do what was pleasing to Him (versus that of trying to please people) - this was especially focused on what Jesus said/taught as the Father taught (which also directly contrasts popular teaching and thought) - note 16:32

f. Hearing this, "many came to believe in Him" though this belief (faith) would be tested

#### XIV. The Overriding Importance of Spiritual Descendancy Above All Others - 8:31-59

A. This next section (continuing from what was just detailed by John) demonstrates a significant insight into the difference between true faith and false faith and its distinguisher being true truth versus false "truth"

1. Everyone believes (trusts) in some type of "truth" even if their truth is that there is not absolute, objective "truth" - such "truth" dictates how we look at everything and how we live our lives

2. The conclusion Jesus will describe is one that would not normally be considered as key

This revelation will bring about a furious response (ending of this chapter) where those hearing pick up stones with intent to stone Him

a. What one believes/trusts (considering only the two main categories of the real truth (of God) and all others which cannot be true if they are contradictory to God's) is controlled by one's father

b. If God is not our father we cannot, and so will not ever know the truth and will be deluded by the only other "father" (that being the "Devil")

B. Truth leading to true freedom from the slavery that comes with sin - vs. 31-37

1. Verse 31 addresses specifically the "Jews who had believed in Him" but leads to questions as to how this could be truly those He was speaking to when in moments they are opposing Him - vs. 31-32

Many that believe that the "believing" ones were not the ones speaking in verse 33 make many good points to back up their case, only the plain, normal handling of the text

a. Many look to assume that there was a mixture of believers and unbelievers in this group, but John repeats twice the reality that many believed and then that Jesus is now addressing specifically these that believed - it must be realized that not all "faith" is saving faith

b. Jesus is directly dealing with the reality of "fickle faith" and the real evidence of true faith being that of "abiding" (continuing) "in My word," for "Ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μείνητε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ" **IF** you remain (stay with) in my word, then you prove to truly be my disciples (learners, followers)

c. True discipleship is proven as genuine in its life-long longevity and the result being a "knowing the truth" (as in reality, the way things really are and why and where it is all headed)

True discipleship is lifelong because a true disciple is "all in" - see Luke 14:26-33

d. Knowing the truth of God/Christ, firmly founded and dependent upon the words of Christ (as from the Father), results in freedom from slavery - this "knowing" is more than intellectual acquaintance or verbal affirmation/assent, it is understanding and directs life/living resulting in actual (real/true) "freedom"

Freedom of the will is an oft debated concept, but the truest freed will is that in Christ, for all other "willing" is bound to the dictates of sin which cannot do as it pleases since it is in opposition to God (the omnipotent one)

e. "Truth only can set the mind free from its bondage under ignorance and prejudice and evil habit. If the Light of the world shines into the dark places of the heart, the chains erewhile misunderstood will not only become visible, but will be broken." Pulpit Commentary

2. The natural state of "slavery to sin" and the emancipation that comes in Christ - vs. 33-37

Notice that Jesus does not "ease-up" when there are the sprouts of faith in those listening, for He clearly was not seeking those less than genuine but only "loyal to the end" followers

a. As is common to mankind, those listening (who shortly before were believing) now take issue with the idea that they were in need of being freed from slavery - this is a sad reality to face, that those who show interest and initial faith take issue when further truth is revealed

b. They, referencing their being of the lineage of Abraham have not ever been (themselves) enslaved to anyone - slavery to sin always results in blindness to its enslaving control - the master of sin demands a retaliatory response in its subjects against the truth (even the truth that it is a controlling master) - if they were including their history as a people, they were clearly, deliberately leaving out their slavery to Egypt and Babylon

c. Jesus clarifies the core issue of slavery being that to sin, evidenced in "practicing" it

The word behind “commits” is a present active participle, describing a continuous habit or practice (way of life)

Note John 3:18-21 where one “doing the truth” demonstrates their love of “the light” while here the one doing “the sin” evidences their slavery

The slave would be dependent on another for release - Paul builds on a similar analogy when he deals with the adoption process that brings us into God’s family - read Rom. 8:12-17

It was not uncommon for many Jews to think themselves secure before God simply by their ancestral relation to Abraham (as if just being “born lucky”)

It desires to stay blind (unaware of reality)

Note Romans 2:28-29 as to, of the Jews, which were truly “Jews”

The word for “no place” (χωρεῖ) also pictures advancement/progress - the word/teachings of Christ were not gaining any headway (making no progress) in them (evidenced mainly in their disbelief, being unconvinced and unconvincible)

This is somewhat analogous to what Jesus was revealing to these Jewish leaders - they over-assumed the impact of their physical relation to Abraham and under-assumed their spiritual relation to God or the Devil

We must remember that these arguing back at Jesus are ones that just before evidenced belief - this is another example of partial belief (as it a step in the right direction) but upon new discovery they turn back, yet still forcefully arguing for their legitimacy - this is more prevalent in “Christianity” than most would admit

- d. Paul stresses this reality also in Romans 6:6-23 - anyone can claim “freedom” of any sort, but the reality of their situation is seen in how they live, what they do, who/what they serve - serving self is slavery to sin, for “self” is not in any way a benevolent, morally upright master
- e. There is no question of this being the case as made clear in Jesus’ use of “truly, truly” - the situation here being described is made clear in the present tense (literally “do sin”) and here it has the definite article (“the sin”) - the one continuing in the doing of the sin (it is who/what they are), and they continue in it without seeking/desiring release (freedom) - we must not confuse the desire to sin with the desire to be free from the consequences of sin - most come to the point where they long for “freedom,” but it is not freedom from the sin (sinning) they love (just to be free of the unavoidable, costly results and the threat of such)
- f. Comparing positions, Jesus reminds them of the differences in status - the slave has no family rights and remains in slavery, while the son was born as family and will always be such - the slave can be sold off by his/her master - the son of the household had the power to free the slave (the offer of liberty) - to reject the Son is to reject the only means to freedom
- g. Jesus is the true “Son” and if this son sets them free they will actually (truly) be free (actual liberty versus the appearance and lip-service of freedom that is not real) - following where we know this concept will end (as regards the Gospel) is that the Son Himself will be the singular source of freedom from sin (and its final, eternal results) and to bring such into the family as children of God
- h. One of the evident issues demonstrated in this context is the unawareness of being slaves to sin - part of its allurements (oddly enough) is its deception and this playing off of “the flesh” and how it senses and concludes norms (“natural” senses)
- i. There was (and is) more to one’s state/standing in life than their physical ancestry - Jesus knows these very religious, traditional Jews are the “offspring” of Abraham physically, but the far greater quality of Abraham they ought to have is the same faith
- j. Jesus makes it clear where the contradiction actually resides... on the inside (because His “word has no place in you” (there is no room or welcome of it) evidenced in their seeking to kill Him) - one of the evidences of being a child of the Devil is the aggressively angry reaction to the presentation of the truth, though it may not kill, there is a desire to have the source of it removed permanently - remember their motive was revealed in John 5:44

### C. Spiritual descendency evidenced in the “doing” - vs. 38-47

1. It is typical to find personal identity in associations with the family and upbringing we all have had

a. Whether we like it or not (or realize it or not) we will be affected with the genetics, philosophy and the results of the day-to-day influences we’ve had within our families

b. This can be unlearned and other influences will come in to take over as the predominate worldview controllers in our lives - but none of us can escape the nature we were born with - imaging, though, finding out that you were not actually “of” the family line you always thought you were (your whole life being a type of lie (deception))

2. Jesus reiterates where His teaching comes from and that their “doings” were from their “father” - vs. 38-41

a. Jesus now narrows the discussion to the core issue (not just identifying or being “related” to something “on paper,” but actually being someone versus just claiming a title)

b. Jesus spoke and lived what was truly divine (of the Father) as these also “do what you have heard from your father” - their life (living, priorities, drives, goals, day-to-day actions) evidenced it

c. His audience reacts again, reiterating their being Abraham’s children - if, though, they were truly Abraham’s children (physically and in faith), Jesus clarifies that they would be doing the same “works” he did - so if they are not Abraham’s children they are someone else’s children (so in a sense they could be considered “illegitimate”)

d. Abraham’s “works” were those of trust (all throughout life entrusting his life, family, home and so demonstrated obedience, selfless sacrifice) - Abraham was the “friend of God” in contrast to these claiming him as their father (as though they were carrying-on his legacy)

e. In contrast, these Jews were out to kill Jesus, and He being the one who told them the truth - this was nothing like Abraham (who was famous for his demonstrations of faith/trust)

f. Abraham heard from God (as these were now hearing via Jesus) - Abraham submissively believed and then obeyed while these arrogantly resisted and plotted against Him

Misdirected confidence has unavoidable, negative consequences in cases like these. They were sure of their "read" and so reactionary to challenge.

There is a type of irresponsible laziness seen here where they take each instance independent of all the other miracles and teachings of Jesus

They knew they did not "worship" other gods and were certainly not a mixed race as the Samaritans - they claim the highest father possible, God, but their claims were not backed-up by their lives/deeds

The outward appearance does not always reveal the inner reality - for whatever reason they believed they could follow the logistics of their "faith" while being someone different (in reality) on the inside

Their nature is revealed here in their inability, their inability to recognize Him, love Him and understand Him - true evangelism looks for those who demonstrate they do hear Him and love Him

It would serve us well for us to recognize the events all around us (and the ones we are wishing) to be from God directly for that time and in His eternal purpose - this adds a weightiness (of value and so sobriety) to everyday life

They kept on hearing Him speak but they could not understand what He meant in His message - they just didn't "get it"

Practically speaking, there is in us an unconscious sense that can ward off focusing on what we are determined not to hear

Since the devil's nature is their nature, what they desire will seem normal and even right to them - evils of all sorts can be viewed even in religious, moral light by those driven by their inward desires/purposes/wishes

- g. These Jews were confident in their spiritual standing because of their connection to Abraham physically - yet, as Jesus goes on to point out, if they were truly of God (as Abraham was, evidenced in his obedient faith), how could they reject God's Son and His message? - it is common for all people to base their spiritual standing before God in their religious/philosophical (positional) standing, and yet without taking much care to be sure it was in actual (practical/living) harmony with God's revealed Word
- h. The critical phrase in verse 40, "... a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God..." demonstrates why it was so wrong - we can see from the human standpoint how they would have reacted to Jesus, and had it only been this instance and without any miracles, it would seem reasonable; but there were so many other evidences that should have driven these to look into Jesus further (they "wrote Him off" too quickly)
- i. So if they were truly Abraham's children (wording intending to indicate one who would have the characteristic and nature of their father) he clearly he did not seek to kill God's messengers
- j. When Jesus reiterates their consistency (in their works) with their father, the Jews knew He was meaning someone other than Abraham and God - their response "We were not born of fornication" was more in line with their spiritual standing as not being those given to idolatry - they were idolatrous in the sense they worshiped and served (and promoted) a version of God that they and those before them had formulated/developed over time
- k. These Jews look to take confidence in their lack of any outward sign of idolatry, and since they have the historical tradition and practices of God's people, they say they are clearly God's children and that He is their only father (as opposed to having an illegitimate (birth) father and in being in the family of another father) - see Mt. 23:13-36

### 3. The results of being "of the Devil" (his nature) - vs. 42-47

- a. Jesus makes the distinctions clearer as to who really are the children of God - primarily there is a recognition of and a love for His son, Jesus - there is no middle ground, for one doesn't "kinda" know and "kinda" love Him, for one either knows or doesn't know (truly) as well as love (for what might be put forward as partial "love" is more likely a tolerance of (holding back the animosity that actually dwells within) - note John 15:23-25 & I Cor. 16:22
- b. If they were "of God" they would love Him since He came directly from God (a reference to His pre-existence) - note the way Jesus then draws a direct connection to that very moment and place - "I came from God and I am Here" - every event, discussion and crossing of paths was directed of God (God had Him there, at that moment to be interacting as He was)
- c. Jesus was not a false prophet who was driven of His own purpose - this entire mission (in every detail) was directly from the Father - so how could Jesus ever contemplate compromising His mission and word? We need to see our calling like this; the responsibilities, the message and the purposes are not ours to define, neglect or compromise (even for a sense of peace with others) - note also I John 5:1-13
- d. Jesus uses a rhetorical question, as in asking "Why can't you understand what I am saying?" almost as though He was speaking a different language (which in a sense He was, since it was not just the meanings of the words, but also their inwardly understanding them in light of a Godly context, as from God directly) - they could only see Him as a man (like themselves)
- e. So they could not understand (truly comprehend) Him because "you cannot hear my word," not just as if their ears didn't function, but they could not bear to hear Him (the truth being so overwhelmingly offensive and even frightful (and in opposition to their nature))
- f. And then Jesus states what He has been inferring, that He, being "of God" is so different and not understandable (not acceptable) to them because they are "of the devil" - Jesus deals with the devil as a person and not an entity or a fictional character
- g. Since these are (by nature) the devil's children, they will do (because they "will to do") the same desires (lusts) that drive him - he is driven by the desire for murder (and everything associated with murder) as well as driven by lying
- h. The devil was a murderer "from the beginning" (his part in death coming upon mankind in swaying Eve to his own way of looking at things, his own drive for independence and self-rule) - when our first parents willed to do his will, death came upon all mankind (Rom. 5:12)
- i. This murderous desire was fueled by his own lying character (to self and so to others)

We can see this with others who live in the same world, speak the same language and see the same things we do, but interpret them ("read" them) in a fundamentally different way

Such an ingrained delusion has no hope but the truth of Christ, and that being the only way any of these could ever be set free (for they are enslaved, naturally, to their own blinded nature)

Those who do not believe Jesus, in Him and His word, do so because of their relationship with their father, the devil - as extreme as this sound, it is actually the most basic, fundamental answer as to why some do not believe

It is clear from this context and previous one that they thought He sinned and had sinned but now when confronted to actually prove it (get Him officially convicted before God) they are silent

This brings us back again to why people are the way they are - they will not, cannot hear and understand because of their nature, so our focus is to be directed at the need for a change in nature, rebirth, rather than possible life improvement as though the words of Jesus were intended to make life better

It is common to see such name-calling when a discussion turns emotional and frustration rules to moment- it is unproductive and reactionary lending nothing useful to working (legitimately) through a disagreement

One way the Father is highly honored is in the telling of and dealing in the truth - to mock and treat with disrespect the telling of the truth is not only dishonoring of the messenger but of God Himself - this is one reason we ought to take great caution in mocking a concept/ message that disagrees with us or makes us uncomfortable

It is always a pitfall to be controlled by the praise of people and the ongoing pursuit of it

- j. His nature is one that does not, cannot "stand in the truth" (and so cannot "stand" the truth) - it is opposite to his nature because there is "no truth in him" - this doesn't mean he and his children cannot have a sense of reality, but that they cannot see it all for what it really is
- k. Note that the word for "stand" (vs. 44) is the word for "abide" or "remain," which also gives us the sense that one may associate with it, but not for long - taken at face value, the devil is driven by lies and has no sense of the truth as the truth (as his children will also see the true truth as being some form of fiction or even a type of foolish delusion needing "help")
- l. The devil is his "own person" (in contrast to Jesus never speaking or acting "of His own"), and so when the devil speak he speaks lies, because he must speak of his own nature/character (lies are what he is, thinks and seeks) in opposition to the truth (reality) - he, of his nature, cannot see truth, because he is a liar (lying to himself) and was the "father of lies" (lies being created by him, he is their inventor, where lying comes from)
- m. This is their (these Jewish religious leaders) father - so Jesus has revealed to them the real (true) reason they cannot hear and understand Him - He tells them the truth (vs. 45) and so, because of their nature, they do not believe Him - these particular Jews, would then also, when they speak, speak from their nature, and even though they deal specifically with religious topics/subjects, they will also end up being liars - it is actually devilish not to believe the truth (a truth that demonstrates the seriousness of disbelief in God's Word)
- n. Note that disbelief will compound itself as seen in II Thes. 2:9-12
- o. Jesus tells the truth because it is His nature (in contrast to the devil) - He cannot lie or tell any type of untruth in any degree, for all and every detailed thing He says is pure truth
- p. Jesus boldly now challenges them with a question (again, He is not backing-off or showing the least of intimidation), asking them which of them (anyone of them) is or can "convict" Him of sin (He does not use the proper article before "sin" so it is a broad handling of sin, as in any sin, any type of sin) - so if Jesus is free of sin, He could not speak lies or errors (for sin and lies (untruth) are directly connected) - lies are sin but one sins (ultimately) because of lies (inward and from without) believing what is false and acting on it) - note Heb. 4:15
- q. Their reply would not be an attempt to convict of any sin at all, just to call Him a "Samaritan" and accuse Him of having a demon (for those who seek to avoid confrontations with the truth (especially of Christ and His word) will resort to some claim of insanity (mental disorder, for how could it be anything else since it does not fit with common, acceptable thought?))
- r. Simply put, Jesus concludes this line of thought with the reality that those "of God" hear His words (naturally, because it is who/what they are) just as those who do not "hear" them are so because they are not "of God" - vs. 47

#### D. The way to avoid true death - vs. 48-59

##### 1. The dishonor of resulting to name-calling - vs. 48-50

- a. The Jews react by calling Him a "Samaritan" and one having a demon - the Samaritans were a "mixed breed" of Jews and Gentiles and were despised by the Jews at large (and the despising was mostly mutual) - this was likely motivated by His descriptions of their true parentage
- b. Their accusation of Him having a demon was more severe, for demons were liars out to do the bidding of their master (and these Jews had more in common with demons than they realized)
- c. Jesus does not respond regarding the use of "Samaritan" for to have done so would have played into their belittling use of it (as though it was truly a "put down" to not only be called one but to be one) - Jesus was no "racist" (as the term is used today) - His concern and message was focused on one's spiritual descendency not their physical
- d. But He simply denounces having a demon and redirects the point back to what was actually happening... He was truly honoring the Father and they were dishonoring Him in the process
- e. Jesus also redirects the focus back to the to judge of actual "glory" - typically, when there is a reaction like this in a discussion, it is related to pride and pride based on the perception of the need to protect one's own perceived "glory"
- f. Jesus was genuinely not concerned in defending or promoting His own glory to them since God is the one fully deserving the glory and He is the one who is "seeking" the glory of Jesus - He (the Father) is the true judge over all - so why would Jesus be overcome with concern that these Jewish leaders would not account Him any glory?

Jesus, in seeking only the glory for and from "the judge" demonstrates there are other pursuits of glory that are founded on falsities or pseudo glories because they will not stand the scrutiny of the Judge

Many are hesitant to take Jesus' words at face value mainly because they see the terms "life" and "death" only as it is seen this side of eternity ("the age") - physical death is immaterial when compared to eternal death (which, by the lost, is seen/beheld forever)

Believers will not see death because they will always see life (even physical death is a step into life)

Jesus and His teaching is associated as coming from a demon - from their vantage point it would seem like a fair conclusion (it seeming so absurd) yet it was truth (even though it came across as unbelievable)

Jesus simply is stating the truth, though it was overwhelmingly profound, is thought to have been putting down Abraham and the Prophets - though, as about to be explained, Abraham rejoiced at this time coming

Jesus is not playing word games with these people - the confounding, incredible aspect of this situation wasn't the claims of Jesus, it was their rejection of them - Jesus makes this clear, for how could the one they call "God" be glorifying Him and they not see/know it?

Only that which is genuinely associated with God and His glory is truly "glorious" (worthy of praise and worthy of admiration)

- g. Note that often people will use dispersions against a person's mental state to avoid dealing with the real issue, and that of a moral or character issue - here, though, the Jews also associate Him with a demon which is their way of responding to His identifying their father as the devil
- h. One of the key differences between Jesus and the Jews was \_\_\_\_\_ motive \_\_\_\_\_ - Jesus was completely motivated for the glory of God (the glory that goes to Him and so the glory that the Father would give) - "Unlike others, he pursues only the glory that comes from God. What others think is immaterial; God's approval is everything, for *he is the judge* (cf. 1 Cor. 4:2-5)." Carson

## 2. The qualifying characteristic of never seeing death - vs. 51

- a. Jesus immediately brings the conversation back on the needed subject of death and life - their reactive interruptions were dismissed with the revealing of the underlying difference between their stance and His - He was seeking God's glory and they were seeking theirs
- b. The reason that this was so vital (their origins, natures and their response then to Jesus) was because it dealt with the most important aspect to them... life - for, as Jesus emphatically states, truly, truly (most assuredly) that anyone who "keeps" (τηρέω - guard, watch over, not just to protect it from perversion, but to guard it as a \_\_\_\_\_ priority \_\_\_\_\_ in life, and so obey and heed it) "will never see death" ("θάνατον οὐ μὴ θεωρήσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα" - death, no not ever behold to the age (forever)) - death, actual death, will never be seen by these - Jn. 3:16, 5:24, 6:50
- c. The last phrase has also been translated by some as "he will not see death forever" - even with the physical side of death this is true, for our bodies will be resurrected - for the believers (keepers of Jesus' word) will "pass on" but to life while all others truly die, in the fullest sense of the concept - they will die physically and \_\_\_\_\_ continue \_\_\_\_\_ to die eternally

## 3. 'Whom do you make Yourself out to be?' - vs. 52-55 (we ought to ask "Who do we think we are?")

- a. The Jews believe their instinctive, reactionary response to Jesus is now further justified when He stated that those keeping His word would not see (experience) death - they use the word "taste" instead of "see" and their reaction is to the idea of physical death - note that Jesus, though using what might have seemed to be obscure wording, does not go on to explain - those that will need to understand (in faith) will come to understand
- b. In the account of the "unpardonable sin" ("blaspheming the Holy Spirit"), it was strongly similar to what we see here - attributing to the devil the words and works of God (Mt. 12:24-32)
- c. Their question of contrasting "greatness" would also seem reasonable to them since they figure that since Abraham died and the prophets, then Jesus must be promoting Himself better than they were (for if what He said was true, why did they die?) - so the question, demanding an explanation of who exactly does He think He is?
- d. The actual problem was in their not knowing who He was because they did not truly know God - this (not actually knowing God) ought to be the \_\_\_\_\_ fear \_\_\_\_\_ of the self-promoting religious!
- e. Rather than making this about any form of self-promotion (and so self-defense), Jesus reiterates (as in 5:31) that just like the issue with bearing witness of Himself (alone), so also glorifying self, such "glory" is nothing - this is a true statement at all times, that any self-glory is in actuality "οὐδέν" (nothing at all) and so empty (just words or thoughts without substantive validity) - note II Cor. 10:17-18
- f. But Jesus, in His genuine selfless humility, makes it clear that the Father (His Father) is glorifying (and will always) Him, this same one that they say "He is our God" - this was the actual issue, for somehow they would have believed Him and accepted (and so kept) Jesus' words if they truly believed God - genuine belief \_\_\_\_\_ always \_\_\_\_\_ results in obedience
- g. The woman at the well in John 4:12 used this argument also, but soon came to believe that He actually was greater than Jacob - her resistance dropped while these continue resisting
- h. If Jesus just "glorified" Himself then it would truly be nothing - this might seem odd to some, but it does point to the reality that there is no other true glory other than that of God's - all else is, of itself, truly nothing (of genuine substantive glory and is at best "glorious" only in appearance)
- i. The same ones calling God their "Father" don't realize it is the Father that glorifies the Son - from Jesus' perspective it would seem odd that they could be missing who He was unless, of course, they were not of God - anyone can claim God as being the one they worship/serve but the reality of it will be seen sooner or later in whether or not they see the actual "glory" of God in the things of God

This was not necessarily an accusation of their being into idolatry, but their worship of God was based upon presumptive thinking, assuming that being identified with the God of Israel and associating with Him did not mean they actually knew Him

- j. They key was in actually “knowing God” as Father - to claim to “know” God is not enough and is a lie if it is not true; many “know of” Him but that is far from knowing Him personally as Jesus did and stressed - if, out of fear of being called a liar, He were to say that He did not know the Father, it would be a lie (regardless of the intent /purpose it was stated)
- k. Jesus called them “liars” to their faces not out of rudeness but out of truth - though it is not often socially accepted, some issues need to be addressed directly because of their seriousness
- l. Jesus also reveals another proof of knowing the Father when He stated, “I do know Him and I keep His word” - the others claimed to know God but were not active in following, obeying and protecting God’s Word (protection from infiltration and distortion because it is God’s Word) - compare with John 8:29, Rom. 5:19, Php. 2:8 where obedience is the outworking of “keeping” God’s Word (rather than just quoting, reading and associating with it)

#### 4. Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ versus their resistance to its actuality - vs. 56-59

note II Tim. 3:1-5 - keeping up the appearance but standing in opposition to its “power” (its substance of truth)

Abraham did laugh (with joy) at the thought of being a father at such an age and he also realized that through this line all the nations of the earth would be blessed - Gen.17:17 and 22:17-18

- a. There have been many that love their own idea of God and His word, but who react to what it really is - this might be hypocrisy with some and determined ignorance in others (for once they have it set in a personally acceptable way, they will not allow challenge)
- b. “Your father Abraham” - Jesus again concedes their physical lineage with Abraham but reiterates the biggest distinction - Abraham “rejoiced” (ἀγαλλιάω - celebrated with exuberance) regarding “My day” and seeing it he rejoiced (the opposite of their resistance)
- c. There is much written and speculated as to what occurrence this is referencing, all the way from first receiving the promise of Isaac and rejoicing in that, to tradition that referenced God showing Abraham all that was to come, including the time of the Messiah
- d. The Jews did not contend against the idea of Abraham knowing and seeing the day of the Messiah (even though Jesus called it “My day”), but could not figure how Jesus (in the past tense that is used here) could have seen Abraham seeing this - their reference to “50 years” was just a round figure an seeming nothing in comparison of 2000 years since Abraham
- e. We do not know for sure how Abraham saw what Jesus states here, but Jesus does tell how He knows what Abraham saw and how he responded - “Truly, truly” again an emphasized, absolute statement of reality, before Abraham came into being, “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμί, “I, I am”) - this was an absolute statement of His eternity and so His oneness/equality with God, as God and so self-existent
- f. These clearly did not realize who they were talking with, but imagine what it would have been like to have been talking with Jesus and knowing He was God, eternal, having always been - it could be also realized how futile it would have been to argue against Him on any point - this reality was a key part of Paul’s beginning encouragement to the Colossians in Col. 1:9-23
- g. Upon hearing Jesus say this, they knew clearly what He meant and so took up stones to stone Him as a blasphemer (which He would have been if this was not true) - Jesus was able to “hide Himself” and leave the Temple area - this was their instinctive, reactionary response to something they could not imagine they could accept

This was one of the times when Jesus directly states what John detailed in John 1:1-3, and was the identified name of God in Ex. 3:14

Realizing this also greatly emphasizes and exalts His example of obedience (for since He did so in every detail, why would we consider anything else as being acceptable?)

“Zeal without knowledge eventually breaks out into a most open madness: and yet the wicked cannot do what they desire.” GBN

#### XV. Healing Physical Blindness to Demonstrate the prevailing Spiritual Blindness - 9:1-41

A. As seen already, when John references a miracle it is for the purpose of focusing on a particular truth - here Jesus will heal a blind man, and because it is done on the Sabbath, it causes a stir and more research (interviewing witnesses)

Spiritual blindness is particularly destructive because it compounds itself by establishing itself as being actual sight and actual sight as (then) undeniable absurd blindness

- 1. Physical blindness would be illustrative of the spiritual blindness evidenced in those that don’t believe in Jesus because they don’t believe Jesus
- 2. This is summed up in verse 39, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” - His “judgment” would be a revealing of those that knew they were blind (to the truth) and would come to see the truth, and those that were confident (self-confident) that they knew it (could “see it”) would be shown to be actually blind to it

B. Work for the night is coming - vs. 1-5

- 1. Shortly after the incident in the Temple (the next day or possibly very soon after) Jesus happens upon a man who had been blind since birth and regularly sat in the Temple area begging - vs. 1-2
  - a. Jesus is wasting no time, even after the attempt on His life - opposition will come (without doubt) to the true work of God from multiple areas (secular, religious, personal)

It is an odd notion to consider the man himself suffering blindness for some sin since he had it since birth - it is true that all physical issues are related somehow to sin in the world, but it cannot be seen just in this light

With us, sin is overpowering and a constant enemy, but in demonstrating not only His merciful kindness but also His omnipotence, Jesus shows how the results of sin can be used to glorify God's works

There are many accounts provided of how people conquered their handicaps, but we ought to be careful to prioritize God's grace in it over the determined will of the one suffering

Some commentators (such as F.F. Bruce) believe that saying the reason for this blindness was to display the works of God only would be an "aspersion on the character of God." But this fails to see the overwhelming worth it was, not only to be healed by the Lord, but to have spiritual blindness removed as well

Thinking on this, considering the verses that proceed it, it would also indicate an effort not to be so bogged down in our theological questions that we never get around to acting on it... the "work"

Note Mt. 5:14-16 where our "good works" serve as light and glorify God

Jesus did not need to use anything and can use anything He chooses, even if it appears to us to hinder more than help

- b. We are not told how it is known that the man was blind "from birth," but this fact could lend to the idea of the actual spiritual blindness of mankind from birth - here we also see a miracle that Jesus initiates on a person not asking for it
- c. The disciples use the opportunity to ask Jesus regarding the reason for the man's blindness - it was common to associate certain maladies with certain sins - we can often draw the same conclusions where we observe certain consequences to certain sins, though this is not universal because we see physical ailments not associated with any particular sin(s)

## 2. The consequence of sin (here blindness) designed to showcase the works of God - vs. 3

- a. Jesus does not deny, in His answer, that there aren't certain consequences to certain sins, but He does demonstrate (enlightening them) to look beyond their limited perspectives regarding sin and sickness/handicaps (to God's purposes in/for them)
- b. His answer does not indicate this man and his parents had no sin, just that this was not the cause (reason) for the blindness - sin is part of why there is blindness, but sin is not a thing or an idea that can overpower God or effectively thwart His purposes in anything
- c. There ought to be a lesson learned in seeing How Jesus approached such ailments/disorders, in not only His not tying them to sins of the person, but compassionately spotlighting the power of God over all such results of the Fall and to prove again He was who He said He was
- d. We must not become like so many in Jesus' day that looked on sicknesses, deformities and handicaps as though they are just God's judgment, rather than first seeking/hoping to see or hear of how God used it to glorify Himself over it
- e. It is important to realize that Jesus' explanation reveals that this man's entire life was in blindness with the purpose to "display" (φανερωθῆ, reveal, make clear) God's works - this reiterates that the true significance in our lives is not so much what we do, or even do for God, as much as what He does with and through us!

## 3. Realize the limited amount of time to do what ought to be done - vs. 4

- a. "Night is coming" which was in reference to His coming death on the cross (which was estimated to be about 6 months after this account) - accounting the shortness of time is to be a motivator to get to the work that must be done! (without delay)
- b. Jesus describes the work as "the works of Him who sent Me" - note He does not call them "My works" as He demonstrates the supreme example of what we are to be, in being like Him; seeking out, understanding and then doing (obeying) what God has given us to do, every day
- c. "Day" was the typical time when work was done and as night approached, there would often be extra effort to get the day's goals finished - Jesus' time was nearing an end as far as His earthly ministry was concerned
- d. Underestimating the importance of good time utilization (for eternal purposes over the temporal) will be more wasteful and disappointing than we can anticipate - too many "now" priorities choke out time/effort in the prioritized opportunities God gives us daily, though His priority scale often does not match the one we are living by

## 4. Jesus is the true light in the world - vs. 5

- a. While in the world (as He was then), He was a light (no Greek article) - His light was and still is essential to see (to see what is what, for what it all really is) - as in Jn. 8:12
- b. Jesus now says this as He is about to remove the blindness of this man - reading this in light of what He had just said ("We must work the works...") and His inclusion of His disciples, we must see that as He was light in the world, so we must also expect to be
- c. Once Jesus was not in the world (physically), it would then fall on those that are His to serve as lights in the world - this light would not be a light of our own ingenuity, intellect or effort, but would be the result of the indwelling Holy Spirit - see Jn. 14:15-21

## C. Healing the blind man - vs. 6-13

### 1. Jesus makes mud and uses it in the healing of the blind man - vs. 6

- a. It is almost always asked why Jesus used saliva with dirt (into mud) to heal - the most honest answer we have is that we do not know; He just did - some attribute it to a type of work on the Sabbath (e.g. making a brick) and others that saliva was considered to have some healing powers
- b. Matthew Poole seems to sum it up sufficiently when he wrote, "He maketh use of no means that had any appearance of natural virtue in it; nay, which was more likely to put out the eyes of one that saw, than to give sight to one that was blind."

## 2. Simple obedience and a dramatic change - vs. 7

It might be, that since this was written so long after the occurrence that John translates it to distinguish which one it was to his readers

- a. Jesus tells the man to go wash it off “in the pool of Siloam” which John believes needs to have its name translated (“Siloam” meaning “sent”) - there seems to be tradition that indicates this stream being acknowledged as being sent (graciously) by God to provide water to then what was known in its result; a “pool”
- b. Jesus could have just healed this man without any activity on the man’s part as He did with Bartimaeus in Mk. 10:46-52, but here he has the man do something, something that would have seemed (likely) odd - it is not definitely the point in this account, but it should be noted that obedience of some sort is typically a result (indicator) of faith
- c. We are not provided more details, but there had to be some level of trust in Jesus to have done this and his obeying Him without question
- d. He “went, washed and came back seeing” - for some reason known only to our Lord, this man and those around him needed to see this happen and he needed to obey - note also the simplicity in the way it is stated that he returned “seeing” - we see no learning phase (adjustment), so as the other miracles, there was more to them than “just healing”
- e. It might have been that the Lord was setting things up for the man to go, return (with Jesus no longer there) so the next events would unfold as they did

The Lord’s miracles were not only demonstrations of power but were each miraculous in the life of the person being healed and those observing - God’s purposes in each matter are more than we can ever anticipate - He not only wastes nothing, He thoroughly uses everything

## 3. The response of the neighbors (those that lived around him on a daily basis) - vs. 8-13

It is common for people (and us) to see people more for what they do and don’t do more than why - Jesus was the supreme example of meeting more than just surface, temporal needs and as will be soon seen, He used this to deal with the man’s spiritual need (his spiritual blindness)

- a. It is in verse 8 that we are told that he was also a beggar, which would have been common for a blind man in his time - his neighbors simply thought of him as the man “who used to sit and beg” - yet now here he was, but from their vantage point, this could not possibly be him since the man in front of them could now see
- b. Since many would conclude (naturally) that blindness was not curable, this man (from reasonable deduction) could not be the man they had come to know
- c. Some concluded it must be someone who looked like him, again not allowing for the possibility he had been cured - it is possible that he did look somewhat different now that he could see (his eyes, his demeanor and ability to look around) - though, when dealing with anything of the Lord, even though it might not seem plausible, we revere Him more in our reliant trust (evidence (typical, predictable) not seen - Heb. 11:1)
- d. As he was insisting “I am the man” they (naturally) question as how he could now see - as with any account like this, we (as the readers) are hoping with anticipation for the credit to get back to Jesus, though his account may not have been as impressive as they might have expected
- e. He recounts the details accurately, and rightfully, so their interest is in the man that healed him rather than the mud or the waters of Siloam
- f. These neighbors were uncertain what to think of it, possibly because it was done on the Sabbath, so they bring him to the Pharisees - their uncertainty how to react was possibly related to the additions the Pharisees and the other spiritual leaders had added to the Scripture

This might seem like a trivial detail, but it is not unusual for us to focus on incidentals (second causes) that God uses more than God Himself being at work

## D. Tradition and commonly accepted regulations are used to dismiss the moral rightness of the miracle - vs. 14-17

### 1. A division is caused by evidence that seems to contradict their view of God - vs. 14-16

There is often too much deference being displayed in dealing with those that demand to have the truth taught and demonstrated to them on their terms - if there is enough compromise, there is then an agreement reached, but at the expense of the truth and when enough of these agreements are made, there is no Gospel left (leaving peace with man but no peace with God)

- a. John now points out that this miracle was done on the Sabbath (just He did in chapter 5)- this becomes the crux of some (of the Pharisees) and their scrutinizing process - yet Jesus clearly knew He was doing this on the Sabbath and how they would react, yet He did not accommodate (defer to) them in this, since it was core to demonstrating their spiritual blindness
- b. Note the inclusion of John in verse 14 of not only the “opening the eyes” but the making of mud (which lends to the speculation as to why Jesus used it in His healing)
- c. As with the neighbors, the man’s account was again clear and to the point, only now when he ends the account he uses the present tense (I see) - sight was the result of all this, for this formerly blind man, but that wouldn’t be enough for many of these (protecting their self-righteousness) men
- d. Because Jesus broke the version of the law that some of these held He could not be doing this “of God” (which should cause us all to be careful not to write-off something of God or His Word that contradicts an erroneous view on our part)
- e. Others of them were perplexed that, if He was a “sinner” how could He do such “signs”? - “signs” being what would normally be considered an indicator He was from God

Their take on the Sabbath was the deceit and not the sign miracle of the Lord done on the Sabbath



The second group look as though there might be some hope in them, but we do not see them standing against the other group - for whatever reason, they were not willing to suffer consequences (publicly) for considering Jesus

Sadly, many seeming battles for the truth are actually more a battle for followers (to one's side) than they are the pursuit of the truth

This serves as a good reminder, that though it looks like the working of God is occurring in groups, it actually comes down to the individual

This is a telling insight into this group to realize they were likely trying to determine how long he was blind versus if he had been blind (as though taking away from the magnitude of the miracle might somehow lessen its impact)

To be "put out of the synagogue" was to be cut off from society and to face the humiliation of being ostracized - even for the seeming "nobodies" there is a fear of humiliation that can drive them to submit to mob induced conclusions

This is a common tactic... claiming to be siding with God while defining disagreement as then being against God (and not the person making the assertion) - these try to hide behind their idea of God while being against God

This is the same mindset/spirit seen in Rom. 1:18, II Thes. 2:10 and I Tim. 4:1-2

f. Notice the approach of the two groups within the divided Pharisees - the first felt no further consideration was needed since He transgressed (sinned) against their traditional view of the Sabbath, yet clearly their take was wrong and was stopping them from considering more the Lord and what He was teaching. The other group could not imagine such a miracle being done if Jesus was truly a sinner

g. It appears as though having a division regarding the miracle caused them to pursue the "case" further (though based on the dialog we're about to see, there was only a focus to get the answer they wanted (a discrediting of Jesus))

2. Even with likely opposition, the (previously) blind man exhibits greater faith in Jesus - vs. 17

a. Still looking for a way out (clearly not seeking the truth), they ask "the blind man" regarding his thoughts about Jesus - it has been noted that it is interesting John still references the man (in this verse) as "the blind man" while these (who see themselves as fully sighted) seek insight into Jesus from him - though their "test" would be one of seeing whose side he was on

b. Something was clearly happening in this man, for rather than offering a safe and vague answer to these (already disputing with each other), he plainly asserts "He is a prophet" - there are at least two situations happening; the Jews internal arguing with each other and fighting against the credibility of Jesus and then the growing faith of the man healed of his blindness

E. The interrogation intensifies in a desperate attempt to discredit the man, miracle, or Jesus - vs. 18-34

1. The Jews first attempt to legitimize their speculation; maybe this was all a hoax - vs. 18-23

a. These Jewish leaders just could not accept that a miracle had actually happened - if the apparent truth isn't acceptable, then the proposed facts or testimonies must not be true (they figure) - it is now clear that these interrogators have decided against Jesus and any that would think of Him as "the Christ"

—b. They call the healed man's parents to come testify since they didn't believe he was actually born blind (either that he was never blind or that he hadn't actually been blind all of his life)

c. The opening questions were not only probing as to validating this man's account (and that of the neighbors), but asking for their input as to how it happened (if indeed it did)

—d. They affirm his blindness from birth and that he was their son, but, out of fear of being indicted of confessing Jesus as the Christ (in any way), they point them back to their son for an answer - as mentioned earlier, the fear of suffering in the "now" can be a dominating and overpowering diversion from openly or even inwardly facing the truth

e. They dared not answer (or even speculate) on how he was healed (though it might be supposed that most, without being under threat, would at least speculate it was miraculous)

f. Again notice that these Jews had "already come to an agreement" regarding Jesus, so they were not at all considering His being the Christ (Messiah) - it may seem obvious in concept (yet not necessarily in practice) that predetermining against the truth will never then reach the truth

2. The "front" of giving glory to God by siding against Jesus - vs. 24

a. There appears to be an attempt to make a case that this man is taking away from the glory of (and to) God in his saying anything nice about Jesus - after all, they say, "We know this man is a sinner" - they make it look as though (or they sincerely believed) they truly were seeking God's glory in the matter and that any glory going to Jesus was sinful

b. Note that defining "glory to God" is not to be subject to our definitions and interpretations - as seen here, some thinking they seek God's glory and encouraging others to agree/affirm can be those opposing God and His actual glory - it can be too easy to come to define God's glory as what seems to be "glorious" to us

3. The challenging situation of trying to stay with the clear facts with those working to avoid them - vs. 25-34

a. These next several verses demonstrate the frustration that arises on both sides when one seeks to just deal with the facts and what "really happened," versus those desperately trying to avoid where they know the "facts" might/will lead them

b. When pressed again to answer as they wanted him to, he states it plainly, that he cannot authoritatively say if Jesus is a "sinner" but he can say with certainty that he was once blind but now could see - essentially saying "you can think through this as many ways as you choose but as regards the man himself, what Jesus did was clear" (even if they feverishly try to make him see it under a different light)

The Pharisees' appeal to him was to be one of the consensus even without really knowing or looking into the accusations (such as is still being done where most are encouraged to join the majority (at the time) with their conclusions of Jesus and God and His Word)

This is common in theological discussions as well where the "victory" is determined in tripping the other up or catching them being inconsistent (in their estimation) more than actually working through to the clear truth

We cannot see the heart of those who might afflict us, so it is important to stay focused on the topic (text, real issue, and the real answer/solution)

This does help (as an example) of how important foundational training/influences can be, for it is the standard by which we will compare most things - these had what they thought was a reliable standard without realizing that even with the credentials of Moses (true as they were), the actual teaching and reason for what Moses gave them had been infiltrated and distorted with self-righteous ends

With a plain thinker, their motives and objective became more apparent in the shock of their not being more impressed with what had taken place - it's hard to be impressed with the working of God when it's not in line with personal opinions or goals

This demonstrates what the work of God's Spirit in someone looks like - even while being pushed to think against Christ it only causes the focus on the revelation that Jesus is the opposite of what His opponents claim

It is still common for us to consider when someone looks to be "unlucky" or unfortunate in their physical or life situation to associate it with their personal responsibility in their own sin - this is presumption - it could be (as seen here) someone placed in very difficult circumstances in order for God to be glorified in it and our disdain of them becomes the worst kind of prejudice (discounting God's purpose in it)

- c. The healed blind man could not honestly say if Jesus was a "sinner" for he had not heard (or seen) of Jesus doing any sin - these religious leaders had apparently unified that Jesus had broken the Sabbath law and now could not accept Him as being of God at all
- d. It should be pictured in our thinking that as this man is talking with them, he is looking at them with healed eyesight and they are looking into his miraculously healed eyes - this demonstrates the powerful blinding that can take place when the point of focus (here, the supposed breaking of the Sabbath) becomes the focus - the religions of man are truly "blinders" designed to guide attention away from what they don't want them to focus on
- e. His answer was still focused and they did not know what they were setting up! - they try to start over again by asking what Jesus did and how He did it - this is not an uncommon tactic, having someone repeat their testimony to find any kind of inconsistency
- f. The man's response can be taken as a point of sarcasm, boldness, or as a sincere curiosity as to whether or not these might actually be reconsidering Jesus - he seems frustrated when he replies that he has already told them and they apparently did not listen, so why would they want to hear it again? Could it be they are considering being His disciples? Even though such interrogations usually are designed as "traps" we should allow the possibility that the interrogator might be inwardly struggling to come to the truth
- g. They react (as we would normally expect) with a positional separation from him (when they say "you are His disciple") while they, as they confidently assert, are disciples of Moses (at least the Moses of their own Making, for as Jesus has already pointed out, Moses wrote of Him and Moses will judge them in light of this (see John 5:45-47))
- h. They seem to forget how often their forefathers resisted Moses, question his authority and that of God's prophets - there is a tendency in most of us to suppose the truth of a matter will just seem obvious to us and that it will have a sense of being naturally easy; but this is not the case with most things in life
- i. These Pharisees did not nor would they recognize His true credentials, "...as for this man, we do not know where He is from." - some in their ranks knew where He was from in the earthly sense (John 7:27), but the "from" here ultimately points to the actual person (the character, heart, drive) more than their earthly credentials
- j. The formerly blind man's response (vs. 30-33) is again bold and honest (not being swayed by the driving influence of these opposers) - he calls it "an amazing thing" that these who have so much authority and knowledge don't know (and apparently did not seem too concerned to know), for how could they disregard or have no motivation to look into this further since this was a first of its kind miracle!?
- k. Even common people know that "God does not hear sinners" (not in a way that would equate to such a miracle) - some point to the magic the Egyptian magicians performed to mimic what Moses had done; but this was no magic trick and a healing of this type had never happened
- l. So, as if in answer to their voiced conclusion that Jesus was "a sinner," this man calculates that Jesus MUST be a "God-fearing" man and one who MUST then be one doing God's will for Him to have been able to perform such a miracle - He MUST be one that God hears
- m. The evidence he points to is that no one (since the beginning of time) has had blindness (especially that like his... from birth) cured - so, if "this man were not from God" there is no way He could do what He had done (and so, "He could do nothing" as is typically the translation)
- n. The response of the Jews extremely unkind when they say "You were born entirely (ὅλος - wholly, completely) in sin" for this was not in reference to "original sin" but was a "not so subtle" reference to his being born blind - it was common (as seen at the start of this chapter) to equate such "birth defects" to particular sins
- o. Using their presumptive conclusion that one born blind must be particularly sinful (thus their use of utterly, entirely), they react as if in astonishment that he, of all people, would seek to teach them - what is unique about this reaction is what it reveals... that they have now conceded the point that he actually was born blind
- p. This also demonstrates that we must be careful not to write-off what someone is saying just because of their situation or that we presume they are "less blessed" than we are - what is stated must be dealt with/handled in its content

- q. Having (in their pride) placed themselves highly above this man, they not only dismiss his statements and testimony, they “put him out” (likely full excommunication) - he could not talk with these religious leaders, plainly, since his motive was not to determine what they wanted him to say (and say it), but to know the truth regarding the one that healed him

F. The blind made to see and the “seeing” made blind - vs. 35-41

- 1. With theological discussions and philosophical debates it is easy for the topic and focus to drift from the most important concepts (or to never be focused on them at all) - here, though, we see one of the core objectives in Jesus’ healing and even for the timing of it

Jesus uses this situation to heal physically and spiritually as well as reveal the truth of the condition of the opposing religious leaders

- a. Jesus priorities were unshakably focused on God’s glory, God’s will and the offering and giving of true life (“...that you might have life” John 20:31)
- b. For many in this account, there was a drive to “save face”, to fight for tradition over truth and to solidify authority by power and not by the truth

- 2. “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” - vs. 35-38

“finding him” are precious words, not just for this man in this account, but realizing the same is done to/for us - He seeks and saves

- a. Jesus “heard that he had been put out” and sought him out - this process is so often what happens in bringing many to Christ; they are “cast out” (rejected, ostracized, shunned) because they will not go with popular thought and “the way it should be”
- b. “Most happy is their state who are cast furthest out of the Church of the wicked (who themselves proudly boast to be of the Church) so that Christ may come nearer to them. “ GBN
- c. Jesus’ question is direct and goes straight to the man’s faith - the question is one of “πιστεύω” (trust, as in entrusting one’s self to and trusting “in” as the source of life’s purpose and where everything is heading) - the name “Son of Man” (or “Son of God”) both refer (in their purest form) to the Messiah (the One promised to redeem, restore what was lost, in Israel and the world)
- d. The man was already believing (in the most simplistic form of faith) and now just needs to have the object of his faith clarified - this is illustrative of how saving faith works (faith being worked in someone), where one believes but does not know the particulars - this is before Christ died and rose again, so the faith is still as those throughout the Old Testament where they believed/trusted in what God would do
- e. We have no indication here that this man knew it was the “Son of God” that had healed him, so the question from Jesus is truly faith based/focused (on theological grounds)
- f. Demonstrating his true faith, all he needs is to have this one (the Son of Man) pointed out to him and he will believe in Him - Jesus first tells him “You have seen Him” (an interesting term to use realizing he had only been seeing for a short while) and that now He is the very same speaking to him
- g. As is about to be seen, this looks to have been out in the open (others around who could see and hear what was happening) and it is in this setting the formerly blind man confesses “Lord, I believe” and worshiped Jesus - in such a short amount of time, this man’s life was changed (truly) forever and evidenced in his confession and open response

It is sad to realize that this man has just been able to see for the first time in his life and he is seeing angry, resentful and the downcast faces of cowardly people

It is not hard to find many religions in this world that would have a “messiah” come and save them from some earthly problem and threat, but the true Messiah comes to save eternally

Note that Jesus rarely directly revealed who He was and yet he does here as well as to the other “outcasts”... the Samaritans

Note that genuine faith results in true worship (which here is bowing in honoring submission before the Lord)

- 3. The “judgment” of the Lord while in the world - vs. 39-41

see Mt. 11:25 where certain things are hidden by God from the “wise and understanding” of this earth

- a. This “judgment” is not the final judgment of condemnation but another kind of judgment (κρίμα) that is separating, distinguishing the right from the wrong, and in a clear sense “judging” the wrong as being wrong - the verdict and sentence here being that of solidifying that those who see themselves as blind will be those that see, while those seeing themselves as sighted will be proven to be blind (and essentially stuck in that position)
- b. Jesus only saves sinners! The danger of spiritual blindness is that they see themselves as seeing and yet are truly blind to their present condition (and what is coming for them)
- c. Some Pharisees who stood nearby heard what He said and reacted as if in astonishment if He (in any way) could have thought that they were blind (spiritually) - this is significant in light of what Jesus is about to say (somewhat making His point)
- d. Jesus tells them that “if you were blind” (as in, “if you knew you were blind and in need to true spiritual sight”) then their response would not be sin (“ἀμαρτία” truly “missing the mark”) but since they firmly insist “We see” then they are left in their sin (literally “have sin”)
- e. It is important to see the result of such blindness (not seeing/perceiving the truth of how things really are... being before and accountable to God and so in absolute need of His grace) - it evidences itself in a fighting against the light of truth

In the Greek there is the use of “Μή” at the start of their question as in questioning “We are NOT blind?”

One way to determine if someone is spiritually blind is to test and see if they can see the true “light” of God in His Word and in Christ

## XVI. The Door, True and Good Shepherd - 10:1-21

A. Jesus uses another speaking/teaching method more in the form of an allegory and figure of speech” used to illustrate truths, using pictures (as often done in Proverbs), with the benefit of making multiple points using various aspects of the picture (here, the sheepfold and the sheep)

1. In the majority of John 10, Jesus uses the care of sheep to point out the significance of the door, the danger (thieves/robbers), the gatekeeper and (so the gate/door), the shepherd and his call/voice, the sheep and their hearing/following and the “hireling” (hired hand)

This chapter is usually just looked to as a means to deal with Jesus as the “Good Shepherd” but His purpose is much more broad than that - this text deals with false teachers/leaders, true sheep versus the sheep of another and more

- a. There are several possible applications but we should only use the ones Jesus uses and focus on the apparent reason He uses these illustrations
- b. The question might be asked, “So is Jesus the door or the Shepherd?” to which the answer is “yes” and “are those entering the fold shepherds or just the Lord as the Good Shepherd” to which could be answered “yes”
- c. The overriding message and point is that of realizing what is really going on as far as the religious system was concerned (and the same is still true today)

2. This chapter picks right up where we left off at the end of chapter 9 - the setting is still the same; Jesus has just finished talking with the man who had been healed from his blindness and had explained to the Pharisees, who were listening in, that they were truly blind - He’s about to illustrate the reality of this

B. Illustrating the difference between the shepherd and thieves - vs. 1-5

1. The sheepfold and the proper way to get to the sheep - vs. 1-2

Note a similar illustration and in Eze. 34:1-24 where God deals with those who were to be shepherds of Israel (for good) and yet were evil in their selfishness and He will also deal with distinguishing between the sheep themselves

- a. To better understand upfront the topics/subjects being dealt with, we’ll generally identify (understanding what will be described later) what is what - the sheepfold (and so the enclosed sheep) is Israel (in which there are sheep that will answer to various shepherds calls), the shepherd is the one who is to care for the sheep (feed and protect them) which are to be good spiritual leaders, and the thieves/robbers illustrate the Pharisees and other pseudo spiritual leaders
- b. Some may object to limiting the “sheepfold” here to just Israel, but it clearly is in this instance and context, but the same illustrating truth applies to the “Church” (later made-up of Gentile believers and Jewish believers alike, being united (“... I must bring them also...”) in verse 16
- c. Jesus begins this section with His statement of the absolute truth (“Truly, truly”) He is about to illustrate and explain what is irrefutable
- d. So the first way to tell that someone coming to the sheep is a “thief” (one who secretly/stealthily steals) or a “robber” (one who will take something by violent force) is by how they get to the “sheep” (those that are supposed to be God’s people) - these evil intending people must get at them through an inappropriate way/means
- e. These thieves/robbers clearly have ill-intent with/for the sheep and so must seek to get at them in an illegitimate way (not necessarily that their access must be granted by some earthly authority or organization (though there is value in it if the institution itself is legitimate))

We are not certain who the “doorkeeper” is in verse 3 - we are unsure other than it just represents a way legitimate access is recognized and granted

The two words used here are “κλέπτης” for thief and “ληστής” a bandit/plunderer

2. The open door to the shepherd and the evidential response of the sheep - vs. 3-5

But the point being made must not be missed - there are illegitimate people looking to get illegitimate access to those who are to be the people of God to plunder them and ultimately destroy them

see I Peter 5:1-4

- a. To the shepherd of the flock (or, there could be multiple flocks in a sheepfold, so the shepherd comes and calls and his sheep follow him) the door is opened - he calls to his sheep and they recognize either his voice or the unique call of his voice - we know where this will be leading and though there are under shepherds, the Chief, True and Good Shepherd is the Lord Himself
- b. Note the close relationship pictured here - the sheep know the shepherd so well they recognize his voice/call, and he knows them individually (calling them by their name)
- c. There is a clear sense in that those called to tend the flock of God are to follow this example and that of the Good Shepherd closely - such do not possess the authority of the Chief Shepherd, but they are to strive to be above reproach (before God) in their leading His sheep and to give their lives for them also (though these cannot do so in a saving way, they do so in a protective, sustaining (edifying) way)
- d. As in the day of Jesus so there still are those who are (positionally) to be tending the flock of God, but many (as these Pharisees) do so with wrongful means and do so wrongfully (in method, purpose and in lacking legitimate authority/calling)
- e. A true shepherd is evidenced in that the true sheep follow him (as he goes before them) - those tending the flock of God must take such a responsibility with the highest care and being able to go before the sheep as examples to follow - note I Cor. 11:1

The Lord Himself is to be the example we all follow and so we must all be working to truly know Him, what He said, what He did and what He revealed we ought/must be doing in following and obeying Him - see John 13:13-16

We have the supreme example and direction to follow seen in Christ and His sheep are evidenced for who/what they are in their following and response to Him

Those of the visible "church" prove they are not the Lord's when they follow after a stranger's voice and follow after him, leaving the true shepherd and the flock

The goal/objective of these strangers is simple... just lure them away from the protective leadership for whatever reason - it does not take long to get lost, each step leading further away

These were more in line with the thieves and robbers and even the "hired hand" who runs from danger

The "wish" (hope) of the sheep in this example would be to be in the safety of the sheepfold and to be the particular sheep of the shepherd

And then, working from His reference to those seeking to enter and lead the sheep (as shepherds), the only legitimate access to them is through Him

As is fitting for the continuing theme in John, these "sheep" were so in their nature and because this is what they truly were (by God's gift/grace) they were automatically preserved/protected from these intruders

These sheep are "saved" and so are safe in their comings and goings from threat of being stolen or killed

They come to take what is not theirs from others (not to earn it but to steal it away) and will do so at all costs

- f. Still illustrating/demonstrating a good shepherd, Jesus continues the picture by noting what happens when the sheep (only the ones that belong to the shepherd) come out ("puts forth all his own"), the shepherd does not drive them, he leads them ("he goes ahead of them") - vs. 4
- g. True sheep follow the/a true shepherd, following him because they already "know his voice" - these are safe and maintained as they follow him and, from the sheep's perspective, danger or want comes when they wander away (to go their own way would be detrimental)
- h. For "a stranger they simply will not follow" - the word for "stranger" here is "ἄλλοτριος" describing something that "belongs to another" (as in such strangers are not their shepherds or their leaders/influencers for them to follow) and this is a stressed, absolute statement from our Lord for He uses "οὐ μὴ" as in saying, "no, not ever" will they follow them
- i. "Alas and alas, if only our modern pastors had the sheep (old and young) so trained that they would run away from and not run after the strange voices that call them to false philosophy, false psychology, false ethics, false religion, false life." RWP
- j. Jesus does not place any condition on the sheep other than they are the shepherd's and that, because of this, they run from the stranger's voice... they just don't know his voice - these strangers are not specifically identified other than they are not to be trusted, yet they come to try to lure away some of the sheep - if these strangers are to get any "hold" on these sheep (speculating here), it will have to be by force

### C. "I AM the door of the sheep" - vs. 6-10

1. Jesus is speaking now in a proverbial manner, and John explains this as the reason why they were not understanding (yet) what He was talking about - this is not a "parable" as some translations have it, since those often had the intent to keep hidden from certain ones the meaning - vs. 6

- a. Jesus will explain the meaning (clearly) to them starting in verse 7
- b. Note that Jesus was saying this "to them" - the "them" refers back to 9:40 so is in reference (in particular) to these Pharisees

2. Jesus, having laid out the overall allegory (picture), now begins its precise application - vs. 7-9

- a. We know already that there is a sheepfold and how it works and that, generally, it applied to Israel and that those seeking to get in and take/hurt the sheep seek to go in another way other than the door (they are not legitimate as to God's standard though are certified by man's)
- b. We also know that the purpose of the sheepfold is the protection of the sheep and to regulate who has access to them and that, when the shepherd comes, his sheep will follow him
- c. Jesus begins His explanation with "Truly, truly..." adding particular emphasis, not just to His explanation, but even to His usage again of "I am" (here and in verse 9) - He is (as the "I AM") THE DOOR and not, here, of the "sheepfold" but He is the door "of the sheep" making this now specific to how the sheep themselves enter the fold
- d. There had been many who came before Jesus and some still (for Jesus said "... are thieves and robbers...") and likely refers to the current religious leaders - many (if not most) of their predecessors were charged to care for the flock but neglected, exploited and so robbed them - these, to some degree, would have seen themselves as some type of "door" to not only have access but to grant (themselves) access to the flock

- e. And yet, with such power and influence (and likely majority in numbers) the sheep (the true sheep of God) did not listen to them - compare to Rom. 11:1-8
- f. Jesus, Himself as "the door" then makes it so that now the picture/allegory is bright, full of hope and satisfaction for any that enter the flock through Him will truly be "saved" and as a result find their lives characterized with the "going in" (of sheep into the protection of the sheepfold) and with the "going out" to "find pasture" picturing their feeding needs being met
- g. The man who had been born blind and healed of physical and spiritual blindness now has such advantages (especially in light of what he lost, being excommunicated and yet, now, has gained infinitely more than what he lost)

3. The overriding purpose of the "thief" versus that of Christ - vs. 10

- a. The dire need of the door and the protection (and salvation) is seen when the enemy (the thief) is revealed in his purpose and its outcome - these come to "steal," for the "robber" robs (it is their nature) and they are quite often known for the skill of their stealthiness
- b. Their purpose/drive will lead them to "kill" ("θύση" often used to sacrifice)

Their “success” though not seen by the blind, is death and destruction of whatever they lead and influence while they, for a while, rest in their spoils

In contrast to thieves, this abundant life is in no way tied to possessions/wealth, but the true wealth of grace- and so joy, contentment, safety/peace and the realization that it will never end

And such shepherding of the Lord results in no reason for fear even under threat of death, because He is always “there” (with us), and His instruments of directing us and keeping us in line (rod and staff) are a comfort to us, knowing why they are used- there is bountiful provision even when faced by the enemy, meeting needs in abundance (anointed with oil) to our healing and healthy “fatness” so much so that our “cup overflows” with more than enough

The core meaning of this verse is to showcase Christ over any other who would be in any relationship with oversight of the sheep - but we could see the idea that those who minister for the Lord should be those following His example, willingly giving their lives (all their life) for the safety, protection and welfare of the Lord’s sheep

Note that these wolves come to infiltrate the flock to devour and scatter - their focus is on their own appetites

We, in any form/type of shepherding work must see the primary responsibility as directing the sheep to the Good Shepherd for we also are of the sheep (else we are wolves, thieves, robbers)

- c. The idea of “kill” and “sacrifice” carries more than just the idea to take life in order to get one’s physical possessions, but could even involve the killing/sacrificing for their cause, their “religion” and so even their “faith” as we see with the “faiths” of humanism
- d. And with their stealing and killing they are characterized as “destroyers,” leaving them in the wake of their plundering and killing, destitution/ruination
- e. In summing up the objectives of the “thieves” (as rulers, guides, pseudo-shepherds)
  - D. A. Carson quotes Roy Clements, “Jesus is right. It is not the Christian doctrine of heaven that is the myth, but the humanist dream of utopia.”
- f. In contrast, Jesus “came” (versus the ever/non-stop “coming” of the thieves) in order that His “sheep” would have true life (true living now and always, not (here) in quantity but in quality), and in having true life/living they would have it to its fullest (περισσός - over and above, more than is necessary) - what Jesus provides will prove to be more than enough, always
- g. So, beware the thieves who will primarily be identified in their attempts to get at the “sheep” in a way other than Christ and they need to be spotted before they steal, kill and destroy

#### D. “I AM the Good Shepherd” - vs. 11-21

##### 1. As the Good Shepherd, He is in stark contrast with those He just described - vs. 11

Again, a definitive contrast to the thieves who would be ugly in multiple ways and would have been unpleasant to be associated with and identified by

- a. The thieves kill and ruin while He gives His life for His sheep (His death to preserve their life... His loss for their gain) - He lives for them and so would die for them
- b. “good” here is the word “καλός” picturing what would be considered “beautiful” because of who/what He is and does, and is always pleasant to behold and to be associated with - His “goodness” in His shepherding is particularly attractive because of His excellence and complete success in all He does in such a role of leadership, protection and fulfillment of all needs
- c. The phrasing in Greek is more like “I AM the shepherd, the good one” in contrast to all other shepherds - this is a common picture of God such as in Psalm 23 - in this Psalm the Lord as shepherd (1). provides a dwelling where the need is met in abundance (“green pastures” where they “lie down” as in a place of rest) and (2). He leads (not drives) His sheep to locations of being “beside still waters” (where need is met in a way that eases the sheep as being led to restful waters) and in so doing (3). “restores the soul” as He reinvigorates our souls/lives with security, hope and purpose/direction all by (4). leading in “the paths of righteousness” (right paths/directions), keeping from wandering because of His own name’s sake (His absolute reliability in who He is)
- d. The Good Shepherd is evidenced also in that He “lays down His life for His sheep” - this phrase “τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τίθησιν” (the life of Him lays down (as in paying down with and for a price and is possibly the laying down the demanded cost for a ransom)) - He not only will die for the protection of His sheep but also for the possession of the sheep - note Titus 2:11-14

##### 2. The Good Shepherd in contrast to the “hireling” (hired hand) - vs. 12-13

- a. This next verse illustrates those that tend the flock for their own gain, their own purposes of some profit for themselves - “... those ministers who care chiefly for the emoluments and advantages of their position, and retire when the position becomes irksome or dangerous.” CBN
- b. Such a “leader” does not have a vested interest in the sheep themselves since they are not his, and so will run when threatened by the presence of the “wolf”
- c. So, those “just in it for the money” (personal profit or even in it for their livelihood) are not poised with the purpose to give their life for the sheep
- d. The result of a fleeing hireling is the unobstructed feasting of the wolf on some of the sheep, and the scattering (in fear) of the others - remember that fear directs/leads/drives also
- e. Note that the word for “snatches” (ἀρπάζω) has the idea of capturing, presumably for the purpose to eat/devour, but still, primarily, pictures captivity to be used by the captor for however they choose to use their victim
- f. The reason why he flees is obvious; he is hired (paid to do what he does) and so truly does not actually care for the sheep - see Mt. 7:15-20
- g. The Good Shepherd truly loves His sheep and so He tends them (which involves leading, feeding, protecting and even correcting (with rod and staff)) - this we must not only realize to recognize thieves, robbers and hirelings, but to realize the singular source of direction, provision and protection from the Lord only

Note the detailed wording into the Greek, "Εγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τίθεισιν ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων" - I AM the Shepherd, the Good, the Shepherd, the Good, the life of Himself lays down (purposely places/ offers it) for the sheep - vs. 11

Many hirelings will care about the job, the "pen" in general but not for the sheep themselves (but only what the sheep can give them and the "job" provide for them)

There will never be a closer relationship than that which resides in the Godhead and this is what Jesus uses to illustrate the close relationship He has with His sheep and they with Him - He lays down this pattern and we, in faith, trust this close "knowing" with the understanding He is the greater "knower", He being the shepherd and we the sheep

There is absolutely no competitive comparison to Jesus and all other spiritual leaders so we should never entertain such a notion! They will let us down, He won't.

And note that any concept of any "wolf" (e.g. the Devil) is defeated by His laying down His life - the sheep are saved from the enemy by His death and the enemy is also defeated by His death (and subsequent resurrection)

The "Great Commission" given to the Apostles in Mt. 28:19 makes it clear that disciples are to be made out of "all nations"

Note also I Pet. 2:24-25

It is the Father's love that offers His son for us (the sheep), the Son's love for the Father to lay His life down and love overall to take it up again - love is not emotionally, well-intended sentimentality; it is demonstrated in effective acts, not meaningful gestures

h. This analogy of a shepherd versus a "hireling" is limited because of what THE Shepherd, THE Good (He not being one of many "good shepherds" but one of a kind) will do and can do - He lays His life down (offers it willingly FOR the sheep (on their behalf and in their stead), but this would seem futile in light of the wolf mentioned here since it would then still get to the sheep once the shepherd is dead - here, He gives His life, knowing He will take it up again (verse 18) and this is how He protects the sheep with His life and defeats the wolf

i. The best the religious systems of this world can offer (and will offer) will be those driven by self interest, and sooner or later the wolf catches them, devours and scatters them (leaving them leaderless, without defense and direction) - a sheep's purpose is bound with its shepherd, so without a shepherd it is without purpose also - these "for-hire" flock tenders run from danger because they care "nothing" for the sheep themselves

### 3. The Good Shepherd knows and is known by His sheep in similarity to the "knowing" between the Father and the Son - vs. 14-15

a. The "knowing" the Lord describes here is more than just a "knowing of" or "knowing about" - it is a close, personal, intimate knowledge and is again stressed as part of the benefit and result of His being the Good Shepherd - even in our closest relationships, none of us knows another care and as closely and our Shepherd knows us

b. Jesus says it is "...just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father..." - this is an eternal, omniscient knowledge and as a result, His sheep "know Him", though not to the level He knows us - but this is not intended to be competitive; it is intended to stress the intimate closeness being described here

c. There is comfort in realizing there is no doubt that this is the way it is, and that we will be brought along in this relationship since He is the Shepherd - the sheep don't foster this relationship, the Shepherd does! Jesus is contrasting (still) between Himself and all other leaders who were to be spiritual leaders but who were thieves and robbers, not to make it as though there is any competition, but to make the contrast as vivid/clear as possible

d. Since the relationship is already set, and this intimate knowledge exists, He as the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep BECAUSE they are His and not to make them His - for we see nothing of the sheep needing to prove themselves by following Him (and so essentially choose for themselves), but that His sheep follow Him because they are His (already) which is why He lays down His life for them (in particular)

e. The result of this is used as motivational knowledge in Heb. 13:20-21

### 4. "Other sheep" to be brought in also that are "not of this fold" - vs. 16

a. This is a crucial clarification by the Lord regarding "sheep" beyond the initial fold He was describing in these verses - these would be "sheep" among the other nationalities (the Gentiles)

b. Such an addition to those who are (will be) the Lord's sheep are referenced in other places such as John 11:52 ("children of God scattered abroad") and another example in an insight given to Paul in Acts 18:5-10

c. These "sheep" will also be identified by their hearing His voice (versus all the rest that will hear and follow after the voice of "a stranger" (anyone else than Jesus Christ))

d. The end result being "one flock, one shepherd" - there is no religious syncretism support in a text like this (as though there are many ways to God)

### 5. Jesus' authority to lay down His life for the sheep and His authority to take it up again - vs. 17-18

a. If Jesus had just died and remained that way, there would have been no bringing in of the others into the fold, and as mentioned already, the "sheep" would have been left vulnerable, not having a shepherd to continue to protect and guide (pasture) them

b. The Father's love is demonstrated in multiple ways - His love is what makes the obtaining "one flock" possible, and it is His love of Jesus (the Son) demonstrated in Jesus laying down His life; but such love (proven in the greatest of action) is also demonstrated in the "command" (charge/commission) to take up His life again

c. Jesus' death will not be a victim's death since no one will take His life from Him - He "lays it down" of His own accord - this is the Great Shepherd giving His life for the sheep with the full knowledge and purpose to defeat the enemy completely in doing so and the proof being His taking back up again His life

This was God's plan/will all along - note Acts 4:26-28

- d. Think of this "authority"! He is not just a delegate to pay a price and fulfill the atoning, redemptive work; He has the authority both to lay His life down as such (which would demand perfection) and then the positional and moral authority to take it up again (this conquering, authoritative power over sin/death) - consider also the incredible discipline to voluntarily take all this on Him when He could have removed Himself from it at any time! But, considering His perfect character and who He is, this would not have been possible
- e. Even in all this, Jesus makes it clear that this is all done under the authority of the Father - this is an ongoing reminder of the necessity also of our obedience also in all things

compare to Heb. 10:5-10

6. Another "division" as to if He should be listened to or not - vs. 19-21

As we still see today, there are many things Jesus said that people find comforting and/or interesting - but if He is the Promised One (the Messiah) and was one with the Father then He MUST be believed and obeyed, but He wasn't fitting their idea of a glorious leader, one they would openly follow

- a. As was now common (and still is today) divisions arise regarding Jesus, seeking to handle what He says and balance it up against what He did (and was able to do) - there had to be something appealing in what He said, His authority in saying it, but there was still a controlling apprehension as to who He really was - for what would be the response if He was the "Christ"? (some wanted to consider it but could not imagine accepting it)
- b. "Many of them" (likely the majority) use the same method of seeking to discredit Him, making wild accusations of a demon and His insanity, both of which are used to take away any obligation to have to answer the content of what He had just said - again, such is still used today against Christ, generalizing Him either as bad or as generally "good" but neither side delving into His actual message
- c. Such negative generalizations (attacking His mental state with an identified cause being a "demon") are used to support this group's motivating agenda; question why anyone would listen to Him - clearly, they suggest, no soundly thinking people would listen to Him - many will disregard Jesus because of how they fear they will be perceived
- d. Those disagreeing with the popular assessment cannot honestly believe that one possessed of a demon could do what Jesus did in healing the blind - but His message still appears to be missed by these who are so impressed with His power but unsure what to make of His teaching

There have been "madmen" that have been followed and believed, but we need to recognize that the actual truth of things will seem "foolish" to the "natural man" - see I Cor. 2:12-14

XVII. Eternal Life, Securely in the Hand of Jesus Christ, One With The Father - 10:22-42

A. The security of the sheep - vs. 22-29

1. Disbelief rooted in presuppositions - vs. 22-24

It might be that some of these Jewish leaders were thinking on their idea of a Messiah similar to Judas Maccabaeus- presuppositions founded in personal preference over Scripture hinder true faith

- a. Starting here at verse 22, we're about two months later than what had just been described earlier in chapter 10 - this is now the "Feast of Dedication" which was instituted about 164 BC after the Temple was recovered after being desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 BC where he sacrificed a pig on the altar - under the leadership of Judas Maccabaeus it was retaken and rededicated - the celebration was held about mid December and lasted 8 days and was characterized by lights being lit all over Jerusalem
- b. It was winter so Jesus was walking in the "Porch of Solomon" which was likely enclosed
- c. This looks to be a scenario that the Jews were looking for to be able to corner Jesus - the detail added by John describes this group as surrounding Him
- d. They had been building in their suspense as to how He really thought of Himself - the translation "How long will you keep us in suspense?" is good in describing the wording they used - we will see that many of these did not and would not believe but the chapter will end with some believing
- e. These asked Jesus to tell them "plainly" (παρρησία - openly, without fear/restraint) - this was not practically possible because their idea of "the Christ" was already predefined incorrectly

Similar challenges still occur when dealing with people's ideas of what "salvation" should look like and entail and why so many are unimpressed or even offended at the true "Gospel" - Jesus' answers were and would be plain enough but their distorted view of the "Christ" would blind them to the truth

2. His answer was again not what they were seeking - many (like these) still want their theological and philosophical questions answered on their terms in ways they deem fitting - vs. 25-26

Humanly speaking, much of disbelief will be the result of the person just not wanting to believe it (likely related to it being disagreeable)

- a. Jesus clarifies that He has already told them - He has answered it, plainly and even demonstrated it (proved it) with the works He performed - Jesus, once again, points to the true issue; "you do not believe" - when it comes down to it, the core issue won't be the lack of evidence or the lack of explanation, but will be a lack of faith
- b. The actual reason they do not believe is (tying this back to what was covered in the previous verses) that they are not "of My sheep" - again, their nature is the issue, so no matter what He says or does, they are predisposed to reject/disbelieve Him



This explains the futility (and even danger) of trying to tweak the message and presentation enough to get as many as possible to “believe” - such may end up with a “flock” of “of this world” livestock

We have seen throughout Church history many who believe they are hearing and following Jesus, but they are deceiving themselves (and others) by following a counterfeit Christ

Paul and those with him were motivated by the “approval” of God and not men - see I Thes. 2:1-8

Those that are not His sheep do not have this eternal life now and their death will result into their entrance into the “second death”, which is death eternal

It is sad to see so many commentators add the idea to these verses that even though they deal with the security of the sheep it still allows for the sheep to leave the Lord’s hand - this is unnecessary and is not in keeping with the context whatsoever!

This is another reason we do not want a compromised handling of Scripture, so that we are secure in our security (based on our truly being His sheep and once realized, never needing to fear being led away or snatched away)

Note that the word “ἕσμεν” is first person plural, as in “we are one” still distinguishing in persons while still being one

c. Jesus tells them that there is ample enough evidence with the works He had been doing in His Father’s name to testify (act as a witness/evidence) “about Me” - again, it is ultimately never about the “evidence” when it comes to trusting Christ; there will be more than enough but because the eyes (and so hearts/minds) of those that are not His sheep are so otherwise focused, they cannot/will not see it - note II Cor. 4:1-6

3. Having been given eternal life, His sheep will never (cannot ever) “perish” - vs. 27-29

- a. What are the absolute indicatives of being one of His? Jesus sums them up as, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” - these “hear” (they listen and understand because they believe Him, *over all else*) and this is so because He “knows them” (each, individually, and so personally) and since this is all true, they “naturally” follow Him
- b. This is in contrast to those who will not listen and will not follow - the self-righteous ultimately hear themselves (their own thoughts/feelings) and follow after what they trust (though this is often a varied, winding path through life as their guiding authority continues to change)
- c. Notice that Jesus is not discouraged that these are not following Him (or even seem interested in doing so) - He states the assured fact that His sheep will hear Him and will follow; there is no doubt it will occur so He need not meet them on their terms or sense any need to impress them, for His focus is on the will of the Father and not the admiration/acceptance of men
- d. His sheep will not be “given” eternal life, but have been given it already (“give” is present active indicative), they, as His sheep are already living it and have it, and are permanently secure, for He goes on to say that they will never perish (the emphasized negative used here (οὐ μὴ, no, not, as “**no not ever**”) - physical death, for His sheep, is the fulfillment of this ongoing, never ending life, only then without any of the effects of the curse of sin - “Born in regeneration, it pulses in every believer, becomes stronger as faith increases, and reaches its full flower in the glory of heaven. Temporal death merely transfers this life from earth to heaven.” Lenski
- e. Jesus uses the picture of their safety in His hand - it would likely be better to picture His hand as holding tightly to His own rather than having an open hand that some would try to snatch them away - these verses offer no possible way for the sheep to leave His grasp, but the open hand that many picture seems to give room to allow for the idea of the sheep jumping (willfully) out of His hand
- f. The authoritative power to say this, and to back this up, is from the Father - these sheep are Jesus’ sheep because they are given to Him by the Father (another fitting reason of using sheep as the example, for the sheep do not select their shepherd) - and no one (whatsoever) is greater (in any way, in power, authority, wisdom), and no one can snatch them out of the Father’s hand - with this enviable degree of assurance it would then be on us, individually, to be assured we are His sheep by truly seeing what His voice involves (in His Word) and what it really means to follow Him
- g. The way Jesus worded this and made His point, makes the next statement necessary, for how could He be holding the sheep and the Father holding them at the same time?

B. The deity of Jesus - vs. 30-42

1. Such a few words, and yet so profound - “ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἓν ἔσμεν” - vs. 30 (I and the Father one are)
  - a. To secure the absoluteness of the security of His sheep, Jesus makes it clear with an incredibly simple way of stating it (which should have been clear, but is still questioned/doubted to this day by many pseudo-christian organizations)
  - b. He and God the Father are one (not one person, but one in essence/substance), for the word for “one” is neuter also making it clear that it does not combine personhood - some have attempted to make this a “oneness” of purpose/will, but this makes the response of the Jews harder to explain - Jesus had just been talking about power (strength/ability) and then declares their oneness (so equality of power/strength and so oneness of nature)
2. As these Jews picked up stones to execute Him, Jesus redirects them to reconsider - vs. 31-36
  - a. The Jews again (for they had recently tried it in 8:59) to stone Him - this was likely an unlawful attempt on their part since no trial would have occurred and they were not (technically) allowed to execute under Roman law - this was a reactionary, volatile crowd and Jesus is about to (masterfully) distract them with Scripture regarding the “why” of their intention
  - b. Jesus, redirects the focus back to His works (proofs of His deity and character)

Jesus is maintaining the relationship with the Father and will not allow Himself to be distinguished/judged apart from Him

Note that they do not deal with His linking His works with the Father - they clearly did not know how to handle His profound miracles - this is common with self-righteous stubbornness in that it will argue against facts or seek out ways to avoid them and divert focus

In Psalm 82 there are two uses of "gods" (elohim) speaking of those in Israel that God had given special responsibility to and even references them as "sons of the Most High", though they would "die like men"

Jesus knows that they should know and agree with the fact that the Scripture cannot be authoritatively objected to even if the text is controversial or difficult to understand/accept - this truth must still be emphasized today when dealing with public and personal objections to God's Word

No one could out debate the Lord, not just because of His infinite genius, but because He always answered back with absolute, unadulterated truth, and though some may believe themselves to have successfully "put it down", the truth will always win-out!

This was not an argument for them to consider that He was doing "good works" but that His works were of a much higher category and unique above any that had come before (and were to at least be treated as evidential)

Even now there is a natural tendency in us to argue against reality (the apparent "facts") because we have a sense of where they will lead (point to) and we do not want to go there

- c. Jesus asks to make it clear why they intended to stone Him and the crime, as to which of His works (which He categorizes as "καλός" (excellent, magnificent, good)) is He being put to death for - Jesus is keeping the focus on what has been demonstrated as not just "good works" but more specifically "works from the Father"
  - d. We might be naturally inclined to agree (argumentatively) with the Jews when they respond that what they plan to do is not associated with what He has done but has everything to do with what He has said (but Jesus is demonstrating that the two (words/works) are inseparable)
  - e. Jesus cannot lose this debate for they could not speak against His works with any legitimacy (now that He had addressed the accusation of His "breaking" the Sabbath); they were running out of new areas to attack Him with
  - f. They accuse Him of blasphemy, but they (in this) still do not get it right, for they accuse Him of just "being a man" and then of "making yourself God" - He had never called Himself God (the Father) and was actually revealing to them more of the Godhead than they had ever known - He did not "make" Himself God because He already was God (of the Godhead)
  - g. Yet Jesus can easily handle this with another text from Scripture that they could not fully handle/explain (much like His references in Matthew to Psalm 110) - Jesus does not explain the text of Psalm 82:6 but simply utilizes it to make a logistical point of "your Law"
  - h. We mustn't trip over the Lord's usage of "your Law" as though He is discrediting THE Law (for He is quoting from actual Scripture and not tradition or peripheral laws), for He was the Law Giver and the Law was not meant for Him (though He would fulfill it all)
  - i. These judges in Psalm 82 were given special responsibilities in representing God and were in no way equal with God seeing they answer to "the Most High"
  - j. Jesus uses this to legitimize associations with God like this from Scripture, and He emphasizes the authority of Scripture, stating that it "cannot be broken" (can't be nullified)
  - k. Notice carefully that Jesus does not just claim the right of association with God as was used in Psalm 82, but He strings together a flow of thought that brings the discussion back to His affirmation of Him being the "Son of God" - He is not intimidated with their threat of death but instead uses it and their accusation to disarm them (with Scripture) and uses it to come right back to His original claims - we know they are (to some degree) disarmed because they no longer seek to kill Him but just to arrest (seize) Him
  - l. Jesus, in asking a responding question (in verse 36), if they are actually accusing of blasphemy not just the one saying "I am the Son of God" but as a lead-in to this that He is the one "whom the Father consecrated/sanctified and sent into the world" - He again is referencing His being sent into the world (a hint (maybe) to His pre-existence) and His being specially (uniquely) set apart to do the work (and so the "works") of the Father
  - m. This is who/what Jesus was and still is, so we must be careful not to disbelieve any of what He said and taught also (as these), for the same underlying motives of defending self-rightness or even just for the purpose of making "faith" easier and more compatible with how we (naturally) would want things to be
3. The Jews may be dismissing Him as a blasphemer, but they should at least consider His works - vs. 37-38
- a. Jesus has just directed the focus of this encounter now back to the consideration of the works He was doing, for they were looking to deny or ignore altogether the significance of what He was doing and was able to do - note again verse 25
  - b. He does not expect them to blindly (just) believe in Him - He appeals again to the evidence - He has been demonstrating as to His unique position - so, putting it plainly, He tells them that if He is not doing the "works of My Father" then don't believe Him - note to precise wording of the Lord that would make any response from them very difficult, for He doesn't just say the "works of God" but the works of "My Father" (still pointing to His deity)
  - c. If they do not believe what He is doing (works/miracles) are from God (His Father), then don't believe Him - but this puts them in a difficult spot for they have been unable to disqualify any of His works
  - d. Jesus still describes hope (in a sense) for them when He tells them why they should at least consider His works (even though they were not believing Him) so they could come to "know and understand" (describing a coming to understand over time)

Read the account in Acts 4:1-22 - they could not refute the evidence but neither could they agree with the message

- e. This is similar to saying “consider the facts” - this was a fair point, but they again demonstrate their true motive (to forcefully silence Him) - they could not say His works were not of the Father, but they would not even begin to consider the leading evidence in His gracious, miraculous works - as is still common today, where there is only a peripheral consideration of Jesus but not a legitimate consideration of His claims and evidences
- f. It was not necessarily (here) that they couldn’t admit that these works were supernatural and even possibly of God, but they could not accept that Jesus was one with the Father (they could not accept His deity, even as so many religious groups do today)

#### 4. Jesus returns to the wilderness and, again, many believed in Him - vs. 40-42

Those believing were a contrast to the others that were refusing to consider Jesus, His teaching, His miracles and then His being the Messiah (and that, one with the Father) - two groups, essentially seeing/hearing the same thing and one group believes, the other reactively seeks to suppress - one group and agenda to seek to believe the other to seek to refute (for whatever reason)

- a. Those that were angry at Him were angry still and, refusing to consider what He proposed they do, they now seek to “seize Him” (arrest Him) - yet John simply records that he went forth out of their hand (their collective “hand” of authority and judgment)
- b. He returned “across the Jordan” to the same place John the Baptist had been ministering/ baptizing and there He remained and ministered (for He was always about the Father’s work)
- c. John only tells us that many believed and that associated with the reality that they knew John the Baptist “did no sign” (he performed no miracles as Jesus was doing) and everything he spoke of Jesus was true - these, in contrast to some in the previous group, believed in Him
- d. Note that “many” believed (not all) and that “believing” is more than just thinking something is true; it also involves a trust that entrusts itself

### XVIII. Jesus, The Resurrection and The Life - chapter 11

#### A. A sickness not to death, yet death comes for the purpose to show God’s glory in the Son - 11:1-16

##### 1. Jesus is told of Lazarus’ sickness - vs. 1-6

Mary (the sister of Martha and Lazarus) was known for her anointing the feet of Jesus with expensive perfume and wiping His feet with her hair - John has yet to describe this account in chapter 12, but it was so prominent an act, John uses it as a way to identify the family he was describing

- a. John introduces these individuals to his readers with special attention to connect Lazarus to his sisters, in particular to Mary who was known for her humble work of gratefulness to the Lord
- b. They lived in “Bethany” just a short distance outside of Jerusalem
- c. The sisters send word to Jesus that Lazarus is ill and the particular wording they use indicates there was already a close relationship between Jesus and Lazarus (the one you “love” (φιλεῖς - a close friendship)) - this is key when next seeing the Lord’s delay, for Jesus, as the truest of friends, has a love that surpasses the apparent “love”, for He knows what is absolutely best even in the suffering of His friends and God’s usage of it - this is not necessarily the purpose of this text but it is fair to note that sickness is not, in any way, an indication that the Lord does not love - note also the word used here for “sick” is “ἀσθενεῖ” describing the affect of the sickness being the loss of strength and so indicated a serious illness
- d. Jesus’ immediate response to the news was to reveal that the illness would not “lead to death” (in retrospect, that it would not end in death) - the natural interpretation would have been that this sickness was not severe enough to kill Lazarus - Jesus then declares that the purpose of this illness is for God’s glory (not with the idea that He would receive praise, but that His glory would be revealed (even if there was no praise response, it would still be displayed))
- e. Jesus, still keeping His oneness with the Father in the forefront, explains that God being glorified includes the Son of God also being glorified through it (again, shown for the glory He truly has regardless the response)
- f. This would be the 7th major “sign” that John focuses on in his purpose to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God - the first the water into wine (creation), the second, healing the official’s son (at a distance), healing the man (on the Sabbath) who had been crippled for 38 years, feeding the multitude with five barley loaves and two fish (creative multiplication), walking on the water (power over creation), giving sight to a man born blind (which had never been done), and now He was about to raise a man dead, dead longer than any others that had died and that He had already been raised
- g. John makes special note that Jesus “loved” Martha, her sister and Lazarus though this word is different than the one used in the message from the sisters - their word “φιλέω” (root) describing an affectionate love while John uses of Jesus “ἀγαπάω” often distinguished as the “love out of reason” (far more than feelings of affection but with focused purpose (of the will, determined))

This is an example of how we ought not presume how God will be glorified in anything we see or face - He is about to surpass their imagination!

The glory would be even more glorious when showcased in such a “dark” situation as would be displayed at the cross - see John 17:1

The glory of Christ is, in all reality, the revealing of Who He actually is - it’s not like the “glory” of man where special lighting is needed and where accounts must be viewed in certain ways and exaggerations added... and all this short-lived

This “love” is used by John of God in John 3 and helps keep it distinct from love of family (by birth), love of friends (affection often associated with reciprocation) and this love of choice, of purpose

When we read that seeming impossible list of “love’s” qualities in 1 Cor. 13:7 (bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things) of/for others, we must realize this can be (and should be true) because the focus is more on God’s grace at work (and all its potential) rather than the person we are striving to love (for we cannot truly believe and hope all things of the person, but because we look to God at work in them, we expect we must bear and endure all things with and for them)

- h. The distinguishing of the love Jesus had is important in light of what is stated in verse 6 - when Jesus heard that Lazarus was ill, He stayed two days more where He was at - at first glance (for many) this looks to be unkind (uncaring in appearance), yet Godly love always “loves” with trust in God being the controller and not the emotion of the situation
- i. What was best for Lazarus and his sisters was the purposed demonstrations (revealing) of God’s glory - in this case, the death of Lazarus was the best, and the Lord’s love of them was not in the least affected/controlled by the pain that their family would experience
- j. “We see Christ once more asleep while the disciples are despairing, swamped in the storm! Christ never in haste, because always sure.” Edersheim
- k. And lest this verse be taken as “cold” or as a justification to narrow the idea of “love” to just stoically resigning self for another’s best, Jesus will express a sympathetic love, full of emotion, leading Him to weep for and with them (even knowing what He was about to do)
- l. The two days delay seems to have been (practically) for the death of Lazarus to happen, and then that he should have been dead (in the tomb) for four days

2. Assured safety in the allotted time and work from/for God - vs. 7-16

This is a common struggle for us all, why leave a place of peace and apparent success to return into a likely troubling place? The disciples looked on the direction as being risky rather than providential- God often (if not, mostly) works within contradicting (oppositional) circumstances

Each of us has, for certain, the amount of time God has given us to be alive in this world and that it is set (nothing will change it) - we all will die when it is our time to die, and if it is not our time to die, we can face the dangers God brings us to with confidence that we cannot die until God is finished with us here (and that if He is done with us here, there is nothing we can do to remain)

If we are granted the insight that night is coming, we ought to be encouraged to press on with all we can (not retire for the “day” waiting for night to come) and to press on with confidence in having, with certainty, all the time God has given us in our 12 hours of day

It is likely that the disciples were initially pleased with the news they thought was of his recovery, for then, possibly, they would not need to go to Judea (Bethany) and face the danger again

What was shortly coming would be a preview of the ultimate resurrecting work of Christ - see John 5:25-29

- a. After the two days, Jesus indicates the need to return to “Judea” (the region in which Bethany was located, and a reminder of the region which was hostile to Jesus)
- b. The first thought of the disciples is that of danger, for “the Jews” were seeking to execute Him (stone Him) when they were last there; this was a statement of fact - they follow it with a question “... are you going there again?” - there had, apparently, been a sense of calm and safety, for many were believing (10:42), so why leave comfort and safety?
- c. The disciples could only see the enemies and could not see around them for the greater need or Lazarus and his sisters, and beyond that, they were not anticipating (they could not have imagined) the display of God’s glory about to happen in the middle of not only a threat of death to Jesus, but an actual death, and the power over life and death Jesus was about to show
- d. Jesus’ answer is again unpredictable (naturally), for He approaches their notion of danger (threat) from a providential viewpoint (taking God (primarily) into account when looking ahead, and then formulating thoughts regarding the immediate future)
- e. The illustration He uses is that of the allotted time in a day (12 hours (of daytime)) and that that is the time to work (and in contrast to the night), it is fully expected one will have the full 12 hours to do what needs to be done - in light of what Jesus is explaining here, our constant attempts to justify putting off our God-give responsibility till another time is irresponsible - note the similar idea in 9:4 (night being the end of the day, and so here, the end of life (life’s work))
- f. Note Jesus uses the work “walk” and not “work” (picturing the journey (of life)) and this in harmony with the needed journey back to the Judean area - but, in keeping with this illustration, when night comes, it’s not waiting for another 12 hours of daylight, but it ends with a “stumble” and so “the light is not in him” (not that he does not see the daylight of the earth but that his (the person’s) light has gone out in death)
- g. Those in Christ have the distinct advantage in having the true “Light of the World” in Him, so we not only have the light of this world (daytime to do our work), but we are able to see what it is and not “stumble”, not as this world, “...in darkness does not know where he is going” (John 12:35) - they have daylight (life) also but it is without true/full purpose/direction
- h. Still dealing with death, Jesus tells the disciples that Lazarus, “our friend” has “fallen asleep” to which the disciples find encouragement, assuming this must be a sign he is getting better - it is easy to criticize their not realizing this was referring to his death, but Jesus had told them that the illness would not lead to death - note that Lazarus was “our friend” (for any friend of Jesus is our friend in the truest sense) but that when it comes to “awakening” him Jesus says “I go to awaken him”
- i. Jesus meant the “sleep” of death, and the word is appropriate when viewing death from His perspective - death would not be final, and the use of “sleep” (especially with believers) alludes to the future resurrection of the body (awakening)
- j. Jesus then must plainly tell them that “Lazarus died” (a stark contrast in terms/words for “died” communicates a ceasing to live while “sleep” pictures rest and the expectation of awakening again)

The disciples already believed (to a degree) in Him (trusted Him), but faith is intended to grow and that by various means of God (His Word and the ongoing validation of the trust in Him)

As will be stressed soon in this text, to realize the life, current life, of all that have died in Christ are living still (now)

Whether Thomas meant Lazarus or Jesus in "die with him" makes little difference- he was describing the outcome (being death) either way and that because of being with Jesus

It is common for those still fairly "new to Jesus" to jump to negative extremes in what they expect to suffer for the Lord, not considering that such dark situations might be dark to better display the glory of God in it

- k. Jesus' continued response demonstrates His focus being beyond that of the typical human assessments of needs and priorities, but to God's overriding purpose in all things - in this case, Jesus "rejoices" (is genuinely glad) that He was not there when Lazarus was sick and dying, and the reason being that "you may believe" (referring to His disciples)
- l. Jesus was glad, not in the death of Lazarus, not in the pain being still suffered by his sisters, but in the display of glory (the Father's shared glory with the Son) - this is a foundational truth (and example) of how to look upon all trials and painful situations; not necessarily the pain/suffering of them, but the anticipated purpose of God in it (always to some end demonstrating His glory in it, over it and as if in spite of it) - compare to II Cor. 4:7-18
- m. It might have seemed odd to end His statement with "let us go to him" - why not "go to his sisters"? Jesus was still dealing with Lazarus as one who would still live
- n. Thomas' response has received a great deal of criticism, and though it might serve some purpose in setting up his later doubt in Jesus' resurrection (20:24-29), Thomas still shows a degree of courage and resolve to die with and for the sake of Jesus - Thomas also known as "Didymus" (literally "Twin") says to the other disciples that they all should go (with Jesus to Judea) and that they also might "die with him" (some believing this "him" to be Lazarus and other to refer to Jesus)
- o. Thomas was at a point of being willing to die with and for Jesus, likely because he had no idea what Jesus was going to do. Thomas figured they would go to Judea and die as Lazarus, though he did not consider the possibility of Lazarus' resurrection. Many get to a point of just thinking how they can or may die with Jesus, but not that they may also triumph with Him in a situation that looked like the shadow of death.

### B. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead - 11:17-44

#### 1. The setting - vs. 17-20 (a setting of death and great grief, and the closeness to danger)

Grief is expected and unavoidable in times such as these, but it is never a grief to despair, realizing God's underlying and so overriding purpose in them

We can identify with the feelings that would have been in Martha, having suffered such grief to now have such a close friend arriving, one of such comfort and of such power

- a. Jesus, coming near the home of Lazarus (just outside the village), comes to a situation where Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days - Jesus would be a reliable source of comfort in their loss, but so much more was planned in it
- b. John also adds that now that they were at Bethany, they were then about (only) 2 miles away from Jerusalem (nearer the danger of His enemies and likely also the source for many of "the Jews" that had come to comfort Martha and Mary) - such "comfort" usually consisted of several days of open, continuous mourning - it is worth noting that John's normal usage of "the Jews" was one to describe those in opposition to Jesus - some there were likely hostile toward Him
- c. John is careful to inform us that Martha heard that Jesus was coming (He was near the village), went to meet Him (a meeting which was more private compared to that of Mary, which may have some bearing on how to properly handle verse 33 and Jesus' response)

#### 2. The genuine faith and focus of Martha in the midst of great pain/loss - vs. 21-27

It is very important to remember that faith is trust and need not be validated on our terms - He, in faith, is trusted regardless of circumstances

She trusts Him and the death of her brother has not caused her to turn on Him at all- the essence of faith is trust in His purpose, perspective and power (all at once)

She was making a distinction between the Father (God) and Jesus, and Jesus is about to make it clear that He is the "resurrection and the life"

She, as so many others, demonstrated their firm belief in the resurrection of the body

- a. The first thing Martha says to Jesus was likely a thought she had been considering since Lazarus was severely ill and certainly when he had died (since they had requested He come)
- b. It was true, that if He had been there, Lazarus would not have died (see 11:15) - yet she still had strong faith (though not considering He could have healed Lazarus without actually being present as He did with the "nobleman's son" (4:46-53))
- c. Martha quickly declares her undying trust in Him and His abilities (though not actually considering/imagining what He was about to do) - she knew that whatever Jesus would "ask of God" God would grant it (which was completely true, though the magnitude of so many of the truths we profess/proclaim are of a depth and possibility that defies our limited imaginations)
- d. Did she believe Jesus could raise Lazarus from the dead, there and now? There is much disagreement on this, mainly because she does not seem to expect this is what Jesus will do - though, the way she words her statement might be telling and could be part of the reason John is providing these particular details, and why Jesus responds to her as He does in verse 25- her word for "ask" is a word used (generally) of prayers of people to God and that she was not fully aware of Jesus' true authority (and so His authoritative power) - so Jesus could ask (as she puts it) and the Father might give it to Him
- e. Jesus plainly states, "Your brother will rise again" Jesus meaning very shortly this will happen though Martha believes He is referencing the "last day"

Even in our deepest understandings and beliefs in all aspects of Theology, we still must remember our comprehension as to how it will be applied by God has possibilities to exceed our imagination

Note John 5:19-29 I Cor. 15:16-26

Because there is death (because there is sin), there must be a resurrection to fully deal with death - so, rather than living this life with the realization it could end at any time, we live in "newness of life" because of Him (life, in light of the resurrection, has new purpose) - Rom. 6:4

Note that Paul deals with the resurrection in detail in I Cor. 15 and there also covers both those already physically dead and those alive - both will be resurrected (those still physically alive will be "changed")

Again, Martha's example/display of faith is remarkable, especially in light of the pain she was feeling - she is not only a good example of faith but also of how we all ought to be thinking when overwhelmed with life's pressures, trial, and pains

We should assume John is providing these added details to lead to a proper understanding of all he is about to portray and why it happened

It is also speculated that they knew some of these "the Jews" were against Jesus and did not want them to know He was there - it is not uncommon for many would-be comforters to scoff at the idea of God, resurrection and hope for the future in their limited, "of this world" comforting attempts

- f. Again, to her credit, Martha readily acknowledges herself as being convinced that he will rise again "on the last day" - this was the only hope she could (she believed) hang on to - yet she likely could not have imagined what was about to transpire (as we also should not limit the grace of God in hardships to our imagination) - He may not release us from them, but He is "able to do abundantly above whatever we ask or think" - see Eph. 3:14-21
- g. Jesus again makes a profound "I am" statement/declaration - the context of this statement is fitting with what Martha has just declared (her belief in a literal resurrection yet to come (later) for her brother), yet she does not realize that Jesus, Himself, is the actual resurrection (the power of life and death being His, not just future, but now) and so He is the source and power of "life" (livingness) now and always as well
- h. He being the "resurrection" is so in response to the reality and presence of death - He is the answer to death (in all its forms, physical and eternal death) - this is so because He is "the life" also, making it clear that any "life" there is, is from Him, and any "life" apart from Him is not true life (living) - all life owes its life to Him - Col. 1:15-17
- i. As to His being "the life" He goes on to clarify that any (whoever) believes in Him (is trusting Him and so entrusts themselves to Him), though/even such a one die (physically) yet he will live again - "though the sentence of death passed upon it be just; though the effects of death be dismal; though the bands of death be strong; though the body be not only dead, but putrefied; though the scattered dust be so mixed with common dust, that no art of man can distinguish, much less separate them; yet we are sure it shall live again." Benson
- j. And, any who are still living (and have not faced death) and those "living" (still) after their physical death, "πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα" (believing in Me, no, not ever [it's not possible to] die, unto the age (forever)) - this is the assured future of those who believe (trust, have their faith in) Jesus Christ whether they die or are living - there will never be another death for those in Christ after physical death
- k. We believe in the "sleep" of the body, but not of the soul/spirit - see II Cor. 5:6-9, Php. 1:23 and Acts 7:54-60 - note also Luke 23:43 the Lord's promise to the dying thief and also, "If there is no resurrection of the body, there is no resurrection at all since only the body is subject to death in the physical sense." Yeager
- l. Martha's next response is a demonstration of her well-informed and strong faith - Jesus asks her if she believes what He has just stated (in verse 26) - not only does she say "yes" but "Yes Lord" (acknowledging His position over her as being more than just a teacher and friend, and then that "I have come to believe" (or "I have believed") that He is the Messiah (the Christ, Promised One, Anointed One) and being so, He then is also the "Son of God" - then, in capping it off with profound clarity of her belief/understanding, He is the one "coming into the world" (as with John, a likely reference to His pre-existence) - note I John 5:17-21

### 3. Jesus grieves - vs. 28-37

- a. The display of Jesus' emotions in this next section is multi-faceted and demonstrates (no matter how one looks on it) that He was filled with feeling, though His feelings/emotions must never be looked upon as overpowering and controlling (as ours often are)
- b. The scene of the Lord's display of great emotion is set when Mary is told of Jesus' arrival and her going to Him (being followed by many others)
- c. John takes care to mention that when Martha went to "call" her sister Mary that it was done privately (as in trying to ensure she would also have a private meeting with Him) - but because she "arose quickly", she drew attention to herself and those who had been with her in the house followed after her (supposing she was headed for the tomb)
- d. Mary's immediate greeting contained the same wording but a different posture and emotion - Mary fell at His feet, weeping and also reiterating that if He had been there, their bother would not have died - as with Martha, their grief was magnified by their perception of what could have been - there can be a danger for us when trapped with a focus on the "what-ifs" (which will likely enhance the pain/frustration, and that to no value)
- e. John now details Jesus response when seeing/hearing Mary and the other mourners with her - John's words for "deeply moved" and "troubled" are unique - "ἐμβριμάομαι" is translated "deeply moved" but its normal, consistent usage is that of anger and displeasure

Jesus' empathy/pity would not be inconsistent with His nature- He would again express sadness over Jerusalem in genuine grief over what could have been - Mt. 23:37, Lu. 13:34, 19:41-44, Heb. 4:15- but His sadness must never be taken as overpowering and uncontrolled

This is also true when dealing with others who are struggling in any area; there are exhortations that should be given, but to offer emotional sympathy and support is a Christlike quality also (though, not to the avoiding of responsibility)

Obviously there will be those among us who will cry with and for others frequently, but we all should have moments where we cry as well with those deeply hurting - it is not a strength to push back shared sorrow with another and a "cold heart" toward others is a bad sign

This is a reminder of the need for us to be remembering He is with us always, for this thought alone will help us in our situations where emotions would normally overwhelm a focused faith

Picturing the scene it would have been an astonishing thing for Jesus to have told them to do, for it was clear that no one expected Him to be doing this to bring Lazarus back to life - they may have thought He just wanted to see the body of His dead friend as part of the grief

It's interesting to see that the verb for lifting the stone (ἤρᾶν) is the same word for Jesus lifting up (ἤρᾶν) His eyes in prayer... they lift up the stone while He lifts up His eyes to God

Here we see a fulfillment of John 5:25 - He spoke and His voice was heard... by the dead!

- f. This wording has been typically taken to describe a deep emotional response of sadness (as seen in most translations) though it can mean He was responding in anger - if anger, many have speculated it would be His response to death in general (though we have no other example of this), and it could be His response to the possible hypocrisy represented in "the Jews" who came with Mary to openly grieve with her
- g. Jesus' anger (if this was anger) could have been directed at the degree of their grieving, as if it was too much to bear and would inevitably lead to despair (even if but for a short while) for we do not "... grieve as others do who have no hope." - I Thes. 4:13- assuredly there will be great degrees of sorrow, but it must never be overdone (yielding completely to our grief rather than dealing with it, with our assured hope) - see also I Cor. 15:19 and Job 19:25-27
- h. And, of course, if we take this traditionally, Jesus felt deeply with their sorrow even knowing what He was about to do - this is something we should expect to do when we grieve with those who grieve, and not just stoically point them to the hope that is coming (true as it is), there is still pain that seeks immediate relief and hope in the immediate)
- i. As Jesus asks them where Lazarus had been placed He wept (this time, a different word (Εδάκρυσεν, to shed tears)) - some observing noted "See how He loved him!" - His feeling for and with them also demonstrated His humanity (though not at the expense of His deity) - Vincent quoting Godet, "The very Gospel in which the deity of Jesus is most clearly asserted, is also that which makes us best acquainted with the profoundly human side of His life."
- j. There were others of "the Jews" who were apparently unmoved by His display of feeling or were criticizing Him in their own grief; they question as to why He who could heal so many could not have stopped Lazarus from dying - this is also not an uncommon response to God when facing the death of someone we love, when questioning God as to why He did not heal and why He allowed suffering and death - but as illustrated here, God always has a greater display of glory coming, and so we must keep focus on Him and not look away in despair/disappointment from Him

#### 4. Jesus (the resurrection and the life) raises Lazarus from the dead - vs. 38-44

- a. As Jesus comes to the tomb, He is again "deeply moved within" (the same word as in verse 33) and, again, could be translated "indignation within" - we can understand a mix of anger and grief all at once, for with the sadness of death can also be an anger directed at death (and so sin), and here it could be an anger at the utter resignation to the pain of death (especially with Him there, for with Him present it is clearly wrong to carry on any sense of hopelessness)
- b. John provides the details of an eye-witness, describing the cave and later the details of Lazarus after having been raised
- c. Jesus instructs that the stone be moved out of the way which immediately prompts Martha to, as if questioning this instruction, realize there would be a strong odor (the smell of the decay of death having already been well-underway) - John notes her again as "the sister of the dead man" seeming to make it clear why she would be against this, possibly because she could not bear to not only see his dead body again, but now in such a state of corruption
- d. Jesus reiterates what He had said to her and the importance and potential if she believed (verses 25-26), and though He had not specifically mentioned the "glory of God" being seen, this is what it would always be when He is believed - see also verse 3-4 (messenger to sisters)
- e. Having no further resistance from Martha, "...they took away the stone" - the crowd would likely have been silent, astonished, curious and waiting to see what Jesus would do next - Jesus prays, but not a request to the Father, but one of thankfulness, knowing He had been heard (again, not stressing a request but focusing on the being heard, and His noting this hearing out loud for the sake of the bystanders to hear with the purpose that they, hearing Him speak to the Father (and having seen the result) would "believe that You sent Me"
- f. Jesus did not need to pray out loud, but often it is valuable for others to hear one another talking to/with God, especially in this case where He expresses thanks for what is going to happen (without doubt) and it does (though He still has not indicated what will happen)
- g. As soon as He had openly expressed thanks to the Father He speaks loudly "Lazarus, come out" and this, as John reiterates in verse 44, was said to "the man who had died" - it is commonly stressed that He could have raised all those that were dead around Lazarus which is why Jesus used his name

This had no similarity to the scenes in our day of those coming back from the dead (as if monstrous or simply the undead, yet still dead) - this was a wondrous restoration of full life and any fear would have been more that of utter amazement with Jesus (which is exactly where attention was supposed to be)

- h. As soon as Jesus spoke these words, “ἐξῆλθεν ὁ τεθνηκώς” (out came the one having been dead) - what a sight this must have been! There, at the door of the tomb was now standing Lazarus, still in the wrappings of death but somehow he had managed to get to the door (to a place he was seen) - the look of amazement must have been astounding, yet John offers no further detail as to the crowd’s amazement
- i. His hands and feet were still “bound” with the linen strips used for his burial and his face still wrapped with a cloth - Jesus tells those around Him to “unbind him” followed with “let him go” as in “let him go on his way” (there was no interest in the Lord to have him be a spectacle)
- j. This was but a “foretaste” of glory divine!” that is still yet to come when Jesus will raise the dead

### C. The plot to have Jesus killed - vs. 45-57

#### 1. The report of Lazarus’ resurrection, belief, and a panicked reaction - vs. 45-48

Regardless of how this is taken, these men with spiritual authority (and so responsibility) should have kept their focus on their responsibility before and to God, and not to themselves and not even to the nation (certainly not their personal power individually or as a group)

As with so many unbelievers, they demonstrate their determined resistance to the truth against all evidence that does not fit their agenda and priorities - this is normal and is faith, true trust in Christ even against our own, natural inclinations- faith in God/Christ will involve disbelief in self

This is also very common in self-focused leaders who will use patriotism, safety, the “greater good of ourselves and society” to discredit or just avoid standing with Christ

Throughout history there has often been the belief by governing authorities that they have within their power to actually stop or control the working of God in people

- a. Many of the Jews who had followed after Mary to comfort her, after seeing what Jesus had done “believed in Him” - we do not know the extent of their belief, but they were at least at that moment believing in Him and we do not necessarily need to discount it as not being genuine
- b. Some of these (it seems difficult to take “some of them” as being other Jews who were not believing as some take it) went to tell the Pharisees - many assume malicious intent, but again (as in 10:42) these were sincere and may have thought that the Pharisees would need to hear this and either be converted, swayed to consider Jesus more, or possibly even offer an explanation of how this could not be trustworthy and how Jesus cannot be the Messiah
- c. These that went to the Pharisees told of what Jesus had done - we do not see any indication that these believing Jews would hear the discussion to follow in the “council” - if these were hardened against Jesus in spite of what they witnessed, then they demonstrate the astonishing resistant will to the Truth - “Faith is not a matter of so much proof or evidence for the intellect; it is a matter of the will.” Lenski
- d. The Chief Priests and Pharisees “convened a council meeting” - they needed to officially discuss and deal with what Jesus was doing - their initial reaction was literally to say “What are we doing?” (as if saying, “We aren’t doing anything” while Jesus is doing so much) - They admit He is performing many “signs” (a word used of miracles that were to confirm the authenticity of someone, yet they reference Him as “this man”)
- e. This council’s driving motives are now revealed (making clearer their actual priorities) - it is easy and common to come across those with apparent spiritual authority who will use religious “speak” as a means to protect personal aspirations and goals
- f. For “if we let Him go on like this” the expected outcome (at this rate) will be that everyone (other than themselves) will end up believing in Him - this, they conclude, will lead to disaster, for the “Romans will come and take both our place and our nation” - so this would not be good for the nation (their outward motive) and their position (their inward motive) over it
- g. Their “read” on the situation was that if there were enough that would believe in Jesus, that it would catch the attention of the Romans (especially if there was a following of Jesus as the Messiah and so their King) which would cause Rome to come in and reset everything - Rome, as most governments (secular and religious), will not tolerate high levels of loyalty in large enough group for there will be a threatening sense that will cause them to seek to reign-in the zealots

#### 2. The decision (formal) that Jesus must die - vs. 49-53

Caiaphas is speaking in a way that is openly meant to direct the group’s attention what would be most profitable for them in particular while still appearing to be out for the good of the people

God’s “good” for us is eternally focused while man’s “good” for us is usually temporal

- a. Caiaphas (the High Priest which had become a politically assigned position) forcefully speaks to deal with the apparent inability of the Council to reach a definitive decision on what to do with Jesus - He rudely begins by claiming all the others don’t know anything (they are clueless as to what to do) - so he provides a simple answer that he presents as being clear and wise and a must for the good of the people
- b. He goes on to say they do not understand (consider, reason out) that it is “συμφέρω” (a word that pictures the bringing together of parts for a profit) that “one man should die for the people” with the reason to save “the whole nation” from being destroyed
- c. John now reveals that Caiaphas was not speaking this “on his own” but God used him as the High Priest to truly prophesy that Jesus would die for the nation, and even beyond that scope, to all those (of His) “scattered abroad” (note 10:16)
- d. This is a supreme example of how God can/will use others in spite of themselves for His purposes



Note Gen. 50:15-21 for another example of this

Compare to Mt. 26:3-5

Jesus did not take what would be considered unnecessary risks when hostilities were rising - His purpose was more to be a sacrifice than to be a martyr

When seeking the opinion of each other whether Jesus would actually come, they used the strong negative “οὐ μὴ” that they seemed to think He wouldn’t, most likely because they also knew it would be dangerous

Being unable to out argue Jesus, out maneuver Him, and compete with His “signs”, they seek to kill Him, using a “legal” process that would need to be rigged

- e. Verse 51 is an interesting example of God’s sovereign control over all things, and yet there still remains the “freedom” of the thing (person) being used - Caiaphas was evil in his intent and even criminal, yet even in that, God’s power to overrule its intent is evident - for the death of Jesus, by this council’s scheming, would lead to the greatest act of redemption/salvation - this is one of the reasons we never despair when sin seems to be “winning the day”
- f. Note also that John describes those “scattered abroad” as “children of God” that Jesus would die for - Robertson in his “Word Pictures” references this as “the potential children of God in all lands” but his adding the word “potential” is uncalled for; these are the children of God and will be joined into the singular flock referenced in John 10:16 and all by the death of Jesus Christ
- g. It was now these leaders formally plotted Jesus’ death as John will add to in verse 57

### 3. The Passover week nears - vs. 54-57

- a. Jesus, knowing the plans of the council, no longer “walked openly among the Jews” but retreated to a small town several miles from Jerusalem - this is, practically speaking, the consequence when leadership is hostile to the Lord for their own perceived good, and many under their influence lack because of such action
- b. Jesus would soon return to Jerusalem for the Passover, but that would be for His predetermined purpose to act as the sacrificial Lamb of God
- c. The most significant observance of the Passover was approaching where Jesus would fulfill what it represented, because the only way sins could be truly “passed over” for judgment/condemnation was for them to be paid - for another way - Jesus left the threatening area because His time was not yet come, and God would work it all out for Caiaphas’ unintended prophesy to be fulfilled (precisely during what would have been the Passover sacrifice)
- d. As many were coming to Jerusalem early for purification purposes, the talk amongst them was regarding whether or not Jesus would attend - it seems clear that the word was out to most of the people regarding the planned arrest of Jesus
- e. It is interesting to think about these types of responses - the people knew their spiritual leaders were looking to kill Jesus, and yet seem more interested in being watching to see what would happen (as it also seems like many to this day feel safest to just observe and try not to openly take sides) - they knew there was an arrest warrant and that the instruction sought out information as to Jesus’ location so He could be arrested

## XIX. Jesus Comes Back To Jerusalem - chapter 12

- A. John has spent the first 11 chapters covering the ministry of Jesus, and now will go on to use the majority of the remaining content to cover the last week of Jesus’ life, followed by the resurrection - at the start of this chapter, it is now 6 days before Passover - Jesus was about a week before His crucifixion and His fulfillment of all that the Passover pointed to - Jesus will spend time in this chapter speaking of His death and burial
- B. The anointing of Jesus and Jesus’ defense against the negative response of the onlookers - vs. 1-8

### 1. Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, anoints the feet of Jesus - vs. 1-3

She wanted to express her love for Him in this way, though it was a costly expression (monetarily) and went even further by wiping His feet with her hair, an incredible act of humility, expressing her high estimation of His importance

Others were about to criticize this expression of love/honor to the Lord, but Jesus would demonstrate an insight above even what Mary realized regarding this expression of her love

- a. Jesus had just returned from the small town of Epharim (11:54) and had come to Bethany - we learn in the accounts of Matthew (Mt. 26) and Mark (Mk. 14) that this took place at the home of Simon “the leper” (likely one who had been healed by Jesus previously) - a supper was prepared for Jesus - John provides the added details of Martha, Mary and Lazarus being there was well - Jesus was spending one last meal with friends before His crucifixion
- b. With Martha serving and Lazarus dining with Jesus and the others, Mary brought in a “pound of very expensive perfume of pure nard” (likely around 12 oz.) and anointed (poured it on) Jesus’ feet, followed by wiping His feet with her hair - this was her gesture of love and appreciation to Him, and her way of showing Him her love and honor
- c. Martha demonstrated exceptional faith in chapter 11 and now here Mary demonstrates loving reverence for the Lord - we should take note and seek such a motivation within ourselves that even expressions of honor to the Lord that come our way might seem humbling (with others observing or likely to think lesser of us), yet with all thought for honoring Him, we do not hesitate to sacrifice our possessions and personal honor
- d. A woman’s hair is part of her own honor and typically something she takes great care of yet here she sees an honorable use of it in wiping the Lord’s feet

c. We can see a way for us also to serve the Lord in such a humble way also as seen in Mat. 25:31-40 when supporting service is rendered to “the least of these my brothers”

2. The higher purpose of God in this act of Mary’s love - vs. 4-8

There are likely to be times when our works for the Lord are criticized by others who can point out ways it should have been done and even declare it to be a waste - fortunately the Lord is the judge of its true value and God’s purposes in it and not others - this does not mean all our works will be automatically good, for they need to be genuinely grounded in love and honor of the Lord

a. Judas Iscariot, one of the 12 but the one (as John points out) who was about to betray the Lord spoke critically and openly of this act, in a way framed within his attempt to come across as altruistic - for, he surmises, this could have been sold for a high price (possibly for a typical man’s year’s pay) and then given to the poor - to be fair, some of the other disciples (noted in Matthew and Mark) also chimed in (apparently in agreement with Judas)

b. Their assessment of how else the valuable ointment could have been used was true, but our estimates of the value of a work are not the ultimate authority - it could have been used to support the poor, but God used Mary’s seemingly impulsive act of gratefulness for His own prophetic purposes

c. John reveals Judas’ motive in it, for Judas was a thief and would have hoped to have used some of this value for himself - our motives may not be to use such opportunities for money, but we may have our own pride in mind (as what drives it) or even selfish motives that appear good to us (as with conscience appeasers to make us feel better about wrongs we’ve done) but they are still motivated by self-service of some type

Just in speculation, some perfumes are so strong the scent of them lingers on for days (even after washing) - might it have been possible that some of the scent from this still lingered on Him at His crucifixion and burial?

d. The Lord defends her by linking this act to anointing Him for His burial (likely not a thought she was considering since no indication of this as her motive is noted) - in about a week, He’d be buried and this was as if anointing Him now - Jesus also directly said (as seen in Mt. 26:12) that this anointing was for His burial and He added that “wherever this gospel is proclaimed” that this account of her loving, humble act would be included

This text should not be used to make a case why the poor should be neglected, for none of us will ever have this particular opportunity - note also when referencing the “poor” these are those truly poor and not the numerous “less wealthy” we see on our day

e. At first glance, Jesus response to Judas’ reference to the poor might look harsh, but He does not say that the poor are to ever be neglected, just that the opportunities (and responsibilities) to care for the poor will always be there - even to this day with all our advancements, we still have the poor and the opportunities are endless

f. This night would likely be the last night of a semblance of peace and normalcy, so the opportunity was then and now (in this instance), and to have used the resources in that moment to feed the poor would have been to miss a great opportunity of honor to Jesus

3. The plot to dispose of some of the evidence of the Lord’s work (and a point of faith for many) - vs. 9-11

Belief for the chief priests was a matter of competition for them; they would have far rathered the people trust them than Jesus (figuring that trusting them as, to some degree, trusting God)- this is a common trap for spiritual leaders to get into

a. When word spread that Jesus was at this meal, large crowds came to see Him as well as to see Lazarus - since Lazarus was also a “draw” for so many to believe in Jesus (to some degree), the chief priests plotted to have Lazarus killed also

b. Note that these religious leaders would rather dispose of one of the greatest sign miracles of all time (resurrecting the dead) than to accept Jesus for who He said (and demonstrated countless times) He was

c. As stated before, faith is often more a matter of the will than it is of evidence

d. “Thus another striking illustration is given of the judgment, the crisis, the sifting process, which is always going on in the presence of Christ. His greatest signs, his wisest teachings, his most amazing love, bring out the twofold result. Some receive, some reject, some burst into louder acclaim, some try to slay.” Pulpit Commentary

C. The glorious (royal) entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem - vs. 12-19

1. The large crowd that had come to see Jesus (and Lazarus) in Bethany, discovered that Jesus was headed to Jerusalem and so planned a glorious welcome for Him - vs. 12-15

His act of triumph would come at the cross and would be proven as such at His resurrection

a. This account is typically called “the Triumphal Entry” and to be sure it was glorious, and what was expressed was true (more so than most likely knew), but we might be more inclined to use the term “triumphal” in His cross - bearing walk out of Jerusalem to Golgotha, and then His triumphant resurrection over sin and death

b. The celebration of “Palm Sunday” is so named because of the palm branches laid out as a path for Jesus to enter Jerusalem - from what we can tell, a group went with Jesus from Bethany, starting this processional, and a group from Jerusalem worked their way out to meet Him on the way to escort Him into the city

The word “Hosanna” from the Hebrew “hôsî-âh-nâ” meaning “Save us” though it had become an exclamation of praise

c. The crowd was likely very enormous in the number of those participating since it is possible that more than 2 million people were in the city for Passover, and the majority of those participating crying out “Hosanna!” (from Psalm 118:25 for the transliteration of “Save us, we pray!”)

This is certainly the case with us, for even in our most inspired moments of praise of and to the Lord, we cannot fully understand the magnitude and magnificence of what we are saying

One of the dangers of being a loyalist with the “in-crowds” is missing the truth altogether, even under the glorious banners of formal, well-supported, popular religious groupings

compare this to Mt. 21:1-11

Yet it seems that much of what is put forward as “praise services” that are made as spectacular as possible, and that do solicit great admiration/attention of crowds, ends up outshining the Truth (which is seen as needing to be put aside and even hidden to reach the goal of the praise of the majorities) 2. “...look, the world has gone after Him” - vs. 16-19

In the context of Zechariah, we read on from 9:9 to verse 11 and see something yet to be fulfilled and fulfilled in a way (and time) not understood by any of these onlookers - He would bring peace to all the world, and not only would He be truly “righteous” but would have “salvation” in the fullest sense

There is a degree of trust/faith with us also when reading, studying, learning and seeking to implement God’s Word in that much of its significance will not be seen/understood till we see the Lord in glory (glorified) also

One of the signs of self-righteousness is the disappointment and even resentment when the Lord is truly at work in converting the lost, redirecting the spiritually distracted and reviving the complacent through means we are not personally associated with

- d. The holding and waving of palm branches was associated with great joy, and that often associated with victory - quoting then from the next verse in Psalm 118 (verse 26), they shout out “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord”, essentially acknowledging Him as the Messiah, followed still by claiming Him as “King of Israel”, though the magnitude of what was being said was likely not fully understood by the proclaimers - yet in comparison to many of history’s conquering celebrities, this procession would have likely seemed unimpressive to the proud - yet the reality of what was happening was far more glorious than the best of “shows” mankind will ever be able to “put-on”!
- e. It has been noted by some that these were likely mostly made up of outsiders, being those who came to Jerusalem for the feast, and even those who came early for the purification processes (11:55), likely being the more dedicated, sincere practicers - some of these may have then later been those who would be shouting “crucify Him!”, but it also is reasonable to assume many of these would never have changed their perspectives so quickly - crowds with the support of the powerful and influential (the religious leaders in this instance) most often get the best venues for the expression of public sentiment
- f. Jesus fulfills Zec. 9:9 when using a “young donkey” being humble yet coming as a king - He was coming as King, as conquerer, as Messiah yet all of this being infinitely above all the greatest of conquerors and kings the world had ever and would ever see - knowing what we know now, He was all these, yet coming into Jerusalem to serve as the perfect/innocent sacrificial Lamb of God, to pay the price for sin and conquer sin completely and its curse/hold on us
- g. Even in these “glories” and praises, there was the power of God displayed in humility - God’s power/glory is found most in reality (truth) more than in the pride-inducing/promoting processions (even the religious ones) - the truth/reality of what was actually taking place would easily outshine the best of man’s glories in celebrations
  - a. This section ends with the conclusion (above) of the Pharisees, yet human assessments are often reactionary and are prone to miss God’s continuing usage of the unpopular and even the fickleness of humanity (that loves to celebrate moments of popularity but shun the battle/conflict)
  - b. The significance of all that was happening was not understood by the disciples - this might seem odd at first glance, seeing that the crowds seemed to know He was the promised King, yet they and the disciples did not truly understand the scope of His reign (and the timing (practically)) - the magnitude of what was happening, and even the part they were playing in it (and what they were seeing at the time) was unknown - this is the case with us also; seemingly every-day things have a much more significant purpose in God’s usage/ purpose of them than we realize
  - c. It is interesting to see also that John begins his partial quote with “Fear not” in contrast to the original “Rejoice greatly” - some attribute this distinction to taking the first words from Isaiah 40:9, though it could be that John knew (now, after the Lord had been glorified) that the means, method and timing of the complete fulfillment in Zec. 9 would need faith - the rejoicing was yet to fully come (regarding the peace on earth and the rest) - often our understanding of a text is also partial; we see the benefits and end results but, fail to see/know the process (which will involve faith/trust and time/patience)
  - d. There were then (as John explains) more that came to see Jesus because they had heard of the “sign” He performed in raising Lazarus to life - the continuing testifying of those who had been present when Lazarus was resurrected was part of the cause of so many coming to see Jesus enter Jerusalem
  - e. This enthusiastic, crowd-creating response was further troubling to the Pharisees who again had an internal conflict, one group accusing the other of “not doing any good” (likely that more drastic (violent) action be taken, and since it wasn’t, Jesus was still growing in popularity)
  - f. They would soon come to be able to get their way with Jesus (having Him arrested, tried and crucified) but it would be the Lord’s great triumph - self-righteous “victories” against God end up being losses to the proud and proof of God’s overwhelming victories through the humble
  - g. Their assessment that “the world has gone after Him” was more accurate than they realized - this will be evidenced more in the “Greeks” coming to see Jesus

D. "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me..." - vs. 20-26

1. The "Greeks" wishing to see Jesus - the significance - vs. 20-23

These Greeks would be those interested in and possibly following the Jewish beliefs and were come to have a personal audience with Jesus - Jesus' response to the request is telling as to the pivotal point this was making

It seems fitting that these men came from the West (from afar) as men came from the East at His birth - some for the very beginning these now for the end of His earthly ministry

Before this time, the hour had not come and Jesus could not be arrested - the resentments, envies and hatred of His enemies was stayed until this time when it would all lead to His glory - Jn. 7:30, 8:20

- a. This, at first glance, seems to be confusing - we are presented by John a group of "Greeks" who are looking to meet with Jesus and then we are never told that they actually did get to meet with Him - it is likely that this reference is in keeping with the mention of "...the world has gone after Him" and then the transition into Jesus' signifying His "hour" to be glorified
- b. Like the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8) and the Roman Centurion Cornelius (Acts 10), there were those outside Israel (the Jews) seeking the truth and following the God of the Scriptures
- c. They seek out Philip (possibly because he had a Greek name or because they knew of him and his city and had possibly met (which may be why John mentions Philip's hometown)) and simply state, "Sir, we would see Jesus"
- d. Philip is sometimes thought of as being timid since he went to run it by Andrew first, but to be fair Jesus had instructed them to go only to the "House of Israel" in His commissioning of them in Mt. 10:5-6
- e. Jesus, having heard the request to meet Him from these Greeks now declares openly that His "hour" had come (a specific point in time), and here when the "Son of Man would be glorified"
- f. The "hour" He had previously referenced as not yet having arrived now has arrived - it would not just be His resurrection that would be glorious, but also all that would lead to and include His trial, beatings, crucifixion and burial as well
- g. His "glory" would include the shame He would face - it is mankind that sees shame/shaming as to be avoided yet our Lord, here and in other places, demonstrates the glories of God that are/can be seen in the humbling we face rather than the common notion that glory is only found when acknowledged as such by people and honoring circumstances

2. The "much fruit" that comes in death" - vs. 24-26

The "glory" here is the results of the death, bringing forth life (for that was the design in its death), and so "ἐάν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ πολὺν καρπὸν φέρει" (if, however, it dies, much (many times over) fruit (to produce more fruit) it produces

And these countless millions will have eternal life, without sin, without end!

It does seem insane to think this way to those who are so focused on what they have now (this life) and who cannot (do not) see the incomparable value of what could come after

Living for the eternal life will come at the expense of this life in many ways, and will appear to some as though this life is being "thrown away"

This was precisely what the Lord was doing His entire life and His death, as horrific as it would be, would be infinitely more than worth it for the "much fruit" (profound fruit" it would assuredly produce

- a. It would have seemed odd and contradictory for the Messiah, the Son of God, Son of Man to die - death was and is still the ultimate enemy that cannot be conquered (by any of us), and is typically seen as the ultimate end to something
- b. Yet, as Jesus illustrates at this key moment (describing His coming glorification) another way that death can be used to bring about profound life (multiplied many times over than the single death)
- c. For, for certain, (truly, truly) unless a kernel of wheat falls to the earth (is dropped from its higher position/place above the ground, and there dies (yields itself), it would "remain alone" (it would just remain as it is, single without fulfilling its purpose to be used to reproduce)
- d. How does a wheat seed's death fit that of the Lord and His glorification in dying? As will be seen (and as we know from history), His death defeated sin, crushed the serpent's head, paid the price for sin, and in it completely defeated the "second death" for countless millions
- e. Jesus then makes it known the value of true life (a life focused beyond this one, a life lived for the next) - for anyone that "loses his life" and "hates his life in this world" is the one that will "φυλάσσω" (guard, protect) it for eternal life - the key distinction here is the phrase "life in this world" as distinct from the eternal (endless) life to come
- f. For there will be many (most) that will "love" (φιλῶν - affection and strong, driving sentiment/emotion) this life now (in contrast to the "hating" (μισῶν - detest) of it) - this, on the surface, would seem completely absurd and even irrational to the "best life now" crowd
- g. The "hating" here is such a strong contrast to the "love" to stress the profound difference between the two - this life can have happy moments, much to offer when it comes to "loving" it, but when compared to the eternal life Jesus offers, it will be seen by most onlookers as though this life is treated with contempt (who might actually surmise we do hate this life)
- h. "Many will at last hate themselves bitterly for not having hated themselves properly in this life... he who is ready to go contrary to his natural inclinations and desires in this life here on earth, to wound, grieve, deny, crucify, mortify self in repentance and in sanctification. He may look as though he is losing his life by getting nothing out of it, yet in reality he is the only one who is taking care of and protecting even his earthly life, for by thus treating his life he will protect it 'unto life eternal'". Lenski
- i. This would be the standard (not the exception) for all who would serve Him

It seems as though many professing believers are willing to risk eternity for temporal comfort and gain

True service and association with Christ will look to most as one hating their own life (since most view a fulfilling life as a life lived for self)

One of the ideas of following is accompanying - we see and realize life as always with Him and so for Him

Absolutely nothing should be able to compete with this motive! Yet most just won't risk to trust/believe it and will settle for whatever meager "glories" and honor this age will provide

We must keep in mind this was all in keeping with the "Son of Man to be glorified" - the dreadfulness of what had to be faced would lend all the more to this glorious work of our Lord

Some take this to be a prayer, "Father save Me from this hour" rather than part of the question He began - this could also work in light of His prayer in Gethsemane where He request to "let this cup pass from Me" was followed by "nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done"

Notice the passion of His High Priestly prayers on our behalf as described in Heb. 5:7 - the "reverence" or as it is also translated "piety" describes why He faced what He faced - His work for us was not impassionate or stoic, but full of feeling/emotion

see John 13:31-32

- j. The way Jesus phrases the last part of verse 25 is key also; He says, "... εις ζωην αιωνιον φυλαξει αυτην..." ("to life eternal will guard/protect it.") - not in the sense of "eternal life" being earned in any capacity, but that such a person "guards" more his focus on eternal life far above this temporal/fleeting life
- k. Jesus, in line with the apparent "hating" of life shows what it will entail - such will be those whose lives are dedicated (set aside) for His service and so will require (understandably) following Him (His example, His direction), which will end up in Glory - but the path will be one of self-denial, obedience and trust - see II Cor. 4:7-11
- l. This service (διακονη, voluntary, active service) will involve following Jesus, His priorities and so His life path of service to the Father along with the persecution and self-denial that will come as a part of it - it has been said that Jesus has many that will admire Him but few that will actually follow Him - Many will encourage others to follow Him, but will refuse or neglect to follow Him in actuality
- m. Such a life may seem like one of self-hatred, but its reward is incalculable! For, Jesus said, "the Father will honor him." - the God of the universe, Creator will assign high value to these servants of Jesus in contrast to the mocking and derision of this age
- E. Jesus foretells of His coming death, the judgment of the world and its "ruler" being "cast out" - vs. 27-36

### 1. The "troubled" soul of Jesus - vs. 27

- a. We are now able to see a glimpse into the human aspect of Jesus, yet in perfect harmony with His deity - some have tried to explain this text as His concern for other things and look to downplay His inner struggle - this is revealed for our sake and His perfect example of how such struggles (troubled souls) are to be handled
- b. Consider what Jesus knew was coming, "His was not to be the death like that of the Christian for whom the terrors of death have been removed by the cancellation of sin and guilt; nor like the death of the unbeliever who is blind or realizes only in part what awaits him. Jesus was to die with all the world's sin and guilt upon Him. The curse and damnation of that guilt was to strike Him and crush out his life. All the dreadfulness of this impending death was fully revealed to Him, He saw all that was awaiting Him." Lenski
- c. The word for "troubled" is the same as the word for "groaned" in chapter 11 and is in the perfect tense, indicating it began and continued - it is not a sense of fear as much as it is a type of dread (similar to what He would face in Gethsemane)
- d. Jesus' response to this is intriguing - His question, "What shall I say?" is continued with a possible question that would seem reasonable in light of what He knew was coming - Should He ask the Father to save Him "from this hour"?
- e. His answer (all of this spoken openly for the sake of those hearing) was one of acknowledgment to His purpose for coming into this world - it was for this purpose that He had come to "this hour"
- f. Here our Lord provides a shining example of how all internal struggles with life and the evils that we must face are to be faced - because Jesus faced this hour, we now can face, with the same resolve of God's purpose, what would normally overwhelm us and/or cause us to run in fear - many do run and come to terms of peace with the enemy because they refuse to face the troubles/trials (because they do not truly trust God's controlling purpose in it/them)
- g. This purpose (headed toward "glory") was for our good - He came for us! He faced not only the actuality of it (which was beyond our understanding) but He also faced the dread of it coming (which we can understand as being part of the overall agony)

### 2. Glory to the Father - vs. 28-30

- a. How does Jesus respond to His troubled spirit? "Father, glorify Your name" - this has been the acknowledged focus of His entire ministry and the definitive answer to the question He just proposed (should He seek release from "the hour" or focus solely on God's glory?)
- b. This received the third instance of the Father speaking audibly (others could hear) - the first was at Jesus' baptism, the second at His transfiguration and here - the affirmation from the Father was two-fold... that He had glorified it already as He will again in what Jesus was about to face - this is true comfort and motivation - God has and always will be glorified regardless the difficulties and hardships we face... for this is what all of life is about!

“His wisdom and power, his justice and holiness, his truth and goodness, were greatly glorified; the demands of a broken law were fully answered; the affront done to God’s government satisfied for; and God accepted the satisfaction, and declared himself well pleased.” MH

The truth clearly spoken (presented) and even proven need not be accepted by many to be truth - popularity does not determine truth

Note one example of the results of this in Paul’s testimony in Acts 26:12-18

He is like a defeated general/king still on the run attacking as he may but defeated nonetheless

Humanly speaking it would seem unrealistic to think Jesus would draw so many by means of His being put to death as a criminal on a cross

This “lifting up” was, as included in John 3:14, in association of the serpent being raised in the wilderness to bring about healing

As we’ve already seen the popular picture of the Messiah was a political and militarial leader - when potential followers learned of His salvation from sin they became uninterested - the majority do not want to be saved from the sin they love and that defines them

This does not mean that there is no answer - we have the answer now, but they would not have accepted His explanation not having the complete account (Gospel) which is why Jesus compels them to continue listening and learning while they have opportunity

We all have only a little bit of time and even knowing Jesus as “the Light” we should utilize the time He’s given us productively (continuing in the “walk”)

- c. The “name” of the Father is what represents who and all He is, and such will be glorified in this plan and act of love, righteousness, justification, redemption, propitiation and sanctification - such glory is rarely considered as such by mankind who seek glory to and in some way to be about them (for them, by them, always them)
- d. The crowd heard the voice but some assumed it was a natural happening (thunder) while others thought an angel must have spoken to Him - yet Jesus tells them the “voice” (so it was the Father’s voice that they had heard) was heard for their sake and not for His (He did not need to hear it in this a way) - it was another validation of who He was, though these were spiritually blind and deaf to these things, they were done for the sake of those that would later believe and understand why all these things had happened (for much of what God does will look confusing and/or even contradictory in the moment)
- e. “Christ foretells to the deaf the manner of his death, the overcoming of the devil and the world, and in conclusion his triumph.” GBN

### 3. The judgment and glorious result of the coming crucifixion of Jesus - vs. 31-33

- a. This “hour” Jesus is speaking of will bring with it “judgment upon the world” (not just the people but the “κόσμος” (the order, structure of the creation) - Jesus death would be glorious in it’s redemptive, sanctifying work and such glorious light will be wonderful to these, but this glorious light (glory) will expose the evil of this world, it’s people and its order(s)
- b. Jesus used “now” twice in indicating the results of the hour that was now beginning - now judgment was coming and now the ruler of the world (the world order) will be “cast out” (overthrown, defeated, dethroned) along with the “world” he was ruling and directing against God
- c. Note the work of the Holy Spirit in this in John 16:4-11 - the “ruler of this world” (Satan) was cast out of His rule as a result of this “hour” - we see the completion of his final imprisonment and eternal judgment in Revelation - yet even now we must remember he does not rule - the future tense in this second phrase demonstrates more to come
- d. The means of this judgment and casting out of the world’s ruler will pivot on “if I be lifted up from the earth” and will result in the positive affect of drawing “all men to myself” - notice this drawing (same as in 6:44) is to Himself and not His cross, His cause, His message, for this is not a political, philosophical relationship but a very personal one
- e. This “lifting up” would be in reference to the type of death He would die - in light of what began this discourse (the coming of the Greeks to see Him), this “all men” is in reference to all kinds of people and not just those of Israel - it would be a worldwide draw and not tied to a specific people/ethnicity - note also John 18:28-32 - He is the only hope for the world!

### 4. “Who is this Son of Man?” - vs. 34-36

- a. We are not certain that the people listening understood that He was using “lifted up” in reference to His death (though the context seems to allow for it), but they certainly understood what He was saying in reference to His going away (and so not “remain forever”)
- b. Their understanding was correct but in the wrong sense - they were fair questions as so many who read what Jesus has said and yet reject the answer He gives
- c. So based on what they knew (and had been taught), how can Jesus reconcile the idea of a Messiah/Son of Man that can come and go away versus remaining forever? His answer would not convince them (as seen in verse 37)
- d. These were reasonable questions (and not necessarily confrontational as some would insist) but Jesus would not answer them in the way they would expect, for His was still a directive to faith/trust in Him - the teaching/knowledge and evidence (signs/miracles) were sufficient to point them to Jesus as the one to trust, but they impatiently demand their reason addressed to believe (or so they thought, though such typically always have more questions/ concerns before submitting in faith)
- e. “The light” is how Jesus referenced Himself and His teaching and that the time remaining of having such access to such light would only be around a little while (a manner of days) - Jesus compared it to “walking” (continue the journey for truth/answers) while you have time rather than insisting all skepticism be addressed ahead of time - Jesus was the true source of “light” (insight into the real truth) and if these ceased to continue in the pursuit of it in Him they would have the “darkness overtake you”

Many will determine what something is "in the dark" to their own satisfaction, but if seen in "the light" it will be seen for what it really is - there is a degree of faith that is had by those "in the dark" but it is incorrect no matter how sure the spiritually blind person is - see Jn. 3:19-21

Note how Jesus uses this "darkness" as being aggressive in its pursuit to overtake - it is not a passive entity but is active and the dangerously naive ignore it as a genuine threat

Note also Jn. 11:9-10

To be a child of "the Light" is to be ones who are truly "enlightened"

- f. Jesus' answer was the best answer, for rather than cater to their skepticism and ongoing questions (for clarification), He simply tells them to "walk while you have the Light" (Jesus Himself being that "light" in 8:12) - He is directing them to live by faith (in Him), and settling it (trust that He is the true source of true insight into all things) so that the "darkness will not overtake you" (because it most certainly will if not following the Light)
- g. So "walk while you have light" - it is easy to forget the passing of valuable time (and opportunity) while contemplating what one will trust in life - this conclusion is best determined/settled when we are young rather than keeping our "options open" as if there will be a way to not have to live life by faith - this "walking" is our living, so live in the light, while you still have the opportunity of it, for if not, darkness will "καταλαμβάνω" (seize, capture) you - Jesus is telling them not to waste their time in failing to utilize His being with them since the time was growing short - commit to Him while there is time - see Isa. 55:6-9
- h. "But who believes that it is such a serious thing of which Christ here speaks? How little is the light esteemed, and the people imagine they can get it at any time when they want it, even if now they do not take it. But Christ says, "No! if you despise it, the darkness will overtake you." Luther
- i. Such "...does not know where he goes." - they are headed somewhere (maybe various "somewheres") throughout life, but they do not know where they are truly going in life and after it is over - as part of the darkness, they may believe they do know where they are headed
- j. So, Jesus concludes, while they have this light (Himself, His message and so the Light, the Truth) "believe in the Light" (trust and so entrust) and so then be (have your identity as) "sons of Light" - to be a "son" is to possess the same nature, be of the "same" origin/family
- k. Though His "hour" had come it had not fully come, and so he left them and "hid Himself from them" - His arrest, trial and crucifixion would be in God's time and not "the Jews"

#### F. Left to blindness, hardness, disbelief and partial belief - vs. 37-43

1. Jesus had now essentially finished His public ministry (having hidden Himself) and John uses these next verses to make the point that the popular disbelief was not to be a worrisome point as to His legitimacy of being the Light (the Messiah, the Truth) - vs. 37

By most normal accounting, Jesus' ministry looked to be a failure in the end- He clearly had done much to prove who He was, but His teaching, His character and His actual representation of the Father were unacceptable to the majority

- a. Though Jesus had done many "signs" (miracles) in front of them (ἐμπροσθεν - in front of their faces/eyes), they were still not believing Him - it was not a matter of evidence (proof) but an ongoing willful disregard/discounting of Him
- b. This is one of many indicators of the natural hardness of mankind, that even with the spiritual leaders of Israel, those with the most natural advantages (historical and present), they still would not believe... in Him (and these last two clarifying words were key) - many believed He could do these miracles but they could not fully trust Him and in His cause/message/purpose - they trusted (even and so feared) other things more

2. This disbelief fulfilled prophecy as well as God's will - vs. 38-41

John is making it clear that all of this was in keeping (with precision) God's prophesied will - this truth needs to be remembered by us when tempted to doubt God and His Word because of popular (secular and religious) rejection or disapproval

- a. These next few verses are controversial when taken to demonstrate some type of unfairness in God, as though He would be unjust in arranging that His message be rejected in disbelief
- b. But we must first consider that this rejecting, willful disbelief, is normal to all mankind - God would use this (purpose it) as part of the Son of Man being glorified (vs. 23)
- c. So, as John explains, this all happened this way in order that Isaiah's prophesy in Isaiah 53 and 6 be fulfilled (from "πληρώω" meaning to make something complete (finish it))
- d. The first part of this is from Isaiah 53:1 where the question John quotes is from the prophet inquiring of God as to whether or not what he "report" (what he declares/proclaims) will be believed (since there would be so many that would not believe) - Isaiah will go on in chapter 53 to describe the rejected and despised servant of God Who will face immense suffering (and that by God, ultimately) and it all done to deal with sin
- e. These predicted to disbelieve will even be those "to whom the arm of the Lord has been revealed" (those who will see the powerful working of God firsthand), or this could reference the fact that only those to whom the "arm of the Lord is revealed" are the only ones who will believe (or better, will be able to believe)
- f. We need not be pragmatic in our thinking (in the world's sense) for all we need to know is that God is working everything out in His perfect, all-powerful will and that (then) the apparent results do not need to be used to determine His success in it

"The more improbable any event is, the more does a divine foresight appear in the prediction of it. One could not have imagined that the kingdom of the Messiah, supported with such pregnant proofs, should have met with so much opposition among the Jews, and therefore their unbelief is called a marvelous work, and a wonder..." MH

This text in Isaiah 6 is used not only by John but by Matthew (13:14-15), Mark (4:10-12), Luke (8:9-10), and recorded of Paul while in Rome in Acts 28:25-28 and by Paul in Romans 11:7-8 - all these answering why the majority of Israel would reject and not believe the Lord - the rejection of His Word would work into His redemptive plan as demonstrated in Romans 11:11-22

Again, as in verse 36, "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."

"Thus even now disinclination to God and to righteousness leads to moral incapacity. Sin is punished by its natural consequences: unbelief is punished by unsusceptibility to clearest evidence; prejudice by blindness; rejection of Divine love by inability to see it at its best. How is this natural evolution brought about? Surely by laws of God. What are these laws but God's ways of acting with all moral agents whatever?" Pulpit Commentary

There is no "coming to a deal" with God where He will compromise with our sense of things - if the singular way to truth and salvation is rejected, there is no other option - compare with Heb. 6:4-6

There are seemingly endless "glories" humanity seeks after and lives for, yet none of these compare to the glory about to be displayed in all that Jesus was about to suffer

It is highly likely that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were in this group and they appear to come to full belief after the crucifixion

- g. Those who would have most likely prided themselves as being those who would fulfill God's Word in their obedience, were used to fulfill it in their disobedience to their doom just as those in Mt. 7 prided themselves in their works for God, only to discover He did not know them
- h. John uses then the context of Isaiah 6:8-10 (read) to answer the reason why there is no belief (with Israel/the Jews) now with Jesus - Isaiah had just been purified for his calling of the Lord and then immediately told his ministry would be (response-wise) fruitless and would be used to harden the people even further than they already were
- i. So, plainly put, "...they could not believe" (the people in Isaiah's day and the people (the majority) now with Jesus) - it may be critically claimed that this demonstrates instances where God does not truly give His saving grace and that, plainly put, is true - God is not nor ever has been obligated to give His grace (undeserved favor/kindness) to all, but will actually use the hardness of mankind, their opposing choices, against them and for His ultimate glory (above and in ways we cannot fully comprehend) - see Rom. 9:18-24
- j. By means of the declaration and demonstration of the Truth and all the "signs" (evidences of authenticity) God has used it to blind their eyes and harden their hearts to it to fully (judicially) in justice judge them - these are past mercy/grace and so, from the human standpoint it is a fearful reminder to not put-off a yielding to the Lord and His Word
- k. How God fully utilizes disbelief up to a point of conversion versus disbelief (to full and final judgment) we cannot say, but we know from texts like this, it is true - as with Pharaoh in Rom. 9:17, God used the hardness of Pharaoh against him and hardened Him more (roused him to it) to glorify His own name and work with Israel to all generations, and so as in this text, He uses their disbelief and confines them in their disobedience in His perfect justice - this must not be allowed to detract from His demonstrations of grace, but instead should enhance them all the more! - many, in their self-righteous judgment of God will use texts like this to claim (if taken plainly) that He is somehow unloving and unmerciful; yet these, in their limited perspectives, entertain notions that they can hold God's word, the elements of His Gospel, against Him and His Gospel - God must be truly God, and so in no way ever seen (in any consideration) as answerable to you and I, His creation
- l. John does not include these clarifications to perplex his readers but to explain, with absolute assurance, why there was so much disbelief - and then to make it clear that their disbelief would lend to the glory to be revealed in all that was coming in this "hour"
- m. The Lord then, in such cases, blinds their eyes to the obvious and hardens their hearts to their own will (and way) ensuring they cannot be healed (for there is no other way for true understanding and healing to happen) - He gives them over to their own wills
- n. John's next statement in verse 41 is intriguing regarding the reason Isaiah said these things - we know he stated them because he was a prophet and was to pass on what he was given and what he saw, but John specifies that Isaiah said these things (in particular) "... because he saw His glory and spoke of Him." - the "Him" in Isaiah is Yahweh and here John associates the "Him" with Jesus (making them the same) - another text where John points to Jesus' deity
- o. John equates even the prophesied rejections and now the actuality of it with this "glory" also - there was "glory" at the throne of God, and yet this glory would be seen even in the hardened and blind responses of a rejecting people - He is glorified in His rightness over man's rightness
- p. Throughout the history of man there have been many glorious sacrifices, that though they were often dreadful to behold or hear of, yet none of them involved the truly innocent, truly pure/righteous, and certainly none of them involved the God-Man accomplishing an eternal, flawless plan with completely successful results (while the enemy was accomplishing their dream scenarios... to their own demise)
- 3. Partial belief overcome by the pursuit of the "glory of man" - vs. 42-43
  - a. Even with the prophesies of Isaiah coming true, there was still a level of belief in many, though as John clarifies, it looks to have been (at least at that time) still more a mental assent (cornered, as it were, by undeniable facts/evidences)
  - b. This is an enlightening couple of verses for it demonstrates a type of belief that is not genuine (in most of those described here), for though one is convinced with evidences, their will and their other priorities still overrule... even over against truth/reality



True belief/faith must include trust and will come out in ways that demonstrates not only a confidence in it, but an overcoming of fear, for fear evidences where our true faith lies (in the fear of God or the fear of man)

These “glories of men” still overcome partial, incomplete faith - for since this age belittles and even disdains true faith in Christ, many, though they have a degree of faith, fear associating too much with Christ for fear of rejection or missing inclusion in the world’s various and perceived prestigious groups

It would do us all well to trace back our beliefs to their highest possible authority (source) and see where we land (if we can actually do this, if we’re honest enough) - if it ends with Almighty God, it cannot have a higher, more reliable source!

This is at the core reason why those truly in Christ cannot live as others do (the blind) because they see what is really what - just because so many of the spiritually blind are confident in their perception does not indicate they should be looked on as viable in their beliefs

The result of believing in Jesus (and so all He says and His authority and oneness with the Father) will (as a definite result) ends in no longer living in darkness (so no longer deceived or living as one of the darkness)

This is a sobering truth because it demonstrates one response many will have to Jesus and His message and one where they just don’t hold-tight to it (because of other priorities)

- c. These are examples of many who have “belief” in/about Jesus, but it does not equate to “saving faith” and is proven as such in their priorities - the “but because of the Pharisees” is a sad qualifier, for one of the evidences of true faith (ultimately) is “confession” (here “ὡμολόγουν” essentially meaning to so agree/believe it is voiced or acted upon), and so believing something to be true can come short of entrusting one’s self to it - see Mt. 10:32-33
- d. They were more controlled in their fear of being “put out of the synagogue” - note John 9:22 where the decree was made - this would be an intimidating possibility of shame, loss of status and likely rejection and scorn (even by those not “for” the ruling powers, yet these will disdain others because they will not “play the game” (they won’t just “fake it to make it” in society or in the current popular, influential circles)) - read Rev. 21:8 referencing “cowards”
- e. John clues us in on the underlying, driving motive for their silence - these, even though believing on Him, “loved the glory of men” more than the “glory of God” - it is not difficult to see the reference to the “glory” that Isaiah saw (referenced in verse 41 and now here) as being another reference to Jesus Himself - He was and would be (through all of this) the “glory of God”, but these leaders feared (and so revered more) the glories of men
- f. As will be seen in the remaining chapters of John, the glories of God will be on display but will be opposite to what this age deems “glorious” and so will be mocked - yet look what it accomplished (then, now and because of such authoritative power, for eternity!)

### G. The “word spoken” will judge unbelievers “on the last day” - vs. 44-50

#### 1. What Jesus spoke/taught were not mere words of a man, but of God (the Father) - vs. 44-46

- a. These next statements by the Lord look to come right after what He spoke in verse 36 (after which John gave reason why so many were unbelieving or secretly believing)
- b. Jesus equates believing on Him with, in reality, believing on “Him who sent Me” (the Father) - for everything Jesus said and did was of the Father, so Jesus does not appeal to His own Deity authority here but to that of God
- c. Much of what we see in Scripture fails the test of acceptability (or at least open acceptability) because it is compared to all that is temporal (and infected with sin), yet if seen it for what it truly is (seen in the “light”), nothing in this age limited to temporality (and so an end) will be able to compete when we are so enlightened as to “see Him who sent Me” - note also Heb. 1:3
- d. With everyone there is some ruling authority that dictates what is believed - Jesus came into the world as “light” (to reveal what is what, and things for what they truly are in the real reality) - see how this is explained in II Cor. 4:6
- e. The natural state of us all is “darkness”, so Jesus reveals that those believing in Him will not remain (abide) in darkness (blindness, obscurity) anymore
- f. To truly “see” Christ is to see the Father (compare to 14:9-10) - this reiterates His equality with the Father (and so His authority and the authority of all He had said/taught), but also that they were identical in will/purpose - so to see and hear Jesus was (essentially) to see and hear the Father - there is always perfect unity in the Godhead
- g. Jesus, as Light coming into the world makes it so that “everyone” believing (literally “the believing”) will not remain (abide/dwell and so exist) in darkness (error, deceit, falsehood)- these couple statements have provided the authority and the result - to ALL other entities looked to as authority and so “light” (insight into what life is really about and any why’s they can attempt to provide) can only provide a life in darkness - see Eph. 5:6-21

#### 2. The fateful, final judgment (on the Last Day) for those negligent and rejecting - vs. 47-50

- a. Jesus ends His public ministry summing up the responses that can/will come as to what He has said and taught - in rejecting His “words” so they reject Him
- b. Jesus provides two negative scenarios in response to Him and His ministry - the first is one of not prioritizing His “sayings” - for any who have heard Him and His truth and yet does not “keep” them (φυλάξει - to guard, preserve, protect so as to observe them), is not judged of Jesus, for the words He gave will judge them - for the words of rescue/salvation are condemnatory to those who treat them as of no significant value
- c. This may be in response to many of the leaders who believed in Him, but only up to a certain point... out of fear of loss - it is not uncommon to come across some who point back to a time of “believing” but who have lived as though they have not guarded and prioritized (kept) it

The Gospel will always be successful in its purposes, either in saving or in condemning when it is rejected actively or passively

Just hearing/reading His Word carries with it responsibility and consequences when rejected or ignored

Texts like this are why we see, historically, a traditional reverence for whenever the Bible is read publicly

Jesus is the supreme example of exemplifying the crucial need to communicating God's Word accurately - so that those believing/entrusting themselves to it have eternal life and those rejecting it, are now especially guilty of refusing what was directly from God

- d. Jesus did not come into the world to judge the world (3:17) - the world is already standing in judgment apart from Christ - He came to save, and if His salvation is rejected or disregarded (adulterated, "improved" upon), all that remains is the assured judgment to come
- e. The second negative scenario Jesus presents is that of active rejection of His "sayings" - the first might seem amicable to Him, the second is openly, consciously against Him - the word "rejects" is "ἄθετέω", describing a slighting and so rejecting of something, and in this case it is Him and so rejecting what He says (they are against the person and so are against what He says ("...does not receive My sayings..."))
- f. As will be true, specifically for all who have heard what Jesus said, what He said ("ὁ λόγος") will be their judge on the last day
- g. Though He was seen as just a man by some, or just one of many opinions/philosophies (and options), He spoke with the full authority of God the Father Himself - those seeing themselves with the authority to scrutinize what He said (for believability or even practicality) are overestimating themselves, for all He said is indisputable because of the authority behind it and not because of its explainability by anyone
- h. All of what He said was said by "commandment" not only as to what Jesus should say, but how it was to be said/spoken - every word Jesus spoke and how /when He spoke it was in perfect harmony with the Father's will - this "commandment" is then the core of the Gospel message... which will culminate in believing (fully trusting) the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf - and it is a benevolent command, for it assuredly leads to eternal life and since so much is "on the line" for each, Jesus spoke just as "the Father has told Me."
- i. Jesus' public ministry has now concluded

## XX. A Slave Is Not Greater Than His Master - 13:1-17

### A. "He loved them to the end" - vs. 1

1. It appears as though John is setting up the last part of his Gospel in describing the motive/reason Jesus was about to do all He was about to do - out of true/actual love

John is stressing what Jesus knows and why He is about to do what He will do to not only magnify our awe of Him, but appreciate everything He was about to do with added emphasis

- a. John begins setting the stage by revealing that Jesus knew His time was short before He would "depart out of this world" - before the Feast of Passover had come, Jesus already knew His "hour had come" (as we saw introduced back in chapter 12) - He was not surprised
- b. This knowledge (that time was short), and that of His specific love, would position all He did as significant in His use of the little time remaining and His demonstration of love (selfless)
- c. Note also, that Jesus knowing He would, after all that was about to happen, leave this world and go to the Father - this is true for us and why our focus/motivation is less on life here and more on where it is all headed (though we will not necessarily know when our time is short)

2. He loved His own - note they belong to Him (they had been given to Him) - see 17:9-11

- a. John stresses the love of the Lord for those that were/are His, twice, "...having loved His own... He loved them to the end." - it has been speculated that this is a possible Hebrewism that John is using in Greek (such as the ones used in Genesis 2, "eating you will eat" and "dying you will die" as a means of stressing extremes)
- b. The term "loved them to the end" doesn't just mean He loved them until His crucifixion or till He ascended to the Father - it's another way of saying He loved them completely, extremely, to the fullest possible - and note again this love is "ἀγαπάω" which is a willful, reasoned, determined "love" - once applied it cannot be rescinded, because of its very nature/substance - Jesus does not love (this way) and then stop loving this way - He loved to His end (here in the world) and beyond, and He loved each to their end (and into eternity)
- c. All of what He was about to do would fulfill what the Passover pointed to and would be the greatest exhibition of love ever!

This love is in no way dependent for its use or existence upon the recipient- it is given/applied with purpose- look a few of the other references to His love as in Eph. 5:25 and Rom. 8:35-39

### B. Jesus washes the disciple's feet - the slave is not greater than his master - vs. 2-17

1. John sets the stage to demonstrate the magnitude of what was about to take place - vs. 2-4

To "betray" (παραδίωμι) describes one close to someone and because of this closeness, they are used to hand over to the enemy the one they were once close to

- a. Jesus is about to perform the work of a slave, an extremely humble act, and that not only for those who were His followers, but even for the one who would betray Him
- b. It was "during supper" (not after as in KJV) the devil decided on how he would use Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus and so put in Judas' heart to act as a traitor

This does demonstrate the possible outcome of a pseudo believer finally settling on turning on Christ - not necessarily that the devil will enter them, but that they will be (if allowed) used as tools against the Lord

Is is very human for one who is aware of their authority and significant credentials to do the opposite of what Jesus was doing, yet He was the supreme example of what we must do

What Jesus was doing was meant to teach them but was more than just symbolic; He was actually washing their feet (correctly) - it is common for us to "go through the motions" while doing a less than ideal job

The words for "realize" "understand" are "οἶδας (perceive, see) γνώση (know by experience)

Peter looks to be basing his absoluteness on society's standards (knowing it would never be acceptable for a Lord to wash the feet of underlings) - but this was not in line with the standards of Heaven

For the Lord to wash the feet and to wash overall would require Him to see the 'dirt' and we are apt to act as though we have no dirt (or very little)

Jesus will use this again in John 15:3, "Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you."

Such an idea would be related to I John 1:9

- c. For whatever reason Judas' acted on, we know that the devil was working to influence his heart - the devil may have played-off of Judas' disappointment in Jesus not seeking an earthly kingdom (at this time), or that he wanted to break away from Jesus seeing His popularity seemed to be dwindling - either way, God would use this significantly, though Judas would not benefit - in verse 37 the devil "entered him"
- d. Note carefully in verse 3 what John clarifies just before Jesus washes the disciples feet - John makes it clear what Jesus fully knew: He knew that the Father "had given all things into His hands" and with such power, authority and freedom, He donned the apparel of a slave - He knew He had come directly from God and was about to return to Him, so His focus was unshakable on His mission - see also Php. 2:6-8
- e. We should note also what Luke reveals happened during this time in Luke 22:24-27 where the disciples had argued over who would be "greatest" (this age's idea of greatness)
- f. Jesus was from God, for God, and headed back to be with God - In Christ we have and are the same, and so can do what most would consider the "lowest" of tasks yet realizing we have lost nothing of dignity or value

## 2. He who had "all things in His hands" Who "came from the Father" washes feet - vs. 5-9

- a. With what Jesus is about to do, He demonstrates a contrasting values system than the one that is natural to fallen, sin-infected mankind - servitude is elevated above "rank"
- b. While supper was occurring, Jesus laid aside His normal (outer) clothes, and not only began to wash the disciples feet, but setup the process just as a slave would do the job correctly and thoroughly - this may have been something Peter was picturing when he wrote I Peter 5:5
- c. When He came to Simon Peter, Peter responded as if astonished that Jesus would wash his feet, with an emphasis (Κύριε σύ μου νίπτεις τοὺς πόδας) "Lord, You my wash feet!?" - You being who You are! Peter (naturally) saw this as beneath the Lord
- d. Jesus' answer was patient and gracious and pointed Peter to faith (trust the Lord in this matter) - Peter would not know the magnitude of all that was happening here until later (not just the example of servitude, but of all that Jesus was doing for Peter (and for us)) - this is illustrative of how things are for us still; we trust and He reveals purpose and insight as time and experience go on - we may not perceive now but we will come to know
- e. Peter, not yielding to faith in this matter at this time, makes a statement (vs. 6) that is more wrong than we often recognize - "You will never wash my feet" as if speaking in authority (after just acknowledging Jesus as Lord) and as though this action can never be allowed to take place (Peter using the emphasized negative "Οὐ μὴ" (no, not ever, in no way)
- f. Jesus' response is serious, for If Jesus does not "wash you" then one can have "no part with Me" - note this is "wash you" being more than just "wash your feet" - "To reject Christ's self-humiliating love, because it humiliates Him (a well-meaning but false principle), is to cut oneself off from Him. CBN
- g. It is sadly common for many to reject the work of Christ because it somehow is humbling to the potential recipient and their pride makes them resist the Lord's work for them
- h. The core picture/lesson here is that of humility of service and how the Lord elevates it though all others see such service as beneath them - the Lord looks to be implying a moral/spiritual cleansing also in the following verses, but John's emphasis (considering how he began this section) is on the example of service

## 3. One who is already cleaned (bathed) need only wash his feet - vs. 10-11

- a. Peter's excited overreaction to the Lord demonstrated his sincerity in his desire to be accounted/associated with the Lord no matter what was required - but then Jesus tells him in response "... you are all clean..." not only clarifying the practical (his feet only needed cleaning) but now alluding to moral/righteous "clean" - we know this is the case because of what Jesus says next, "... but not every one of you." in reference to Judas
- b. There looks to be the idea also included that once made clean, there are still other "cleanings" needed (though not in a salvific way since they are already truly clean in Christ), but that through the journeys of life there will still be needed cleanings (living in a sin-infected world and the exposure to it)
- c. Jesus knew who would betray Him and yet continued in this servant's act of service

#### 4. Jesus establishes this pattern/example for them to know and follow - vs. 12-17

As an "example" helps clarify they were to do "even as" He did not the very act (as in instituting another ordinance)

It is important that we realize that Jesus is exalting this lowliness/humility of service and life - this is not new, just something that had not been revealed in this way before, and something that was not/is not common to humanity

This example is for them to follow with each other - the priority is this service to each other (believers) - there are many who would serve those not in Christ over/above believers

This is core to the values system we are to live by in contrast to the contradictory, self-honoring values of this age

Humble service is only of lasting value when the servant is humble in it and does so out of valuing the Lord and all He values above themselves - Compare also to Eph. 6:5-7

- a. Jesus completes washing all the disciples feet, puts back on His outer garments and takes His place again with them (as their Master/Teacher)
- b. Jesus question is simply, "Do you know what I have done to you?" - clearly it was more than just washing their feet, for what He had also done in this act was to set a pattern for them to follow - in verse 15 He uses the word "ὑπόδειγμα" describing not just a picture or illustration, but an act/standard they are to imitate
- c. He acknowledges that He is their teacher and master (Lord), they rightfully call Him this, and yet He served them as one beneath them - see Mt. 20:20-28
- d. This involves service to each other, doing as He did, but if we wander out a bit more we could also consider that some of this might also involve dealing as a servant (and humbly) with the sin issues of each other in seeking to assist one another in staying "clean" from the sinful influences of this age - see Gal 6:1; James 5:19-20 (see also Jude 1:22-23, noting that in the process of helping those in sin, there is not attraction to their sin (the "garment stained by the flesh"))
- e. Note also that Jesus did this voluntarily and not of compulsion, also serving as an example to us of volunteer service to each other, dealing with even the seeming lowliest aspects of serving with each other (for with God, this is the greatest of works we can do)
- f. Being disciples of such a great Lord and Teacher, they "should" do as He did (it is a moral obligation and privilege to not only be associated with Him, but to be a part of His ways)
- g. For "truly, truly" (without any doubt) the slave is not more important than his master, just as a messenger is not on equal plane with the one who sent him - if any of His followers see a work as "beneath" them, they are, in reality, considering themselves better than the Lord - any work for and of Him is to be considered of highest honor (not because we're just supposed to think this, but because it actually is (being His work))
- h. "Little becomes Jesus' followers more than humility. Christian zeal divorced from transparent humility sounds hollow, even pathetic." Carson
- i. There is the possibility (as seen with those that have institutionalized foot washing) for it to become a rote practice where service becomes something that must be and is not out of true, grateful humility in the Lord's work - many of the "poor" have been used as if players on a stage while others find their pride appeased in their publicized acts of humility and service
- j. Knowing all this is not enough, for many would, without hesitation, agree with an "amen" of their own to these truths, but they would not be "blessed" (μακάριοι describing satisfaction, fulfilled, contented joy) unless they are doing them (present (ongoing) subjunctive (conditional))
- k. The proud (self-focused) are poised to avoid what they consider demeaning (beneath them) and so miss this "blessedness" (contentment), while those not driven to exalt themselves come to discover the true joy in service for the Lord of all, opportunities missed by the haughty

#### XXI. The Betrayal of Jesus Begins... Just as Planned - 13:18-30

##### A. Not all those associated (even closely) with Christ will know this "blessing" - vs. 18-19

1. Not everything spoken to any group by Jesus could be assumed to be applicable (or true) of each one listening - the key to this verse (18) is Jesus knowing "the ones I have chosen" - vs. 18

Some try to make a case that when Jesus chose Judas that He was not aware that he specifically would betray Him - such an assumption is unnecessary, considering Jesus' focus on the Scripture's fulfillment in all areas/ways

There is debate regarding the reference to Psalm 41:9 and the entire context being tied more to David than Jesus - but, in faith, true faith/trust, we defer to Jesus' understanding and use as foretelling this event

- a. On the surface it is clear that if any do not do the things He had spoken (though they "know" them), they will not (cannot) be "blessed"
- b. Yet Jesus' choosing (in this context) is not focused on salvation as much as it is the working out of the redemptive plan (all the details) - His betrayal was part of this
- c. Jesus, in the fullest sense "knows the ones I have chosen" and this involves more than just knowing what they would do, but who they truly are
- d. Above any sense of worry over some idea of protecting an idea of "free will", Jesus is focused on the Scripture, and His choices were all aimed at its fulfillment - it is common for some to obsess on theological matters singularly (people's perception of it and possible variations of thoughts/opinions) without giving much thought to their part in obeying it and trusting God's purposes/plan in it all - this is one reason we learn it... to obey and trust all while continuing learning
- e. Jesus ties this directly (as a fulfillment) to Psalm 41:9 where it speaks of one that was close "lifting up the heel" as in ready to follow through with a kick against Him

compare to Heb. 6:1-8

f. Jesus, fully knowing all those He had “chosen” knows also why He chose them - this includes Judas, also as to fulfill Scripture - note John 6:70 - even betrayal was part of the plan

2. “...that you might believe I am” - vs. 19

He is saying this with Judas (likely) still in His presence with the others

- a. “From now on...” - Jesus now will reference the betrayal and the betrayer directly, and His purpose is to lend to their belief regarding who He truly is - He tells of His betrayal, of one close to Him, before it happens - He says this so they will realize He was not deceived
- b. The reason is “so that when it does occur” (for it will assuredly happen), rather than having their discouragement compounded, their faith in who He is will be focused/verified - but again, Jesus’ wording is key for He says it will be done this way (including the prediction) that they might know that “ἐγώ εἰμι” (I am, likely another reference to His being the I AM)

Seeming negative (even tragic) circumstances need to always be viewed through the eyes of faith/trust

B. True comfort in association - vs. 20

1. To handle this verse, let’s start where it ends, with the fact that Jesus presents (without any possibility of it being untrue (thus the “truly, truly”)) that anyone who “received Me” is also then “receiving” the Father (for they cannot be separated) - we want to be a part of this association!

This statement (also in Mt.10:40) demonstrates the possibility of rejecting more than just the person - in this case there is a rejecting of Christ or a welcoming of Him when those truly His own are received

- a. Note that this “receiving” is not passive but active, indicating a deliberate welcoming of someone or something (versus a deliberate rejection, typically because of their other associations))
- b. Jesus begins this statement tying in the disciples as being those He sends and that those welcoming/accepting (joining with) them are doing so with Jesus Himself - to reject them is to reject Christ!

2. This would serve as a comfort and point of resolve with these disciples (as well as us)

These received are those truly sent and the Lord arranges this - if we sense we are not being truly “received” we leave it in His hands for timing and rightful outcome

- a. They were being sent and therefore, as Jesus identifies, whoever receives them receives Him (they are in the best of associations and that not per simple coincidence, but by revelation of Christ) - this would be an identifier (indicator) of those truly with and of Christ
- b. It would also then be true that there would be those who would not receive/welcome them, but based on this truth, they would not have had it any other way

C. The acting out of the betrayal begins - vs. 21-30

1. Jesus is deeply troubled (in spirit) - this is the same word used in 11:33 and 12:27 (ἐταράχθη) - again, it is noticeable based on a physical type of shiver - vs. 21

The entirety of the sacrifice of our Lord was not one of calm resolve but of painful submission to what must be done, just as we, though much less than our Lord, will also experience and will only be able to face those times by His grace

- a. It seems to be in response to something either just at the moment happening or when discussing what will happen - Jesus definitely faced all things with resolve, yet in His humanity there was a type of dread at the moment having come (He, fully knowing where it was all leading to and what would take place)
- b. Note the solemn word “testified” (from “μαρτυρέω” a formal word used of providing a witness, formally testifying to the truth/reality of something)
- c. In this formality Jesus again begins with “Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω” (truly, truly I say”) that it would be one of them, the twelve, that would be the one who would betray Him - it is possible to believe that when He said what He said in verse 18 that they could have surmised He meant one of the other peripheral disciples and not one of them, those closest to Him

2. The disciples are astonished and genuinely perplexed as to who it could be - vs. 22-30

Their response should serve as a reminder to us as well not to trust what we think/perceive of ourselves too highly, but to be ever aware of our ongoing need for His grace (always, at all times)

- a. These disciples are described by John in this moment as “ἀπορούμενοι” (at a loss of what to think, not sure) of what to surmise regarding what He had just said - we know in Mt. 26:22 each began to ask “Is it I?” demonstrating the profound reverence they had for Him, for though all but one had no such thoughts, they knew the Lord was always correct - they dare not trust even themselves (their own sincerity and self-read) more than Him
- b. They were perplexed at the thought that one of them could do such a thing - even when Judas is essentially identified as the one (to John and Peter), they seem unsure - there is a nobility in this, where rather than being inclined to suspect each other, they truly could not imagine any of their own doing this

Thus the need for what He stated in verse 19)

It would be because of Jesus love for him that John was who he was - this was how he chose to identify himself and what gave him purpose and value... not because of himself, but because of the Lord’s love for him

- c. John uses a few sentences to describe how Peter sought to get the answer from the Lord via John - John references himself as the one “whom Jesus loved” which caused much discussion throughout the years in commentaries as to the reason he referenced himself as such - it was not necessarily that Jesus loved him better than the others, but that John references himself as one so fortunate to have been (and still) so loved of the Lord - we could also, because of God’s grace and love for us (individually) reference ourselves as “the one Jesus loved”

There may have been a sense that if known, it could be addressed before it happens, but this was not in harmony with God's will at work in it

Added detail regarding Judas is added to make it clear precisely who it was that betrayed Jesus

We need to keep a steady focus on God's overriding control and purpose in all things to stave-off reacting to them

It is likely that most who deliberately turn-on the Lord (hand Him over to the enemy as best they can) do not realize the magnitude of their wrong and coming punishment - it is clearly far more than just a philosophical, religious choice!

Evil becomes horribly evil (bold in its sin) when the fear of God lessens or is put out of mind - sinful thoughts lead to sinful actions, leading to more boldness in sinning

The magnitude of Judas' betrayal cannot be matched, but countless others forsaking of the Lord have occurred since by those not previously suspected of such an act

- d. This love again, individually, ought to be how we see ourselves before the Lord - yes, God loved the world, but we are personally loved also, and from our perspective this consideration of love is primary (above all other loves we could ever desire or know/think we need)
- e. Peter seeks to know who this is, motioning to John to ask for how could a statement like this go without further information!? - Jesus was not reactionary knowing full well it was God's will
- f. In response to John, Jesus tells him that whoever He gives the dipped morsel of bread to is the one - immediately Jesus hands it to Judas (John being careful in his record to specify it was Judas, the son of Simon and of Iscariot) - note the negative associations that come with such betrayals (Judas' father and Judas' hometown)
- g. This was another evidence (then and later) to Jesus knowing all that was happening, the when and even the why - Jesus was focused on the end-goal (purpose) of it all, and aspects like these (being betrayed) were all seen in light of it
- h. After receiving the morsel, Satan then "entered him" (Judas) - in verse 2, the devil was influencing his "heart" (his thoughts/feelings) and now, with apparent complicity, Satan takes over - Satan clearly has a direct interest in this betrayal - this is another reminder also of the controlling factor that evil is (while promising freedom, independence)
- i. In Matthew 26:21-25 (and Mark 14:18-21) we are told that Jesus said it would have been better for the one (who betrays Him) to have never been born - "... 'it would have been better for him if he had not been created'; signifying, that it is better to have no being at all, than to be punished with everlasting destruction..." Gill
- j. Jesus, fully focused on God at work more than Satan at work, tells Judas to get to what he is about to do quickly. "He knows all their plans, as Jesus did that of Judas, and he calls on men to act under the full conviction that he knows all their soul. Sin thus is a vast evil. When men can sin knowing that God sees it all, it shows that the heart is fully set in them to do evil, and that there is nothing that will restrain them." Barnes - note Psalm 36:1-4
- k. Judas leaves (separates from them all) getting to (quickly) what he was planning to do - after he leaves, Jesus shares some of the most profound words in all of Scripture! Judas has chosen his path and will hear none of this (in reality and willfully)
- l. It is interesting to see that the rest of the disciples still did not know what Jesus was referring to when He spoke to Judas - they all still thought Judas was up to something related to the feast or in caring for the poor - as is so often the case, one of their own, all of which thought that betrayal in their midst was unthinkable, was not what they thought him to be
- m. We must never have our faith in people nor allow our faith to be based upon the apparent level (or lack thereof) of faith - see Jer. 17:5-10

## XXII. A New Commandment; Love Each Other as Loved of Jesus Christ - 13:31-38

A. The placement of this "new commandment" from Jesus is within the declaration that He, Jesus, as the Son of Man, is glorified along with the Father - vs. 31-33

1. With the topic of Jesus and the Father being glorified as the main point of discussion, it would not seem to have been necessary to encourage the disciples when considering what most would normally equate with "glorification"

Back in 12:23, after the Greeks came to see Him, the "hour" for Him to be glorified had not come, in this moment glory was on display, being fulfilled

Though most of this would appear as dark and gloomy (unglorious), yet Jesus reveals it is and all will be glorious in God's purposed plan in it - this is part of the idea utilized in Romans 8:28, and the "good" there not defined by us

- a. Yet this "glory" would come in a very unusual way (as far as most would consider) - Jesus said He was glorified "now", in that moment with what had just taken place (the betrayer sent off to do his betraying)
- b. Think how often our age has and continues to mock the idea of a suffering savior, of a need for propitiation for sin, of a vicarious death for sinners, and yet Jesus identifies the beginning process of His redemptive work as glorious
- c. God Himself is glorified in Jesus (the Son of Man) in all that is and will be happening in the betrayal, arrest, trial, beatings, crucifixion, the burial and then the resurrection
- d. Note how inseparable the Son and Father are in this when Jesus says, "If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself..."
- e. Once all is done as it should be and in perfectly precise timing, Jesus acknowledges that God will "glorify Him immediately" (εὐθὺς - right away, forthwith) for then the complete message of the Gospel, started back in Eden, will have been completed!

2. The time they would have with Him in person (personally) is short - vs. 33

- a. Jesus begins what He is about to say by calling them “Little children” here an endearing, caring intent - He will be parting from them (in His death and then in His ascension) and is beginning what will be His encouragement (to face the rest of their lives without the close, in-person relationship they had been enjoying) - this is also a term that reveals their immaturity in comparison to His (pointing them then to trust Him in it all)
- b. Jesus, affectionately, tells them the time left with Him is short and that, as He had told the Jews (8:21) that they would “seek Me” but would not find Him - with the Jews He went on to say that they would also “die in your sins” - with His disciples, He clarifies that they also could not come where He was going though He would later tell Peter (vs. 36) that he would “follow later”
- c. The “seek me” idea is one of being used to someone “being around” and suddenly they are not there (you expect at times to see them, even after they have died, and realize they are no longer with us) - life for them was about to drastically change

Jesus would face what must be faced without these friends - He was preparing them for what was coming and rather than this discussion heading to despair it will be one of encouragement in the upcoming challenges and their need to be focused on mutual encouragement versus personal depression

B. Love each other “as I have loved you” - vs. 34-35

1. A “new commandment” - vs. 34 - Jesus, in light of His soon departure from them, commands them to love each other (in particular) in the same way He has loved them

- a. The use of “new” isn’t in the sense of no command having ever been given to love, but “new” in the sense of how to love, and who to love this way
- b. The “how” to love is following after how Jesus loved - He was patient, caring, focused on needs, constantly pointing to the Truth, protective, warning against sin/evil and error, and He was ever self-sacrificial (which would be ultimately proven by the cross)
- c. The clarification of true love’s details are seen in I Cor. 13:4-7 with it be characterized by (driven to be) patient (bearing with others), kind (useful/usable), not self-commending (proud), not misbehaving with others (not focused on self-rights versus the betterment/best of others), not provoked to anger, not taking account of wrongs done to it, joyful for and in truth and righteousness (in others in this case), trustworthy, and bearing with others, striving to trust, expecting the best in/for others and enduring all things that would come to distract or thwart it
- d. Part of the “new” is in the exclusivity of this love, “have love for one another” (speaking to them as His disciples and this then being our focus with each other (in Christ))

Love as Jesus loved is one of God’s practical mainstays as we each face the trials and persecutions of life - we are to strive (in following this command) to look on those around us, particularly our brothers and sisters in Christ and to love them this way - to do this, focus cannot be on self

2. This Jesus-like love being a unique identifier - vs. 35

- a. If this true love (as the Lord defines and demonstrates it) is followed/practiced, it will be how “all men” will know one is a disciple (learner/student) of Christ
- b. “Alas! how changed is the spirit of the Christian world since then! Perhaps, of all the commands of Jesus, the observance of this is that which is least apparent to a surrounding world.” Barnes
- c. No doubt many are seen as “disciples” of a “Christ” of the world’s own making where there is an all-permissiveness, or there is a type of defamation of the Lord by the lack of this selfless love amongst those claiming to be Christians (yet living-out the opposite of Jesus’ love)
- d. It is true that we each (individually) ought to recognize the need to be loved by the Lord, so when we are not loved by others we can still love - but we must see the necessity of our loving other believers as a must (even when not being loved by them)

If we consider the opposite of this we would come up with something like, “By this will all people think you are not (truly) my disciples because you do not care for (are apathetic toward) one another” - this is a command, so to disregard one another or even beyond that (in hating) is to disobey... and actual disciples obey

C. Peter’s false belief (over confidence) in discerning his love for the Lord - vs. 36-38

1. “You cannot follow me now, but you will follow later” - vs. 36

- a. Peter did not know the full meaning of Jesus yet, and not only could he not follow Jesus in death (especially the kind of redemptive, atoning death of the Lord), but was soon to find out he was in no way prepared to follow the Lord to death
- b. The comforting part of this is the assurance that Peter (and the others) would follow later- Peter’s concern is that he does not know where the Lord is going and firmly believes he will stay with Him no matter where He goes - he does not want to be apart from Him!
- c. Peter looks to firmly believe he loves the Lord, and based on this will follow Him anywhere- though love of the Lord will involve a separation (soon, this separation would be the rest of his life (after the ascension)) - Peter would end up following the Lord in truth and example his remaining days on the earth and then would follow to be with Him in person at death

Often, in the moment of high emotion, our resolve seems strong and unstoppable - yet the timing of these tests of love for the Lord and the needed grace from Him to follow though become apparent to us (first our inability in reliability of ourselves) and the needed timing and grace from the Lord in them (as Peter came to know and experience later in life)

2. Peter’s denial of the Lord is foretold - vs. 37-38

- a. Peter’s question is one we can likely identify with - why can’t I follow where you are going now?

This reminds us also that when others we love and long to stay with are taken in death that we do not remain just to “live” a while longer, but that our remaining is for the Lord’s purposes and service

The source of true courage and the proper use of it (in timing) will come as a part of God’s grace at work by means of the Holy Spirit

Following the command of the Lord we will love (and so support/encourage)

- b. It is most likely that Peter did not know that the Lord was going to the crucifixion and that also the “now” was not the right time, for there was a tremendously great purpose about to be discussed which required Peter and the other disciples to remain a while longer in the Lord’s service this side of eternity
- c. Peter boldly expresses his willingness (even determination) to lay down his life for the Lord - Peter did lay down his life for the Lord, when the time for it had come (by God’s design)
- d. But at this point, with Peter’s confidence in himself and his own resolve, Jesus asks, “Will you lay down your life for Me?” and without giving any time for a response, Jesus tells Peter with a “truly, truly” assurance that he will deny Him three times (that very night) before morning
- e. We glean more detail surrounding this in Mark 14:27-31 and Mt. 26:31-35 and we also have the added encouraging words of Jesus after revealing this in Luke 22:31-34 (note verses 31-32) where Jesus had already prayed for him in light of this (and Satan’s intentions toward Peter) - Peter would then “strengthen your brothers” when he “returned”
- f. As with Peter, when we are proven to be weak in our own faithfulness to the Lord, it is not intended for us to quit, but to be reminded of our constant dependence on Him for even our own faithfulness to Him

### XXIII. Being Prepared to Take Up the Work of the Lord - 14:1-31

#### A. The benefits of Jesus going away (where He was going and the why) - vs. 1-3

- 1. Don’t let your hearts be troubled (from ταρασσω (as in shaken, being deeply saddened, the same used of Jesus in chapter 11) - vs. 1

The verb form, παρασσεσθω being present imperative passive or middle indicating either not allowing their hearts to accept being disturbed or to participate in discouraging it themselves

The trust in the Lord’s overriding control and purpose in all things is not just a fear stopper, it’s also a confidence creator

The only answer (as it still is with us) is to trust Him, no matter how bleak it will seem to us - here Jesus was to be betrayed and even denied by His most outwardly courageous follower

- a. Jesus is taking on the responsibility and the entirety of the work which involved His perfect sacrifice for sins, so the disciples need not be troubled (shaken) to their core at knowing of His soon departure, for the greatest of good would come out of it all
  - b. This command is given again in verse 27 with the addition to not allow the heart to be fearful - some take these verbs to be indicatives rather than imperatives, though this would just mean Jesus is stating a fact, that this is what and in whom they believe/trust
  - c. The “heart” here is our true selves, who and what we are, the seat of our emotions, thoughts, aspirations, and faith (focused belief/trust) - seemingly negative circumstances must not be allowed to agitate their souls, for since they do (or are supposed to) trust (believe in) God, then in the exact same degree and manner they are to believe/trust Him (Jesus) as well
  - d. The inner shaking from perceived “bad” comes only when our focus is on the circumstance and its apparent power and purpose - Jesus is about to walk them through all the immense good that will come out of His going away (and the why)
- e. Note the clarification of the Lord that to believe Him is to believe God, and so to believe God is to believe Jesus - Jesus is talking to men in a troubled state having been told He was going away and that, somehow, it would get so bad (right away (that night)) that Peter himself would deny the Lord 3 times - yet this was not to trouble their hearts!

- 2. Going to “prepare a place for you” so as to be with Him again - vs. 2-3

There is, oddly, the reality that part of the draw to despair and emotional yielding to discouragements is laziness - optimism based in faith is hard work!

If any believes they “have it good” here and that this would be an acceptable (or even preferred) place to live eternally, they are going to seek to comply with all the demands and fads of the age (and then death becomes a horrific thought and life must steer clear of its possibility fearing the loss of all that one believes they have)

- a. Jesus focuses their attention on why He is going and what will be accomplished - so often our hope is found looking ahead, beyond the trouble and to where it is all heading, rather than succumbing to whatever the “bad” is around us as though it had won or was what everything was really all about
- b. The true “home” is brought into focus so as not to settle into being “at home” here - for in “My Father’s house” “μوناί πολλαί εισιν” (dwelling places/rooms numerous there are) - where the Father “lives” (usually associated with Heaven) there are more than enough rooms available - suddenly Jesus speaks of a heavenly abode (a permanent place to live with God Himself) - yet how could these (or anyone) be welcomed (or allowed) in such a place?
- c. As a point again of trust/belief, if this was not absolutely the case Jesus would have told them - this was no artificial motivation or a baseless promise/hope, but was an actual place and result on the other side of the finish line
- d. For “I go” (the reason He is going away) to prepare a place for them in this house - this does not describe a type of construction project but the “preparing a place” was obtaining for each the right to citizenship in such a place



This actual return of Jesus Christ to this earth is described also in Mt. 24:29-31, I Thes. 4:13-18, II Thes. 2:1-15

We were made relational creatures from the beginning and will find eternal satisfaction when the fullness of this relationship with our Creator is restored - this is also a reminder of one of the reasons Heaven will not be a place of disappointment even if others, that we have loved, are not there

Note the "burning" hearts in Luke 24:32

- e. His dying for us and His proof of victory over death (and so victory over sin) is our means to dwell in these "mansions" (He, as High Priest and the sacrifice for sins, has cleared the way (made ready) for us) - read Heb. 7:22-27; 10:12-23
- f. The end result (the purpose for this leaving) is His return for them that where He is (with the Father) they also will be (forever) - this return is literal and not to be spiritualized (Acts 1:6-11)
- g. The focus of the encouragement is in the realization that He Himself will come again and "receive you to Myself" with the clear purpose that wherever He is they will be also - this is the focus of our hope/expectation as well, more than anything else (more than the draw of seeing loved ones that have died, more than the splendors of Heaven) - we may not sense the closeness of this relationship at times like these disciples did, but we will
- h. Much of our struggles with depression/despair are related to our seeking fulfillment in other relationships - there is certainly encouragement in many of our earthly relationships but they were never designed to fulfill us - the disciples had a taste of this while the Lord was with them in person, and is something we need and even look forward to (though often not realized at first, it is evidenced in the disappointments we have in our earthly relationships)

## B. The way, the truth and the life, one with the Father - vs. 4-11

1. Jesus tells the disciples that they do know "the way where I am going" - this would be telling of the way to "the Father's house" and so the way to the Father Himself

We need to understand that this is illustrative also of how God will often "connect the dots" of so much we have been taught and will, at times throughout our life, pull them all together into clarity and understanding (insight)

- a. For the place He is going (they know, certainly now), and even the actual way (path, means) they know to get there - here Jesus tells them something they don't know that they already know - Jesus has been teaching them and revealing to them more truth than they were consciously aware of (as still happens with us in the learning from His word)
- b. Thomas was open about not knowing where Jesus was going and the way to it - he does not seem to be belligerent since the Lord does not chide him, but seems (as we all can identify with) to be verbalizing his discouraged faith - his openness was used to produce one of the most quoted and profound sayings of Jesus
- c. Jesus' answer is significant in many ways! First, it is a direct answer to Thomas but second, it is a claim to His deity and His "God-ness" as what He states is only possible with God
- d. He is "the way" to the Father and the Father's House, which is a direct reference to Heaven - He is the access/way to it (note the proper article) - "In him God and man meet, and are brought together. We could not get to the tree of life in the way of innocence; but Christ is another way to it. By Christ, as the way an intercourse is settled and kept up between heaven and earth; the angels of God ascend and descend; our prayers go to God, and his blessings come to us by him." MH
- e. He is THE way because He is THE Truth (as in "reality", as in truth/fact of thought and idea and even truth as is genuineness versus what is pretend/fake) - it must be stressed that He is not "a" truth but the one and only truth, clearly indicating an absolute and objective truth - note the combination of grace with truth in John 1:14,17 (for the truth will not only enlighten to reality, but that reality would be one of condemnation only if it weren't for His grace)
- f. It should be obvious, though it needs to be stressed that even though there are a multitude of competing "truths" in religions and even in variants of Christianity, there is only one truth, only in Christ (who He really was, what He really said, what He really meant) and without this, any other "way" is the wrong way - Jesus is truly "the answer"!
- g. It is not enough to just agree that Jesus is the Truth, for being so He must be studied and learned for truth (and implemented/obeyed (see John 7:17)) - many claiming that Jesus is the answer don't truly know Him and proclaim a false "truth" (false answers/false solutions)
- h. And because He is the way and truth He is life itself - He is the source of all life (see Col. 1:13-20), in Him is life (and so true living), so apart from Him there is no life - there is a sense of "aliveness" (biologically, and that does come from the Lord), but this "life" (ἡ ζωή) is true life/living, for in sin one is conscious (in a sense, alive), but they are dead in sin, indicating there is more to life than just being aware/conscious, for the majority of people are alive but do not truly live
- i. Being the singular of all these (the way, the truth, the life), then it is impossible for any to come to the Father apart from Him - so there are not many ways to Heaven!

Jesus is the "means" to God and the "approach" (see Rom. 5:1-2) - from the broader perspective, He is the way home, the way to our ultimate, final destination and so is central to our focus throughout life

Note also in John 8:31-32 it is truth that sets free, and this in the context of freedom from sin (one of sin's results is blindness to the truth)

Many become fixated on the "why's" of life never getting answers because they have not come to know the "what's" that are revealed and defined in Christ

He is and represents what life is all about and His life (as in John 1:4) was the "light of men", the revealing of this true life - see also I Jn. 5:10-12

## 2. Oneness with the Father - vs. 7-11

One key point to consider is the reality that Jesus and the Father are distinct as “persons” in the Godhead and yet so identical in will and character, to “see” one is to see (and know) the other - note Heb. 1:1-4

We then treat all we are taught of Him (as well as by those He commissioned) with highest reverence/respect

Yet, as we’ve been seeing already, our idea of “glory” is too limited - even when Moses asked to see the glory of God (Ex. 33:18-34:8), as the Lord passed by He proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness...” - glory was associated with these qualities

The “from now on” also includes them realizing they had “seen the Father” all along - again, seeing Him is so much more than a visual with the eyes - Note Eph. 1:15-23 where the working of the Father is mentioned

This does not mean we won’t face and fight discouragements, but we will not need to succumb to them since we have the best answer to them all, fully facing life at its worst with absolute truth!

To some He is a great moral teacher/leader and to others and point of theological discussion only and not an authoritative example to follow

Many in the inner conflicts faced too often assess them as being a lack of information or evidence, when it really is a struggle to surrender in faith

Jesus did not ask Philip if he could explain the Father in Him and He in the Father... just if he believed

- a. To truly know Jesus Christ is to truly know (and see) the Father - there is a glimpse into the Godhead that is mentioned here that reminds us also of the complexity (that we may not be able to harmonize in our comprehension/thinking), yet we still, in unwavering faith/trust (as in verse 10) believe this (understanding there is much more about it to be explored and that much may be beyond our understanding) - faith trusts even with questions remaining
- b. Jesus begins this sentence (after mentioning the coming to the Father through/by Him) with the statement, that if they had truly known Him, they would have truly known the Father and then goes on to stress that along with this, that from this time on, not only will they know (understand this truth) but that they have then also (already) seen Him
- c. This, again, intensifies any consideration of all that Jesus said and did - it all was absolutely of the Father and of Jesus Himself - His importance in every detail (and our considerations of them) must be kept as prominent in the forefront of our thinking
- d. Our scrutiny of the Lord is then never allowed to doubt His accuracy, understanding or authority, and why our posture is then one of quick, trusting obedience - see Heb. 4:12-16
- e. As with verse 4, so again Jesus reveals that they know something they do not realize they know (He provides more in His word than we know!) here in verse 7
- f. This time it is Philip that responds and now with a wish to have Jesus “show us the Father” - he along with some in the past (including Moses) desires to “see” the Father - there seems to be an expectation that it must include overwhelming, spectacular and possibly dangerous “glory”
- g. Philip assumes that if he gets what he requests, “...it is enough for us.” - realizing what Jesus had just stated in verse 7, it is as though Philip is asking Jesus to “make good” on what He had just stated - the words “ἀρκεῖ ἡμῖν” (enough, empowering, sufficient for us) demonstrate his focus/attention was lacking, for what they had seen of the Father (in Jesus) was so much more than just a visual glory (more than a “glorious moment”) - what we assume will actually motivate us (and so is needed to move forward) is often similar to this
- h. As Jesus makes evident, there is much more to “seeing” the Father than just a visual manifestation - to see Him (as they had seen the Father in Jesus) was to see His works, His character, His power in His miracles and authority - the timing of this is in light of Jesus saying in verse 7 “from now on you know Him” - from that moment on, truly knowing and seeing the Father was directly tied to everything leading up to His crucifixion and resurrection
- i. We should consider also that this idea (in general) was also used by Paul in Rom. 1:18-21 - God can be seen/recognized as God in His creation - what Jesus tells His disciples is a much more intimate/personal “seeing” of the Father in all His working
- j. So, they have “enough” in what was already seen and in what they were about to see - we not only have this advantage (and so “enough” to be satisfied/content through life), but as will soon be addressed, we have the indwelling Spirit of God
- k. We also see the Father, but often do not recognize Him at work because we are not actively looking for His working or we are focused on temporal, earthly distractions - as Jesus points out (as a question), “...have I been with you so long and you still do not know Me?” - there is the possibility still where many are, as it were, “with Jesus” but still do not know who and what He truly is - Philip had been the one to bring Nathanael to Jesus - John 1:43-46
- l. The struggle of Philip is a familiar one - we are shown in Scripture what we are and, to some degree, what we already (essentially) know, but the real issue/struggle is belief/trust (to such a degree that even though we don’t know many details and cannot explain some of the profound conclusions, such as Jesus and the Father being one and yet two “persons”)
- m. We know this is the core issue by what Jesus asks next, “Do you not believe...?” - Philip still thought that something more needed to be seen to suffice, not realizing they had been provided all that was needed
- n. Notice the clear and succinct wording of Jesus here - He asks if Philip believes that the Father is IN Him and He IN the Father, the “in” (ἐν) indicating an indwelling (as close a relationship as can be had) and yet not one we can fully explain or understand
- o. Notice also here in verse 10 how Jesus includes the oneness of the words He spoke with the Father and then, as if in parallel (as the obvious output) the resulting “works”

This does not lessen the "personhood" of Jesus... it stresses the oneness of the relationship of the Father in not only His teaching, but also in the works

All His miracles were signs, not just of a general identity (though this was included), but signs to point to and out something of what He taught/declared

There have been and still are those whose belief is in the works, their own sincerity, their will-power, yet the truth here, though it seems simple to say, is the essential point - Jesus is who and what we "believe in" and so usurps all other would-be competing objects of faith/belief

The idea of "greatness" is focused on the extent of the impact of these works. They would essentially be "the works that I do" and though we saw several, profound miracles early on in Acts, the focus was on the ministry, the message and how it was expanding in influence

Boldness in prayer, in approaching the Father, is not because of anything good or authoritative of us, but because we are in Christ... so we ought to boldly pray! - see Heb. 4:14-16

Notice Jesus does say "If you ask Me anything" showing at least one instance of directing prayer to Him

The asking is not the only activity of faith; so also is the waiting and watching and trusting the results, the means and timing

- p. The answer Jesus gives in verse 10 is also interesting because Jesus does not give Philip a chance to answer - Philip does not truly know what he believes/knows, and this, because he does not fully understand who Jesus actually is - the Father was so much a part of Jesus also that, as He reiterates again, all He (Jesus) speaks is not of His own (literally, "from Myself not") but the Father, Himself, inside of, one with Jesus
- q. Now, in verse 11, Jesus addresses the group (now plural) with an imperative to "Believe Me..." which to any who see themselves as primarily intellectual or to those who are agnostic in their life outlook, this seems like an unreasonable command - yet this is what it is, a command to trust Him, and that He and the Father are united (even though unexplainable/not comprehensible) - so trust what He has said
- r. And if there is still a struggle, then believe for the sake of the works He has done (all of which were supernatural and the performance of each with a profound usage) - there needs to be a practical starting point for faith (in its exercise), and though the "works" were not complete in themselves, their pointing out Christ as the Christ should not be ignored/disregarded

### C. "Greater works" will come - vs. 12-14

1. The idea of "greater" works is often misunderstood because the natural idea of "greater" is focused on the idea of something like "more spectacular" (more impressive to more people), and though there can be a notion of this, the main idea here is in reference to more significant works (results) - vs. 12

- a. Jesus again begins with "truly, truly" adding particular emphasis here to something they would find as too incredible to believe - yet, it is not about the "glory" of the work but its purpose/usage that is the focus of the use of "greater" here
- b. The point of emphasis is on the works of Jesus and "greater works" that are the result, the absolutely assured results by believing in Him
- c. These will do "the works that I do" - would this include the miraculous works? It would have to, to some degree, though we must remember that as John stressed, these were "signs" all pointing to Jesus and who He really was - so all other works would need to meet the same requirement - the so-called "miracles" done in our day are typically done to draw attention but not to Christ
- d. But how could "greater works" be done than what Jesus did? Would they be more impressive and profound "miracles"? The greatneses are identified when we consider the limitations on the works of Jesus up to this point - His redemptive work was still not complete but after His death, burial and resurrection, everything that was done after that in declaring, sharing and pointing to (even with sign works) was of greater significance and impact... the fulfillment, the completion of the purpose was being done/seen

- e. It is also important to understand that the "greater" is not limited to the types of works (miracles), but was in the magnitude, these upcoming works being far more wide-spread and as Meyer put it in his commentary, they would be "world-subduing" works
- f. The focus, again, is on "...he who believes in Me..." - Jesus also reveals that all this will happen "because I go to the Father" - this is the ultimate "connection"! This is the greatest line of communication that could ever be imagined (and still, an oft untapped resource)

2. Because Jesus is going away, He goes to the Father, which now changes prayer - vs. 13-14

- a. Part of prayer is asking, making requests to the Father, and now that Jesus will be with the Father, when asking anything, the asking is "in My name" - this now indicates a whole new approach and even authority (right) in requesting things of/from the Father
- b. But, it must be stressed, that to ask in His name includes asking what is in accordance/harmony with Him, His will, His work - Jesus' oneness with the Father in will and purpose is the supreme example for us to follow when praying (harmonizing our will with His)
- c. This ultimate connection in Heaven is reinforced with Jesus clarifying that this request to the Father "I will do it" - it will be His working, again, clarifying the assurance of greater works - He will continue His work, through us and our seeking His work for and in us outwardly (and inwardly) - the overriding purpose for this is for the Father's being glorified (honored, praised, elevated for who He is before all)
- d. What is also comforting is the assurance what we ask in His name to be done, will be done right (since He does it) even if we cannot see the how or the when as being right/best

D. Jesus promises the sending of another “Helper”, the “Spirit of Truth” - vs. 15-31

1. Obedience, the result of true love of Christ (those that love obey) - vs. 15

see I John 5:1-5

Lenski described this love as, “...the love of intelligent comprehension and purposeful preference.”

Mt. 10:34-39 shows that this love is primary - to love another more would incline us to follow their “commandments”/ demands

Texts such as II Cor. 5:11-17 show this also as core to the motivation to obey and how such becomes why they no longer live to themselves

- a. Rather than showing an emotional (of this world) love by grieving His departure (His going away), true love will be evidenced in “keeping” His “commandments”
- b. The underlying word for “love” is from ἀγαπάω describing a selfless preference for another, a welcoming of another, and all this genuine, inward, being who/what we are - the opposite would be a self-preference and a resistance/opposition to others not endorsing self
- c. This love makes it so these commandments/precepts are what one will do and desire to do because they love Him - Jesus does not frame the need to love Him as a commandment but as something expected/anticipated - God, as often seen in the Old Testament, commanded love of Himself, but now, with Jesus being the fulfillment of all the Father set in motion and fulfilled, is now loved not just for who He is, but for what He did... for us
- d. Also, these “commandments” are now described by Jesus as “My commandments” including all He taught, exhorted and demonstrated - this would include His “but I say to you” sayings in the Sermon on the Mount, all of which went beyond the letter of the Law and pointed to the heart and underlying (full-spectrum) of each

2. The one “called along side” to be sent and to abide with us - vs. 16-17

Some question and/or try to explain why Jesus asks and just doesn't send the Helper - no answer is provided, just that He did, though we still see Him in a subordinate position demonstrating His practice of it, though with absolute assurance what He asks will happen... just as He told His disciples they could do

More will be covered on this, but the Holy Spirit is actually with us, as closely as Jesus was with His disciples - it is by faith we know this and should then expect His ever-present working in and for us, working out of us what is in accordance with God's will

The world, being driven in whatever faith it has, will find it on what is observable, see-able, “provable” and can be studied and scrutinized with human tools, minds and other physical resources

In spite of this age's attempts to define everything by the physical/biological (just matter and energy throughout time), the truth is that the true substance that controls and defines everything is spiritual - there is God's spirit, of Truth, and all else under a spirit of denial, contradiction and hostility toward truth

- a. It might still have seemed not so encouraging that the Lord would not actually be with them as He had been - Jesus, still building on why they should not allow their hearts to be troubled, tells them that He also will request of the Father to send to them one to be along side them
- b. He says the Father will send “another Helper” indicating He who would come would fulfill the same role that Jesus had been doing with His disciples - this is the same One we have today, if we are in Christ - the same comforter, exhorter, encourager, director, teacher
- c. His “being with you” is forever, from here on out, so always - they (as we) would never be alone and without direction - sometimes, as it was with the Lord and His disciples, it would be corrective, instructive and even directive - note Eph. 4:25-32, in a list of interpersonal relationship commands, the possibility of grieving the Holy Spirit is mentioned, as one would be grieved with us, seeing us especially when ignoring Him
- d. He is the “Παράκλητον” a term used of an advocate (pleads a case, intercedes), counselor (judicially and in overall (life) direction)
- e. He is called “the Spirit of Truth” and not just because He will (inwardly) guide into all truth, but because He will direct attention to reality (as we are before God and the purpose of everything and where it is all heading) - He is in contrast to the “spirit of error” (error being deceit, fraud, forgery) - see I John 4:1-6
- f. The next phrase, “ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν” (the world order not having power/ability to receive/accept) makes it clear that the Spirit Helper will have an exclusive relationship with the disciples (and all future Believers), one that the world's order/systems will be totally unable to accept, and from the world's vantage point, it is because it “does not see Him” (the word for “see” being “θεωρέω”, where we get our word for “theatre”)
- g. The world also cannot (is unable) to “know Him” (γινώσκω) a word describing experimental/experiential and so perceptive knowing/realizing - this does not mean the Holy Spirit won't deal with the world in any way, for as seen in 16:8 He will “...convict the world concerning sin, righteous and judgment” - but the world (as it is on its own) will not be able to accept any of it - each of these points will be treated as an enemy (sin will be denied and the concept rejected so that righteousness will be redefined so that it will not allow judgment from any but of its own)
- h. But, in marked contrast, “...you know Him...” (same word for “know”) because He is already with them (certainly in the presence of Jesus) and soon (at Pentecost) will be “in you”

3. “I will not leave you as orphans” - vs. 18-20

We can clearly see an obvious change in the disciples right after the resurrection - they were never again what they used to be

- a. As Jesus is building His case (as to all the benefits of His leaving), He makes it clear that they will not be abandoned by Him, personally - for though they are “orphaned” (left without a parent) for a bit, He promises to “come to you” - this coming being right after His resurrection, which would be the pivotal point in their relationship
- b. This is such a caring, endearing promise of comfort and future security!

When Jesus said, "you will see Me" this would include seeing Him physically after His resurrection, but would come to mean (and be) so much more in the "seeing"

All of this transitioning their focus on the physical life (as predominant) to the true spiritual life (which is at the core of our physical life)

Note Rev. 1:17-18, Rom. 5:9-11 and I John 1:1-3

As experienced in those times when we doubt these truths and yet, somehow know they are true/real - times like these seem like contradictions and yet are more the inward battle of the spirit and flesh, yet the Spirit will always win out

The love of the Lord is evidenced by having and keeping His commands - the wording "ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν ὁ ἀγαπῶν με" being "he (that one) is the one loving Me" - we do not obey to love, we obey because we love

see II Cor. 5:14-15; I John 2:1-6, 5:1-3

Note the third-person wording here, reinforcing it being universal (not just the disciples but to all loving the Lord)

Such experiences are apt to be personal and not ones to be showcased (as if others ought to place faith in our experiences)

Primarily, "the world" will not see Him because the World does not love Him and so it certainly will not obey Him - this makes Him invisible to them and the World will naturally seek to oppose and contradict Him (because it cannot verify Him on its terms)

- c. They would be, as it were, orphaned (as children left without a father to protect and provide for them, for He was this and more to them), but this would be for a very short time and then never occur again - we that are in Christ now will never be orphaned
  - d. "After a little while..." the world would no longer see Him, ever, but His disciples would see Him again after a little bit of time (after His resurrection) - this seeing would then reconfirm that, "...because I live, you will live also." - He is still the strongest guarantee for life (true life) after physical death and because He still lives, so we also will assuredly live
  - e. Writing of this "seeing Me" in Ellicott's Commentary we read, "The words may indeed have their first fulfillment in the appearances of the forty days... but these appearances were themselves steps in the education which was leading the disciples from a trust in the physical to a trust in the spiritual presence."
  - f. Jesus uses the present tense when saying "because I live" even (or especially) when facing His soon physical death, and will be the source of their (still to come) living "also" - all this because Jesus is "the life" (14:6) - this is not only our hope in death, but our hope through this part of our life here in this world, in this age
  - g. Pulling it back to what He said in verse 16 Jesus assures them that "in that day" they will know that "I am in the Father" ("knowing" now being even beyond the "believe" in verses 9-10), for the coming Παράκλητον (Helper) will confirm these truths - they will "know" (inwardly, firsthand) that they are also "in Me" and "I in you" - the same closeness in the Godhead now integrated into them (and us) - the part in all this that partly restricts the full awareness of this is our sin-infected bodies, and yet the confirming/assuring work of His Spirit will even usurp this!
  - h. This "that day" must be in reference to Pentecost ultimately (even above their times with Him after the resurrection) - Acts 1:6-8, 2:1-4 - it is an overwhelmingly profound thought to realize the entire Godhead (Trinity, 14:16 indicating the Spirit also) at work in us!
4. The privileged distinction of those having and guarding "My commandments" - vs. 21-24
- a. Jesus continues to build on the characteristics that will evidence those that are truly His and that truly love Him (for many will profess to be His) - those that truly love Him (which is a must (an automatic characteristic) of one of His) are those that not only have (possess) His commandments (charges, objectives and conclusions/convictions) but that also are "τηρέω" (watching over, protecting, guarding) them and so obeying them
  - b. The "keeping" of His commands/precepts pictures more than just protecting them, but includes the idea of integrating them (as in the difference between guarding a hard copy versus memorizing it) and then living by them (they being what we now are) - there is also a very clear sense of guarding them from corruption/alteration
  - c. Such will be "loved by My Father" ensuring that love of the Lord is without risk and could never be seen as being fleeting or even distracted - this is Jesus' describing the same love as in the Godhead - one practical result being the continued love of the Lord and His "disclosing" (manifesting) Himself to them - this will include more than the resurrection appearances, but will be an ongoing revealing Himself, assuring we will never be lonely (as if orphaned) but will have Him with us throughout life
  - d. As Jesus reiterated with the disciples, they knew more than they realized and so do we - the Lord is "manifested" to us also - though realized in faith, it is no less real
  - e. Judas (not the betrayer) asks how such a revelation of Himself could be to a select group and the world not see it - he was anticipating the return as judge and conquering king (which has yet to come) and not the indwelling (the "make Our abode with him") coming - it is astonishing at times to realize how many have no sense of the Lord at all - we wonder at times how so many don't believe (don't realize) Him because we know Him
  - f. Jesus reiterates the unique (from the world) qualities that will distinguish these privileged people - they will love Him and obey Him, "... he shows what an inseparable connection there is between love and obedience; love is the root, obedience is the fruit. First, where a sincere love to Christ is in the heart, there will be obedience." MH
  - g. The Love of the Father is then further expressed in both Jesus and the Father making their "abode" with this person(s) (this indicating a permanent dwelling)

True love results in communication and communion (which involves our loving obedience (harmonious will) and results in co-habitation (which should clearly involve a continuous acknowledgment of the other's presence))

- h. Compare the truth about God's abode within us to texts such as I Cor. 6:15-20 as well as II Cor. 6:14-18, both dealing with the responsibility of such truth - their "abiding" within us is a love relationship and considers then the reasonable response of true love for Him
- i. Jesus reiterates that those who do not love Him evidence as such by their disregard for His words (the opposite of "keeping") - the magnitude of this wrong being that these "words" are the Father's, so the highest concept of God that could be expressed
- j. There can be those who look as though they are obeying "His commands," yet not truly loving Him - so it is either their obeying what are not His commands or they have redefined them to fit their ideas that will allow them a belief that they obey Him "within reason"

#### 5. Peace given, though not peace as the world gives - vs. 25-28

This reference to "abiding" with them would normally add to their grief (knowing it would end), but another is coming to also abide (be always abiding) with them

- a. "These things" references all that He had just been saying, emphasizing all he had said to them while still with them (while remaining with them) - this is another indicator that He is soon to leave them, yet transitioning again to the benefit of the coming Holy Spirit
- b. "But the Helper" (ὁ δὲ Παράκλητος), the Advocate, the one coming along side to aid and direct, now referenced in His formal title, "the Holy Spirit," will be sent by the Father (just as Jesus was sent by the Father, though this would be an indwelling, far more personal)
- c. He will be sent "in My name" (not necessarily under Jesus' authority, but coming to "push" the exact agenda of Jesus - and in this role, He will do two primary things for these disciples/apostles - He will teach them and remind them of "all that I said to you" - this is unique to these disciples, in that we cannot claim the same detailed remembrance (because we were not there to hear all these things) - but we now have all we ought to know preserved, and considering this text, we ought to treat it all with highest reverence
- d. He will "teach" them all these things, which includes not just the remembrance of the words/sentences and contexts, but their meaning (which they often failed to grasp) - yet even though we do not experience this level of detailed remembrance, the same one (the Holy Spirit) will guide us and teach us also in all truth (John 16:13) - our goal then is to heed/obey!
- e. This is partly what will be the "peace" He will leave them, part of His "peace" being the confidence grounded in truth/reality regardless the circumstances - It is true peace He leaves, though here it is more than a subjective feeling, but primarily (first of all) an objective peace, a real peace with God and therefore a solid basis for all other peace, lending then to the subjective peace (calmness of soul and thought having real peace with the Creator)
- f. This peace is also distinguished by our Lord and not being given as the world gives - the "peace" the world gives is not truly given (in two ways) - the world has a cost to be paid in what it gives, for one must cooperate with it to be at peace with it, while Christ has purchased and won His peace and, second, the peace the world gives is not genuine peace for the world cannot give a lasting, genuine peace
- g. The world commonly "gives peace" in its greetings (as in "peace be with you"), but what the Lord leaves/gives is infinitely more than a wishing someone well; He actually accomplishes peace, guarantees it, and this truth alone brings peace - see Rom. 8:31-39 as an example
- h. This peace is described by Paul in Php. 4:7 as "going beyond understanding" for it (the "peace of God") mounts a guard (a garrison) around the heart, defending it from the overwhelming attacks of worries/anxieties/threats - for those inclined to argue against it (lean on their own understanding and so yielding to anxiety/worry), Paul instructs in Col. 3:15 to "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" (trust, and don't resist the control of God in all matters), let Him have His way and not your struggling to have yours
- i. So as the disciples were trusting the Lord while He was with Him, so now they should trust Him as He leaves and promises them the Advocate/Counselor and His being with them, actually controlling all situations
- j. As the Lord began this discourse in verse 1, He reiterates based upon all He has revealed, to not allow their hearts to be disturbed (shaken up so as to be in confused, anxious disarray) nor to allow them to be fearful (δειλιάω- timid, living in dread and so paralyzed, inactive)
- k. Jesus uses the concept of true love here (in verse 28) in what it looks like when it's genuine - it is not focused on self, so though He had been telling them He was going, and then coming back to them (so with hope), if they loved Him they would rejoice

There are plenty who have (over the centuries) disagreed with this or disregarded it and so feel emboldened to question the accuracy of what these men wrote, unable to accept such a supernatural transference - yet to do so is to deny its authority and reliability leaving it (by such) torn apart and reassembled to fit another's agenda

All other "peace" is subjective or, at best, based in circumstances or perspective, both of which are vulnerable to misconception, misreads and so lead to depressing disappointments

The world cannot give true peace because true peace answers life's most important questions and fears (life purpose, why things happen and where things are headed)

Note a contrasting "peace" in Jer. 6:13-15 (dealing with those in Jerusalem) - "As worthless surgeons the religious leaders refuse to examine or probe the wounds of those who are under their charge, and for the sake of their own ease assure their patients that all is well." CBN

Regarding trust, this is how Jesus began in verse 1 telling them to "believe also in Me"

Note John 16:33

They needed to trust Him in love that His departure was great for Him and so then also for them

As Jesus would restate in Mt. 28:20 before He left them (physically) again

John had already made a case for Jesus being equal with God, so that is not to be questioned- so to handle this phrase we must realize the use of "greater" cannot demean Jesus in any capacity - His humanity concealed His glory and His submission only elevates the concept of submission and does not lessen Jesus in any substantive sense in His person

It is true that faith is belief without having to see (evidence) but this does not mean that God will not direct faith, in a sense "prove" faith in how He will manifest Himself to us, often in unpredictable ways, keeping our faith focused

This does not mean that the Devil was not involved - he clearly was (in "bruising His heal" (Gen. 3:15)) but it would all lead to his defeat and ultimate loss

l. Their rejoicing should also be in the reality, for themselves, that He is coming again - this is in harmony with I Cor. 13:6 where love is described as "...rejoicing with the truth", making this love of the Lord fully attached to their faith/trust - not only will He return to them physically, shortly after His crucifixion, but would then be closely with them internally (spiritually)

m. The Lord clearly uses this to demonstrate their lack of love for Him at this point because they were more troubled for themselves at His leaving than for the good it would be for Him to go - for "the Father is greater than I" (as it stood currently in His incarnate position)

n. There is (understandably) hesitation to identify the Lord too much with His humanity, but it is essential that we do not take away from His humanity and the aspects of His incarnate state - two heretical groups formed over this point, believing they needed to side with one side (humanity/deity) over another (Arians considering Jesus less than God, to focus on His humanity while Gnostics holding to some aspect of Jesus' divinity, but not believing Him to be truly human)

o. The disciples should have rejoiced, and now Jesus has stressed what their love of Him should look like in at least two ways - keeping His commandments and rejoicing in His good/glory over their own comfort/feelings - love is focused on the best of another before self

6. Jesus sets up the future increase in the disciples faith, and He will counter the ruler of this world with His love of the Father (keeping His commands) - vs. 29-31

a. As Jesus said in 13:19, He again states that He is telling them what is coming, before it happens, that when it does come, they would believe - Jesus knew what would be needed (practically) in establishing their faith in Him versus them (or any of us) ever looking to set proofs for God to fulfill in order to believe - we would not actually know what would be needed to build and establish faith in us (so we dare not demand or even expect "proofs" on our terms)

b. Jesus reiterates that He does not have much time left to be with them (in this moment) and to speak with them - much still needs to be said! Jesus then makes it clear, He is fully aware of the "ruler of this World" plans, and that he is actually "coming" - this is also part of building on what He had just told them - He knew they were coming, and their plans, and could have avoided them, stopped them, yet did not - He was willingly (deliberately) offering His life

c. This "ruler" was not an authoritative force to be reckoned with, but a tool to be used in carrying out the commands of the Father - this "ruler has nothing in Me" - Satan has no claim at all on Jesus, so all that was about to take place was of God and not of Satan - Jesus was sinless

d. Note, that our being "in Christ" means Satan has no claim to us either

e. The world would soon see the most vivid demonstration of Jesus' love of the Father in keeping all He commanded (especially considering the cross) - again, this stresses what true love of God looks like; far more than sentimental moments of emotional stirring, but mainly of obedience

#### XXIV. Abiding In Christ, The True (Actual) Vine - 15:1-17

A. This is the last of the "I AM" statements in John, and provides us with a very detailed picture (illustration) of the reality and necessity of "we in Christ" and "He in us"

1. There are two main points covered in these verses, the first being the need to "Abide in Me" and what that involves... mainly the bearing of fruit ("fruit" being the result of the vine with which the branch is connected), and in using this analogy, fruit is expected

2. The second major point being the fruitless branches and what is done with them - there is a reason for the existence of those associated with Christ (or "in the Church") that wither away, and this is explained

This is a good picture to have in our heads to always remember how this relationship "works"- our focus is the connection/ association with Him and the expected fruit that comes from it

a. It is important that we are not too exploratory with this picture, but that we keep the conclusions as close to the illustration and Jesus' use of it, so we glean from His actual meaning/intent

b. This example that our Lord uses is intended to provide an underlying reason/purpose for us to "stay with" Christ and to never count it a small thing when considering leaving Him or when others walk away (or wither away)

B. The vine, the branches and the vineyard keeper (the farmer) - vs. 1-2

1. Jesus continues His teaching after He and His disciples got up from the meal, as they were in the process of leaving - there is no indication of actually leaving the room until the start of chapter 18 - this means His "High Priestly Prayer" in chapter 17 would be with them in the room - vs. 1

a. He, now, quickly turns the focus toward a deeper discussion regarding the close relationship He had just been speaking of to them

This picture will focus more on the inner workings of the relationship (how it works and why it is essential) and the combined results that come out of it (the fruit)

- b. He had just made it clear that the ruler of this world has “nothing in Me” (though this may not be true with some of Jesus’ followers and professed loyalists) - He was going to prove His love of the Father to the world in His exact/precise obedience
- c. Now, what about those “in Christ” versus those professing (pretending) to be in Him? This is answered with a focus on fruit-bearing, the process of it and its cause
- d. Jesus does this with the use of an analogy of a vine in relationship to its branches and the farmer - He assigns Himself in this scenario as the “true vine” (the real/actual one) apparently in contrast to other “vines” (other religious systems/leaders, and possibly Israel itself)

## 2. The vineyard keeper’s handling of unfruitful and fruitful branches - vs. 2

This has to be a more severe consequence than just such a one dying, or being left to themselves to be a useless, former part of the work/purpose of Christ - they are removed permanently from any relation to the Lord

- a. The first scenario in this illustration involves branches that are not producing fruit - since the purpose of a vineyard is its fruit, if any branch is not bearing fruit is “taken away” (by the cultivator, the Father) - fruitlessness is a result of either some disconnect with the vine or that such a branch is just a drain on the overall resources and proves it has no true part in the actual purpose (fruit bearing) of the vine
- b. In contrast, every branch that does bear fruit, these not only remain but are “cleansed” (often translated or handled as “pruned” (since this cleaning is the removal of anything connected or attached to the branch and is removed so as not to have these parasites or competing growths taking away from production))
- c. Texts such as Gal 5:22-23 give a list of such fruits that are the natural byproducts of the indwelling Spirit of God - others such as Col. 1:3-14 show us also that fruits are the resulting “works” of the Lord versus the parasitical “fruits” of competitive growths
- d. The result of the Father’s cleansing/pruning is a removal also, but only of deadly life/resource drainers, all for the purpose that more fruit (true fruit) is increasingly produced

Though we may not see from our natural perspectives the good in such purifications, texts like these enable us to know what is happening and why - the focus of the vine dresser is not the ease of these fruit bearers, but the ongoing cultivation for more fruit

## C. The key to fruit bearing is “abiding” - vs. 3-8

- 1. Regarding the “pruning” (cleansing), Jesus lets the disciples know that they are “already clean” (purified) because of (on account of) “the word I have spoken to you” - primarily because He said so, and secondarily, because they have heard, learned and have His words within them (as in verse 7) - vs. 3

Because we are clean officially, (judicially), He keeps us clean practically - this we should expect as a positive, constant result of abiding in Christ - the Father does this in some degree as our earthly fathers kept us clean through chastening Heb. 12:5-13

- a. It is because they are clean (in and by Him) they produce fruit, and as such then are consistently cleaned (purged via sanctification, separating them from bad influences and separating bad influences from them)
- b. “καθαροι here means “in a condition fit to bear fruit” (Expositor’s Greek N.T.) - this is important to note because our being cleansed (sanctified) is not a truth we look upon passively, as though it ends there - we are not only purified in the removal of sin, having the relationship with God restored, but it is now a starting point from which we are to see ourselves as bearing fruit in this relationship (it is active, productive)

- 2. “Abide” (μείνατε (μείνω) to stay with, remain, so not to intentionally leave (or unintentionally wonder off) with Him - this now provides our “side” of this scenario - He is always faithful, and now the disciples (and so we) are to focus on sticking-with the Lord, always for the purpose of bearing fruit - vs. 4

Using the illustration here, to not “remain” (so to separate to any degree for any time) is to cut off from Christ’s fruit-bearing work in us - our nutrients for this purpose are found in this totally dependent relationship with Him and “apart from Me, you can do nothing” (15:5)

- a. It is common for some to use texts like this to make a case for the potential loss of salvation based upon our unfaithfulness, but in other texts such as Php. 2:12-13 we see both sides of the obedience to God presented; our part (“work out your salvation”) and God’s part (“for it is God who is at work in you”)
- b. The point again being as J.B. Phillips translated it, “You must go on growing in me and I will grow in you” and Kenneth Wuest’s expanded translation is, “Maintain a living communion with me, and I with you” as in not only “maintaining a living communion” but that with the understanding that He is with us - we stick to cling to Him in light of this not to somehow make Him do it (for He is always faithful and will always provide) - our issue is neglect, cutting-off from Him or seeking “sustenance” elsewhere
- c. Self-dependence (independence) leads only to not bearing fruit - this (independence) is sometimes pursued because we redefine “fruit” and picture it in a more measurable way (by others (often)) - much is done in Christ’s name that is not “of Him”

As we often do with friends - we associate with those we identify with and define most of ourselves by this (as who we are reflected in who our friends are)

- d. This “abiding” pictures more a deliberate frame of mind, a singular strategy to get done what must (ought to) be done - to “be with” Him is an act of will/determination, a purpose and an expected way of living (that this is “what I do”)



To “abide” indicates a coming to and joining with Him in some fashion, and then to stay with Him - there will be lures to leave which is why Jesus emphasizes both the fruit-bearing benefit (reality) and the dire consequences of letting go

We need not spend much time arguing here the sovereignty of God versus the will of man - we should not become “fatalists” excusing a lack of responsibility as if it is dependent faith in God

These “fruits” are “Christlikenesses” (His qualities, His focus/purpose, His words/commands in us all with a purpose to glorify the Father) - anything truly along these lines is “fruit”

True life is drawn from Christ in us as emphasized in two other popular verses - Gal. 2:20 (Christ lives in me) Php. 4:13 (Christ strengthens me)

see Eze. 15 as another use of this illustration by God

And before this final judgment, there is a life of withering away in the absence of a true life source - this is sadly evident in the lives of so many

We live by Christ and so for Christ which then will dictate the nutrients/nourishments we will seek (and consider needs) - His words for instance

With such a description and the reality of the indwelling of Jesus’ sayings, the asking and assured promise makes perfect sense (versus a pseudo-christian asking to “consume it upon their own lusts” (James 4:3))

The “ask whatever you wish” is in the imperative... it is a command to ask - this asking is a necessary (commanded) part of getting things done

Note that the focus isn’t on defining the fruit, just the expectation of it - if we define it on our terms, we risk forcing other, unnatural results

- e. To “abide” is staying united with Jesus, His person (so recognized/acknowledged fellowship), with His teaching (His words), His focus/purpose/direction (His priorities) - the opposite would be to walk away/let go (having had a relationship/acquaintance with Him) and this walking away could be slow and progressive over time (or immediate), yet leaving nonetheless
- f. The branch is unable to bear fruit (its purpose) “of itself” unless it stays connected to the vine (its source of life from which comes “fruit” (characteristic of the vine it’s attached to)) - this is because “abiding” in Him is directly associated with His “abiding” in us - bad fruit comes from bad sources as described in Mt. 7:15-20
- g. It should be noted that the lack of concern for no fruit at all or no concern for the type of fruit (good versus bad) would be a bad/negative indicator (that maybe we are not in Christ)
- h. Again, there is a clear point of a deliberate remaining (staying with) the Lord

### 3. “Much fruit” versus no fruit - vs. 5-6

- a. Note the distinct contrast between those abiding in the Lord and He in them over against those that do not - there is no “middle ground” in this scenario (there is no “little fruit”) - Jesus states it as certain that those in Him and He in them “φέρει καρπὸν πολὺν” (bears fruit much (in abundance)) - if we are to consider any notion of complacency in the life of one believing they are “in Him”, it will be with great concern (of a possible, soon-coming disconnect with Him altogether) and so it is never treated apathetically (not (truly) at all)
- b. To be disconnected with Christ is to be in a state to not be able to do anything, no not anything (nothing whatever (οὐ ... οὐδέν) is closer to the way this is worded) - this is, of course, related to what its apparent purpose (spiritually, religiously) would be - it might seem to “it” or others that it can do something, but it is utterly removed from any actual production (fruit) so it will just wither/dry up
- c. The ones not abiding (again, apparently those somehow associated with Jesus and then leaving Him (associated for a short time or long time, either one)) are thrown away (as fallen/disconnected branches) only to then dry up (waiting to be burned) - the gathering to be burned looks to be associated with Judgment texts such as Mat. 13:24-30, 36-43
- d. The reference to burning seems clear in its connection to the final judgment - there is nothing noble in temporarily “connecting to” Christ and then to leave off Him - to have life, true life, is to be in Christ and to be in Christ is to produce much fruit

### 4. The life connection explained - vs. 7-8

- a. Similar to our physical life, there is a strong realization that our life/living is “just happening” and we come to learn more of all that is actually taking place in our bodies to keep us alive, functioning and so productive - we do not will it to happen, though we realize that if we cut ourselves off from life-sustaining resources (air, water, food) we will die - and so it is with Christ - we may not know how it all is working, but we are aware of what we cannot be cut off from
- b. There is again the reference to “abiding” (faithfully, dependently staying with Him) and now not just He in us but “My words (sayings) abide in you” as part of this lifeblood - the result of this being a change in desires (known needs and even cravings) which naturally (the new nature) results in asking for what is “wished” (desired/willed) and it will happen (come into being), all because of a newness of life (Rom. 6:4) a renewed mind (Rom. 12:2)
- c. A text like this can seem confusing with complacent “Christianity” as a norm, so what is pictured here may seem an “oddity” (where desires/wishes/cravings are for what truly lends to the production of true fruit... Christ-likeness in thinking and deed) - the “ask what you will” statement is often seen in light of a will self-focused and not one controlled/influenced by the indwelling word of Christ (the actual source of any true produce/production)
- d. Jesus now goes to the purpose of all this... “My Father is glorified” (the husbandman/vineyard keeper) - again the reference to fruit is “much fruit” (in great numbers/amounts) of all forms of Christ-likeness - we live to exhibit (be used to produce) this fruit - it is sure to occur as a result of “abiding” in Him and He in us
- e. The result of “much fruit” bearing is ongoing validation of being His (Jesus’) disciples (His ongoing pupils/learners/students) - and as such, we prove to be those who learn of Him versus being disciples of this age/world being used to glorify the world in being used to produce its expected “fruits” (produce not for the vineyard keeper)

## D. The love of the Father, the love of Jesus and the resulting joy - vs. 9-17

### 1. "Abide in my love" - vs. 9-10

With this being the love the Father has for the Son and now the love the Son has for us, we can be assured it is all-encompassing, unwavering

As is about to be described, true love involves (in this case) the seeking out of the will of the one loved (Jesus with the Father, and we with Jesus) and acting in harmony with it

For instance, the key to true joy will be linked with keeping His commandments

Live with the knowledge of His love for us (urging us on to keeping His commands)- with people, such a command could look manipulative but with the Lord of glory is it absolute truth

- a. Before Jesus tells them to abide (remain) in His love, He clarifies the magnitude of His love - it is "as the Father has loved" - "as" (καθώς - in the same manner and degree) so Jesus has loved these disciples (and now, us) - it is a divine love
- b. Jesus used the aorist tense for the reference to His love and that of the Father, demonstrating a once for all time love (reasoned, willful/determined care/preference (choice) of another), and so these should remain in it (stay with it) - this is a difficult idea to explain other than this "remaining" is constantly living (thinking) in light of this as a never ending fact - we are loved, but are susceptible to forgetting it at times or living as though we are not loved- this is at the root of not (then) following/keeping His commandments
- c. Jesus defines what it means to abide in His love... guarding/obeying His commandments - this should be looked upon as what is the expected result and, ironically, what is at the ongoing cause/motivation of our remaining in His love - this is not describing a loss of being loved by Him if we fail in obedience, but more about not availing ourselves of the advantages of His love ("living in" the realm/reality of His love) when disobedient
- d. Jesus uses Himself as the example (and standard) at the end of verse 10 when saying "just as I have kept my Father's commandments" and "abide in His love" (of which there was no doubt that He would) - so this is no threat, just what should be taken as the expectation - it is too easy to declare love for Christ yet failing to obey Him - true love is active, not just verbal
- e. One way to illustrate this would be to consider where we "live" - if we're "living" in an unloving place we will struggle with joy, yet if we live (abide) where we are loved, though it carries with it responsibilities, we will find fulfillment (because we are loved) - there are competing "loves", though all others are either pseudo loves or futile (unable to truly fulfill because of limitations) and so disappoint and let us down - see Rom. 5:1-5

### 2. The Lord's love points to/directs what is best for those He loves and leads to true joy - vs. 11

This is truly the scenario of "getting" to do His commandments versus having to do them - true joy is found in obedience to Him, not a supposed freedom from obedience

This is another demonstration of how what we love (and why) has a direct impact/connection with our joy (fulfillment) - if self or the world, true, lasting joy cannot be had

- a. As one that truly loves would desire, Jesus has said all He has said (likely since the start of chapter 14) that the joy (delight, gladness, deep seated contentment) He has would be "in you"
- b. It is clear that the temporal, worldly idea/concept of joy is distorted, considering it (joy) to be more an excitement (temporary "fun" based in favorable circumstances) versus the positional joy in the Lord leading to responsible activity versus idle pursuits
- c. His joy, this joy ends in our fulfilled joy (πληρώω, filled-up to capacity, complete (and so not lacking anything)) - it would be a rare thing to hear of someone (these days) counseling another to obey the Lord's commands to find joy, but this is the case, yet this complete joy is such a rarity many do not know enough (or have faith enough) to even look to pursue it
- d. Compare this to I John 5:1-4 where loving God is associated with keeping His commandments and the clarification that His commands are not "burdensome" (weighty/oppressive)

### 3. With such love shown us, we are commanded to love each other as He did us - vs. 12-17

His love of the Father in 14:31 was the precursor to this - His love would have Him live for all the Father would have Him do resulting in yielding His life to die for His friends

see I John 3:10-18; 4:7-11

- a. Jesus once again( Jn. 13:34) gives them His command ("My commandment") that they love each other as He loved them (and so the same goes for us) - yet the scope is stressed now with the example He was about to set in the degree of His love for them and of the Father - He would lay down His life for them (His friends) - He would live and die for them
- b. This is the greatest exhibition of what love is, so all other, lesser versions of this same love, are to be focused on giving (living/sacrificing) for the best of another, each other
- c. How will His friends know they are truly His friends? If they do what He commands (they are not obedient to become His friends, but are obedient because they are His friends)
- d. It's easy to lose sight of this as a command from Jesus (another reminder that love finds its source, not in emotions/feelings, but out of (for us) obedience first, which will then come to include compassion for others as He did)
- e. We should also realize that Jesus' dying for friends was also in anticipation of what they (we) would become, for as Paul points out in Rom. 5:6-11, He dies for those who were His "enemies" and now, by His work, are His friends, and His true friends (now alive, having a new nature through Him) are known and identified as such because of their obedience to Him
- f. Which brings us back to His precept/command in verse 12, to love each other as He loved

Such a loving friend demonstrates their love/friendship in sacrificing of their life even if never called upon to sacrifice it all (in death)

The idea of a “friend” is powerful when taken seriously seeing how it is to be normally expected of a friend - the “friends” of our day are those who come with demands on us and we on them - yet when having a friend who lays down their life for us, following them is a matter of a love debt

There is a natural reaction in our time to the term “slave” since it is believed that a person is fully what they can be when they answer only to themselves, but knowing what we are without God (and so on our own, just ourselves) shows us that we find value in Him and not ourselves

We should expect to be even more responsible knowing what we know - “pleading ignorance” is not a defense for us!

Compare to Psalm 25:12-25, Mat. 10:13-17, Rom. 16:25-27

This “fruit” also including converts having introduced the world to Christ and now bearing the Good News and passing on the words of Christ form the Father

This asking of the Father is “in My name” (in the name of Jesus, so in keeping with His will, priorities and work)

Too much of our fretting and complaining are produced with the absence of prayer

## XXV. The Hatred of the World - 15:18-27

### A. “If the world hates you...” - vs. 18-21

#### 1. The “if” is not so much the possibility of it not happening but more a “when” (when the time comes) - vs. 18

It is not uncommon to see forms of the “hatred” of the world in the Church (having its source in the same motivation... hatred of Christ)

- g. The greatest love that can be expressed is “laying down” your life for those you care for (φίλων) - this demonstrates what true affection is willing to do (and does) in placing the life of another above your own - such love sacrifices many times over before such a final expression
- h. Jesus returns to what their love of Him (being now His friends) will look like - His friends do what He commands - this is not Jesus telling them how to be/become His friends, but what is indicative of those who truly are His friends - His “commands” (ἐντέλλομαι- order, what is prescribed to be followed) are to be obeyed/followed - the motive (as in chapter 14) is one of love/care, and here a natural response of being His friend (again, natural of the new nature)
- i. The opposite being a resistance or disobedience out of some self-focused, self-prioritized reason
- j. There have been and still are those that claim to be a friend of Christ yet are not driven to follow Him (not having a sense of the importance of obedience) - Jesus was not/is not just any friend - He condescended to love and die for us as the God-Man, so resistance to Him (as though He was just another man) should be seen as unreasonable (versus looking on obedience as being uncalled for or unreasonable)
- k. Knowing who Jesus is makes this next statement especially profound... “No longer do I call you slaves...” - they were and still are at this point “slaves,” but now they have a different standing with Him (a slave/servant and so much more) for now these “slaves” are called “friends” - just being a slave of the Lord was the highest of callings and privileges, but now to be recognized as His friends would seem incredible
- l. Jesus still references (in verse 20) them as “slaves” (which will always be the wondrous reality) but now to be also “friends” having the particular benefits He describes - He will always be Master, but what a master! The cause/purpose of life is now what we are directly a part of (being told now of God’s purposes, knowing what the “Master” is doing) - we are profoundly honored in getting to know what we get to know (for all others are blinded, ignorant and even hostile to God and so to the true purpose/reason of life itself)
- m. Their being now called “friends” proven in Jesus’ telling them “all things I have heard from the Father” - this is a friend with the highest possible connections!
- n. But there is no self-pride in this, for it is so because “I chose you” He tells the disciples - this was not at all “of their doing” but of His choosing them and “appointing” (literally “placing/established”) them that they would “go” (sending them out into the world) and there to “bear fruit” (the Father’s vineyard infiltrating and encompassing the world) - note also that the word for “go” (ὑπάγω) means “to lead under, bring under” (going under His authority leading others under His authority)
- o. Jesus uses the word “remain” (same as “abide”) regarding the fruit - the effects of their work would be lasting (versus the fleeting works and causes of this age... and clearly they have been)
- p. If we take verse 16 in its order, the Lord makes it clear that He chose them not they Him, and His purpose was for their ordination to His work (their new, life-defining purpose), and this all for the purpose to bear lasting fruit (lasting also in that it continues to reproduce) and all of this leading to full access to the Father in fulfilling this calling... His work, His fruit, His glory)
- q. It might surprise us to realize how often, when we are genuinely seeking the will of God to be done, that we have not asked for specific needs - prayer is so often treated as a last resort that it is not seen as a daily component to our work
- r. The command to love one another is reiterated as part of this work and how this work will be accomplished (mutual, supportive love) and in preparation for the next topic; the hatred of the world

Hatred can often be felt, welling-up even without the hater themselves knowing why they hate - it can be instinctive hatred... to them "it's just there"

The world can and does have some morals that align with those of Christ's, but their motive and authority for these are substantively different

And so, in contrast, if you will love the world you will keep its commandments (as they are at any given point) - it expects loyal abiding in it for life, purpose and to bear its fruit

This is why the world truly hates Jesus Christ - He successfully removed people from its grasp and causes/purposes- they will accept endless "answers" and faiths so long as they are not that of the actual Christ

To seemingly accomplish something Jesus did not (nor would He have pursued) in obtaining a peace and acceptance of the world is to truly be anti-Christ

His "slaves" are so because He chose them (since slaves cannot choose their master) - the world is a slave to sin and the devil and will never be able to free themselves to their notion of true autonomy

True teaching of Christ's words will never become world-popular - if it does, it cannot be His words

There have been many throughout history that have done evil to true Christians in the name of a Jesus of their own making - distorters of Christ accuse others of distorting Christ just as liars accuse truth-tellers of lying

To sincerely believe we know God does not mean we do - there must be something outside of ourselves that determines the facts and we, on our part believe it in content and as the actual authority

- c. "Hate" (μισέω) is well translated, for it involves all we know "hate" to involve in how it detests the object of its hatred, and as all hatred, it indwells and consumes its possessor, fermenting to a point of explosive outbursts even to violence of thought, speech, intent and action
- d. Truly (really!), don't take it personal for it hated Him first - it is Christ they truly hate and therefore those that are His and represent Him and His work will be hated (even if their hatred is not fully reasoned out as being against Christ)

## 2. The world hates those that are not "of it" - vs. 19

- a. The world hates us because of Christ and because we are not a part of it (we being actual "aliens" so fundamentally foreign in our being (new nature) and citizenship) - and in being such, we are a genuine threat to its way of life, its priorities and even its fundamental morals
- b. As mentioned previously, even the organized "church" can hate true Christianity because Jesus Christ Himself is not in it anymore and so it comes to, naturally (as the nature of the fallen world) hate Christlikeness and are threatened by His fruit and words
- c. The world "loves its own" ("love" from φιλέω being an emotional, affectionate love in contrast to the hatred of Christ) - it will still hate others, but such is its nature also to be selfish (one of its morals), placing self foremost in multiple ways and degrees - it (the world) will be tolerant of variants within itself as long as they align with its core principles of first, not being of the true Christ and His words and second, keeping any idea of "salvation" within the protected realm of human effort and ability) - this is why the world can praise some "religions"
- d. It will hate true Christians because they are not "of it" and they are not "of it" because Jesus "chose" us out of it (we were once of it but no longer, so we will be seen as traitors/opponents)- this is part of the instinctive, core reason the world hates these - they were (by nature) one of them, living for its values (temporal, physical), and now have a focus/purpose beyond the world, above it (superior to it and eternal), so it is resented/feared

## 3. Guilty by association - vs. 20-21

- a. Jesus now ties it all together in their association with Him - if He is seen/recognized, there will be hatred and persecution - if there is acceptance and unity with the world, it is clear evidence Jesus is not seen in us/them
- b. Jesus reminds them of what He said to them in 13:13 that a "servant is not greater than his lord", there in the context of washing their feet and that humble service could not be beneath them since it was not beneath Him - here its is now related to His being hated/persecuted, so since they persecuted (διώκω to aggressively chase/pursue to stop/put an end to with threats and pressure, seeking to remove options (cornering)), so they will (without doubt) do the same to His slaves - see also Mat. 10:24-25
- c. Being His slaves, we will never be "greater" than He is avoiding this persecution - it came from "the world" and then (at that time) it was the religious that fit this category
- d. If they (the world) "kept" (from τηρέω, to watch over and observe) His word, they will do the same for those that are Christ's (assuming the message/words are the same) - the world never will, so they will (100%) not keep His word unless they are chosen out of the world
- e. Jesus makes it clear that all of this persecution and rejection will be because of Him (for His name's sake) - the accusations of wrong and wrong-doing will come just as they were launched against Christ, and whether or not the persecutors fully realize it, they do what they do because of their hatred of Him - they do this literally because of His name (His reputation, all He lived for and promoted)
- f. Idolatry is still fully functioning even in realms of religion that identify as Christian - they form a version of Jesus Christ made in the image of how they believe He should be or is (in their estimation) and, once many years of "tradition" are established, it becomes heretical/blasphemous (in their ideology) to present Jesus as He actually is in Scripture
- g. All of this happens because "they do not know the One who sent Me" - they do not believe He was truly sent from God because they do not truly know God (the Father) - everyone, in some form, know of God, but only those in Christ truly know Him (personally and accurately) - to know of someone or a variation of the person may bring with it a sense of authority in the self-declared, self-recognized authority, but even with such confidence, the truth is not changed to bend to their perception

## B. No “excuse” for their sin - vs. 22-25

### 1. The particular sin of rejecting disbelief in the face of all that Jesus had said and done - vs. 22

There is a more general sense of this in Romans 1:20 where all people are without excuse in regards to their knowing of God and ignoring/disregarding Him and His evidence - to know such truth is to have greater accountability - compare to Luke 12:41-48

Some may, now, even in “Christian” circles claim exemption because ignorance, trying to ignore or cover the fact that they did have access to Scripture which they willingly neglected

- a. Jesus is not making a case for some to have no sin at all (a sinless perfection), but is stressing the particular sin of having the Lord (the Messiah) in their midst, teaching them and providing signs of who He is - before He came and proved Himself, these were not guilty of the disbelief in the Messiah (the Promised One)
- b. Having seen and heard what they had from Him, they now had no “excuse” (πρόφασις- a pretense or pretext, putting something forward to cover), and here Jesus makes it clear they could not put forward any argument in their defense
- c. “What Jesus means is that these determined unbelievers have not even as much as an excuse... an “ostensible reason”, the figleaf of some pretext behind which to hide. So perfectly has Jesus done his work, so completely did he reveal himself (his name), that no unbeliever is able to find even the shadow of an excuse for rejecting him.” Lenski
  - These are guilty of persistent/determined/stubborn unbelief (loving darkness not light)

### 2. Hated without cause - vs. 23-25

One cannot hate Jesus and love the Father - the same would be true that we cannot say we love Jesus but not the Father or the Holy Spirit

There is an evil disposition in humanity which will lead to open disbelief and variations of expressed hatred, even in light of the truth given us by our Creator in evidence of His creation and in the special revelation of His word - when cornered, there is an attempt to be quickly dismissive of it, but when “nagged” by the truth again, they become haters

Even though the content of Psalm 69 had personal reference to David, it had a greater intent/purpose (and so meaning) in Christ, for David was not hated as Jesus was and David’s zeal for the House of the Lord (69:9) was not to the extent of the Lord’s

- a. The motive/cause was actually one of hatred - since disbelief is not a result of a lack of necessary proof/evidence, its reason/motive needs to be determined - why not trust and accept Jesus with all He had done? It was, whether or not they consciously realized it, because of their hatred of Him (they being “of the world” and He being its rejected creator, not subjecting Himself to its plans/goals/values)
- b. Typically, this “hatred” of Christ or the Father is because of a particular (or more than one) attribute - they may love His creation, His sacrifice and generosity, but hate (or even fear) His holiness and justice
- c. He again, as He did in 10:37-38, indicates if they do not believe Him (what He says/teaches) then at least “believe the works” - but even with “works which no one else did” (which were of the greatest degree), they not only did not believe (passive and active disbelief), but they “hated” - Jesus made it clear that they “have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well” - so again, they are guilty of this particular disbelief in the face of such profound evidence
- d. In our day we still see it where even the religious (some claiming “Christianity”) become hateful because they are embarrassed in front of the world by the Gospel and all its facets because, in their hearts, they long to be accepted by the world rather than hated with Christ by the world - these also, having such advantages of exposure to the Truth have a particular, severe guilt
- e. Jesus references Psalm 69:4 (as being in their “law” (sometimes the entire Old Testament/Tanakh)) and its “fulfillment (πληρωθῆ - fulfilled in the sense it is brought to its ultimate fulfillment/demonstration) that He was hated “without cause” (δωρεάν- freely, gratuitously and here in the full sense of His not deserving it) - this was so in the time of David, with David, so it will be with us (privileged to be hated with Him)
- f. Putting this all together, they have “seen and hated Me and My Father” so there is a clear sense that they knew what/who they were hating - they are truly hateful people!

## C. The “Helper” is coming to testify of Jesus... along with the disciples - vs. 26-27

### 1. The Advocate is coming and will bear witness of Christ - vs. 26

They needed to know (and we) that the world is hostile to the Lord, toward the Father and toward the light and will be as much so to the genuine working of the Helper since His genuine work will point to Christ, leading many to Him and stirring fear and hatred/disdain in the rest

- a. Even with the continuing hatred (even growing hatred), rather than backing-off, there is a “doubling-down” in the response by first sending the Holy Spirit - He will testify (act as a witness for Christ, with us, and against the world)
- b. These days, a hateful response is supposed to be taken as a reason to back-off or yield the cause as a loss - but they (and we) could not be intimidated, for that is the objective of haters (to instill fear in order to stop opposition to what they hate/fear themselves)
- c. Again, the Advocate will be sent by Jesus for this purpose (so it was guaranteed), and this Helper is once again names as “the Spirit of truth” who also comes from the Father (all three members of the Godhead working this out... it cannot fail in its purpose!)

### 2. These disciples will be doing the same work, the Helper working with and in them - vs. 27

This is in line with Acts 1:21-22 indicating the Apostle’s special authority

- a. His work is to comfort/help them in the “testifying” (witnessing work)
- b. This is our work/purpose/calling also - He comforts us with truth, not flattery or excused absences

XXVI. The Coming “Spirit of Truth”, Guiding as Christ Did in His Continuing Work - 16:1-15

A. “Remember... when the hour comes, you may remember” - vs. 1-4

1. Informed/forewarned to be prepared (forearmed) so as not to “stumble” - vs. 1

“The ministers of the gospel must expect all types of reproaches, not only by those who are open enemies, but even by those also who seem to be of the same household, and the very pillars of the Church.” GBN

Some would fall away out of fear/pain, while others would betray Him reacting to His teaching - see John 6:60-65

- a. Jesus is telling His disciples all that will be coming in the continuation of His ministry and their association with Him - one of the core reasons for this is to protect them from misinterpreting the negative, even violent opposition
- b. The word for “stumbling” is “σκανδαλιζω” describing an entrapment designed to ensnare and to cause one to ultimately fall (or fall away in their focus/faith) - much of the persecution that was coming was of such a matter and from such people (many often very religious and seemingly moral/upright) that it could easily cause one to question their faith
- c. It will be imperative that these (and we) know for a fact the reasons we will suffer and be rejected (in the true work of Christ), so as not to be ensnared by doubt brought on by a perception of life direction determined by (focused on) circumstances

2. “Religious” rejection and “religious” killing - vs. 2-3

Many have been tortured and killed as heretics (to various faiths) by sincere people seeking to be true to the “god” they believe they serve - it is a reminder of how very important it is to be certain of our interpretation of God’s Word, for even it has been used to “justify” cruel acts

Many have been persecuted and killed through the last two thousand years even under the name of Jesus, though with such action they prove they do not know Him - He never sent us to kill for Him!!

- a. Speaking specifically of the Jews in their time, these disciples (and those who would follow Jesus later) would be “outcasts from the synagogue” - this and the killing to follow are clarified in a way so as to demonstrate those persecuting are not necessarily doing it out of hatred
- b. To be put out of the synagogue (to a Jew) was to lose almost everything (job, social standing and acceptance, religious fellowship, friends and more) - there were many “good things” lost because of Christ which would be enough to make even the most faithful susceptible to doubts (had it not been for Jesus telling them to anticipate this)
- c. Not only would they excommunicate, but as Jesus clarifies, “the hour is coming” that those who “kill you” will think they are actually performing a sincere/legitimate service for God - the word for “service” (λατρεία) describes formal worship/service as something done out of duty and highest reverence - note Paul’s testimony of this in Acts 26:9-11
- d. The underlying reason for their actions is because they (the Jews that would do this) did not truly know the Father (though they would claim to have known Him best of all), and because of this did not know Christ - this “knowing” is more intimate/familial

3. When the time comes for these oppositions, remember “I told you of them” - vs. 4

The goal in life is not to avoid suffering and opposition, since everyone will face them in some degree - better to suffer with purpose, with cause, not holding our lives here too dear- see Acts 20:22-24

- a. Jesus does not promise them escape, just that these things are coming and are supposed to be coming - having known purpose in sufferings not only helps focus resolve to face it, but enables a form of embracing them, knowing they fit so precisely in God’s almighty, perfect purposes - Jesus spoke of their remembering also in light of His betrayal (13:19) and that He knew it was coming, as well as in 14:29 of His going away
- b. He had not told them precisely of these things at the beginning of His calling of them since He was with them, but now He is about to depart and would no longer be with them as He had
- c. Marvel more in the overriding control of the Lord than in the power of a cruel enemy

B. The coming Helper, the great advantage He brings to them and the work - vs. 5-11

1. Countering sorrow of Jesus’ departure by realizing how much better it will be with the Spirit - vs. 5-7

Peter’s question stopped when he didn’t like the answer and Thomas questioned more of the “way” Jesus was going

The Holy Spirit will not only be with them, doing what Jesus did for them, but will be within, and in so doing will be convicting (judging) the world

- a. Why not inquire more as to where He was going? Peter and Thomas had asked where He was going (13:36 and 14:5) but they did not continue to search it out - Here Jesus is telling them that they, in the present tense, were not asking Him where He was going
- b. Jesus would continue to tell them more, but He is pointing out that their response to what He has been telling them of His departure was one of sorrow - if they would just keep asking Him more about where He would be, what would be happening and why! - some of our disappointment comes from our giving up on a truth too soon and not exploring its depths, facets and expected benefits (that come from delving into the details)
- c. Jesus stresses what He is about to say with “But I tell you the truth...” that it is profitable (συμφέρω) and so to their advantage that He goes so the Helper will come - He (the Helper) will essentially be the true “Vicar” of Christ (the one coming in Jesus’s stead)
- d. For this to happen, Jesus needed to “go away” - though this was a discouraging notion to them, Jesus assures them it should be something they anticipate with excitement - their focus was to be on the honored part they would have in His work and not reaching the “finish line” (the Kingdom) early

Our feelings/emotions must be submissive to the Truth and not the Truth submissive to feelings

This is one reason we do not need visions or personal visits from Jesus now - we have the added advantage of the indwelling Spirit now

Jesus has been doing this work and when the Holy Spirit comes, He continues it only on a larger scale ("the world") and by His indwelling of all those in Christ

Though this will be done by His showing sin for what it is (ultimately disbelief), and demonstrating righteousness here on earth in the absence of Christ (bodily) - He (the Spirit) will also convict (judge) all others who are in lockstep with the ruler of this world

Robertson in his "Word Pictures" wrote that without the work of the Spirit, "... such men actually have a pride of intellectual superiority in refusing to believe on Jesus."

Compare to Hebrews 10:26-29

Our innate sense of right and wrong is not reliable and if founded solely on a personal sense of right and wrong, it is not authoritative

This work continues in the work of His Spirit

Anything that is against God is in harmony with Satan - to stand with or as a condemned leader is to ultimately suffer the same fate

- e. Jesus' using the phrase "I tell you the truth" demonstrates the need for truth over emotional (natural) comfort - though they did not like what He was saying, the truth of the matter was that it was truly best for them for the "Helper" to come - things were going to get even better!
- f. It is interesting to realize that though we could imagine how wonderful it would be if we could travel back in time to be with Jesus in person, that actually (based on what He told His disciples) it is to our advantage to have the Holy Spirit with/in us... as we do now - we dare not allow for a disgruntled attitude that we do not have Jesus with us (as it were) in person

## 2. The convicting (judicially) work of the Holy Spirit - vs. 8-11

- a. The work of the Lord would continue on by means of His Spirit, and this within and by means of these disciples/apostles and all those coming after them (who will also be guided by the Spirit of truth (as in vs. 13))
- b. The particular word used to generally describe His work is "ἐλέγξει" which generally means to "expose" (show something for what it is) and so to convict (either to repentance being exposed for what they are, or judicially in convicted as guilty and so assured of judgment)
- c. The entire world in some capacity will be "convicted," whether or not we see it or can account for it - this is another area of trust we need to cling to rather than stumbling over the questions often asked (out of doubt or to stir up doubt) as to those who have not heard
- d. The three categories that His work will encompass are those of sin, righteousness and judgment, each with an explanation - this "exposing" is essentially dealing with the world's "sin" as well as its "righteousness" and even its "judgment" (how it judges/discerns being judged itself seeing its "ruler" has already been judged (found guilty/wrong and so condemned)
- e. The Holy Spirit would first of all condemn/convict/expose the world in its disbelief, in particular the disbelief in Christ - in His work, He would convict some and they would repent of their disbelief while all the rest will be found guilty long before they stand before God
- f. "The very nature of sin thus stands revealed, the leprosy of sin will come out on the smiling self-complacency of the world. It will no longer be able to charge upon Adam, nor the devil, nor upon natures nor upon temptations of the flesh, the blame of sin; but will take the guilt home, and see that, in this crowning act of human folly, unbelievers have rendered themselves personally liable to condemnation, and, by rejecting infinite love as well as eternal law, have left themselves without excuse." Pulpit Commentary
- g. This disbelief of Jesus Christ includes then disbelieving what He said, who He was, so the world (all in rebellion against God in some way) will question the whole concept of "sin" and what it is - to disbelieve Jesus is to then include calling good/right what He called wrong/sin
- h. He (the Spirit) will then "convict" the world of "righteousness" (what real righteousness is in contrast to sin) and in so doing will expose the world's "righteousness" for what "falls short" of God's glory and His righteousness (at best) and that the world's righteousnesses tend to drift towards competing self-righteousnesses or even immoralities (at worst)
- i. The Holy Spirit is still pointing to (revealing, pushing for) what is truly right in and through us (by the Scripture primarily) since Christ is personally/visibly with the Father - the world (in its rebellion against God) will hate an absolute standard of what is right and will, by nature, oppose it (striving to keep its definition within its own authority) - see Rom. 3:21-26
- j. "... one of Jesus' most startling roles with respect to the world was to show up the emptiness of its pretensions, to expose by his light the darkness of the world for what it is," Carson
- k. Because the world is exposed for its wrong/sin in disbelief in Jesus and so must also have its "righteousness" judged as wrong as well, then it concludes that the world's judgments (conclusions and actions/stands upon these conclusions) are judged in association with its actual "ruler" (Satan, for even those who would refuse to be associated with Satan, will still follow the same path of rebellion he did against God, and so as Satan, now stand judged)

## C. The ongoing work of the Spirit to "guide into all truth" - vs. 12-15

### 1. There was still much more they needed to know when prepared to "bear" it - vs. 12

Learning is typically a building process; one truth builds upon and so leads to another- each stage is to be seen as essential and we trust the teacher in content and even order

- a. Jesus was soon to be parted from them - it's interesting to note that even though Jesus had much still to say to them, He noted their inability to "bear" it at the present time - there is something to be said regarding the process of learning along with the source
- b. This was much more than just an emotional "bearing"

This type of learning/insight would be an ongoing practical challenge for those to follow as seen demonstrated in Heb. 5:11-14

To say there are competing truths is to say there are differing realities (which should be seen as absurd) - there are varied perceptions/perspectives, but these are personal and personal observation and opinion do not dictate truth

The use of "spirit" indicates the motivation is more than mental, and so is more of what drives a person in motive, in morals, authorities and "faiths" (belief/philosophical structures) - see Eph. 6:12

There was no need for separate agendas within the Godhead - many over stress their own need for some type of "individuality" to have significance/worth, but our differences are not to be what we see as being most important - our unity around the Truth is most important (for even love must be "in truth" to be love)

A fleshly, of the senses (sensual) approach to life will not be focused on the Spirit's work of guiding from and to a spiritual priority - see Eph. 4:17-32

The truth the Spirit guides us in will be in contrast to the wisdom of this age - see I Cor. 2:6-16

The Spirit will point to Christ and not Himself - there is a sense in which those who focus most on the Spirit do Him a disservice, not looking to where He points

As in 16:7, Jesus told them it was to their "advantage" (profitable, expedient) that this arrangement come - it is even better!

- c. It is significant also to realize there is always more to be learned - the work of the Spirit in His leading/guiding them into all truth would be ongoing - "now" they could not handle them for it would either be too much in their current setting or that more time would be needed (and the actual indwelling work of the Spirit within them would be necessary for all that would be revealed (in handling/accepting it and all this correctly))
- d. One more note on this verse - even the "bearing" of truth will be dependent upon the Spirit's work within us - we should not confuse our current acceptance and understanding as something natural to us, but as a constant reminder of the Spirit's previous and ongoing work in us

## 2. The leading/teaching work into the truth - vs. 13-14

- a. This is necessary because of their personal inability to "bear" it on their own and because there will be ongoing "spirits of error" always on the offensive
- b. The word for "guide" is ὁδηγέω, describing first a directing (and so a leading to the truth, where it is and what it is) and in so doing, will then (second) be a teaching (He carrying on the discipling work of Christ from within the disciples)
- c. He is called "the Spirit of Truth" (not "a" truth but "the" truth, what is factual/real, what is what, why things are the way they are, and what is coming)
- d. This is still His work in/with us, guiding us in the Truth as it was given (not new truth, but what was provided in/by Jesus Christ (and those He commissioned)) - note the particular warning of John in I John 4:1-6 and the core way of distinguishing between "the Spirit of Truth" and "the spirit of error" is determined by the "confession of Jesus Christ" or not (they are either of/with Him or not, and so the handling of Christ is the pivotal point in spotting truth over against that of error)
- e. What is "guides into" will not be "of Himself" just as Jesus made clear regarding His teaching and actions, so it will not be different from what Jesus would say or had said - once again we see the perfect unity of the three persons of the Godhead - this again stresses the reality that truth is reality and since this is fact, we would expect perfect unity with all three persons of the Godhead (not needing to see a difference between them motivated to somehow make a practical case for there being three separate persons)
- f. The Spirit not speaking "of His own initiative" is again a reminder of the elevation of this concept (versus self-expression of individuality) - the more we speak in tandem with the Lord and His Spirit, the more we are like our Lord - this is our goal! For in all this He is glorified (as clarified in verse 14) - the pursuit of self-glory is opposed to our purpose
- g. What the Spirit "speaks" (communicates) to us is precisely what He hears from the Lord (just as Jesus was doing in all He heard from the Father) - they are all one in purpose and so one in word/message - the inner connection with Heaven, because of the Spirit, is securing
- h. It must be clear to us (primarily) that the Spirit has spoken through these Apostles and is the truth He guides us into and through - note II Pet. 1:16-21 - anyone can claim to be led by the Spirit but each must be able to validate it and this, primarily, through Scripture (Jn. 17:17)
- i. The Spirit is sometimes referenced in theological studies as the "Illuminator" since He, as it were, turns the light on the truth and enables us to see it - compare to Eph. 1:15-21 - The Spirit "inspired" the Apostles (breathed into them, through them) while He reveals/illuminates the Truth to us (thus the "guiding" into)
- j. In all of this ongoing work, Jesus Christ will be glorified by the Spirit (the word being "δοξάζω" as in revealing the glory/honor/value of someone) and this by revealing and declaring what Jesus said/says (for it all is glorious in itself)

## 3. Nothing will be lost in this process, for Jesus declares that all that the Father has "are mine" - vs. 15

- a. There might have been a sense that since Jesus would not be with them in person that they would not be getting the best of what was to be had in all of this - there is a natural sense of envy we may face at times where we wish to be in the physical presence of Christ, see Him and talk with Him, yet as seen here we are not missing anything (as far as the work is concerned)
- b. Jesus is telling them that they will have it all - all that the Father has (which is everything) Jesus has and all of this the Spirit "discloses" to them (ἀναγγέλλω to declare/share in detail) - all that they will need to know (and when they need to know it) is guaranteed - the order of the detailed process also demonstrates its authority and so reliability



We are always receiving the best of the best by Him and to think anything different is to place our judgment over His

c. Jesus, in reiterating that everything the “Father has are Mine”, makes the greatest point for not looking elsewhere for Truth and answers regarding the purposes and priorities of life - all He has already said/taught was to the fullest extent at the time and will continue to be so by means of the Holy Spirit - the learning would be ongoing

## XXVII. The Coming, Brief Grief Followed by a Secured Joy - 16:16-33

A. “A little while” of grief used to produce unstealable joy - vs. 16-22

1. Jesus was again preparing them for what was about to happen in His soon to come arrest, trial and crucifixion - it would result in them seeing Him no more (for a short time) - vs. 16-20

This is one of many examples of how often the Lord (and throughout the Scripture) reveals what seems to contradict and yet is proven to perfectly fit when fulfilled

a. Jesus uses the words “a little while” emphasizing the shortness of what they were about to face themselves and yet it all resulting in ongoing “joy” - change must happen (best to know why)

—b. The disciples were not sure what to think of this and His reference of going to the Father - this with what He stated in 16:10 (that they would see Him no longer) did not seem to harmonize now with His saying they would see Him again shortly

c. Jesus is describing His soon separation from them in death and their seeing Him again after His resurrection - this must be the case based in verse 20

Grieving has been and will continue to be a major part of God’s process - yet His purpose in it for His own is always to use it to their joy - patient faith is a must!

d. Stressing the certainty of what He was about to say, Jesus again begins with “truly, truly” that as a result of what He was just referencing, they would initially “weep and lament” (“weep” referencing an uncontrollable, audible crying and “lament” a wailing (other sounds made facing great grief) - their grief would be genuine and painful

The world’s rejoicing in its perceived victories is not to be seen as an actual defeat in God’s will - this is why the focus must always be on the other side of the world’s gloating to Christ’s unstoppable victory

e. The world, in contrast will celebrate, demonstrating the difference - why will the world celebrate (and still does whenever it puts forward what it sees as Christ or His truth/teachings defeated)? He exposes the world for what it is and He, as its soon coming Judge (John 3:19-20, 15:18-25) - notice that Jesus says “the world” which mainly included the Jewish religious leaders (for all false faiths, whether they be secular or religious, are “of the world” (of/for this age), with a focus on self-righteousness and the temporal)

f. With the compounded waves of pain (Jesus separated from them in death and the world celebrating it) there will be grief (for a while) - compare with Psa. 30:5 - But this grief will be turned into joy (literally even His suffering and death, when seen for why they happened and what they won will be actual points of joy)

Again, this is a “truly truly” statement so the joy to come is absolutely assured

g. Suffering should be a reminder to those in Christ of the need for faith, especially in light of our inability to control circumstances, trusting God’s purposes in them even with the anticipation that we will rejoice in them later (in a little while)

2. An example of this type of situation when a woman gives birth - vs. 21-22

It is not uncommon for some to become famous and to forget or devalue those they once had as friends, yet when Jesus is shown for who He is, His glory and power, He demonstrates (again) that these always were His priority

a. When a woman is in labor there is pain, “because her hour has come” (the time for bringing a child into the world) - it is a pain full of purpose (which she knows) as so these disciples also should realize the worthwhileness of the suffering

b. Once the child is born “she no longer remembers the anguish” in comparison to the joy of her child being born - obviously it doesn’t mean there was no pain nor that there aren’t other effects of the process, just that the joy overwhelms the pain

—c. The grief they had was “now” but such “nows” are not forever - the difference is in “but I will see you again” (and this is profound realizing He would die and also profound that His coming to them and seeing them is His priority)

d. Note that their “hearts” will rejoice - this will not be superficial happiness, but will be “to their core” (they will be joyful on the inside) and that being a joy which no one will take (or be able to take) from them - the impact of the resurrection, after having faced such grief, is comparable to the severe pain of a woman in childbirth and yet the impact of what it produces fully secures the joy

e. These disciples/apostles were later so sure of what life and even death was about and who was in control of it all, that though there would continue to be those coming to snatch away their joy, they will be unsuccessful - it (this joy) is their permanent possession

B. The work of the Father and Spirit “in that day” - vs. 23-28

1. Questions and petitions/requests - a coming change in procedure/process - vs. 23-24

a. With the New Covenant about to be instituted, the process of prayer was to change with it

Jesus was about to direct their attention (regarding their asking/requests) to the Father (as Father) directly... likely something they would not have anticipated

To pray in Jesus' name carries with it the responsibility of knowing Him before utilizing His name - it is not to be treated as a magical ending to get what we desire

The asking here is an present imperative... so keep on asking, in Jesus' name to receive - compare with James 4:1-3 (asking primarily and asking correctly)

John uses similar wording in I John 1:1-4

This was intended and even fulfillment of prophecy (see Mt. 10:13-17) - it is by special working that they and we come to know these things which the rest of the world will not/cannot know and understand - some will argue against this as "unfair" but it is to be seen as a unique privileged and not a form of injustice

This, of course, doesn't mean that He does not intercede for us, in dealing with sin - I Jn. 2:1; Heb. 7:25

Note also that belief is also equated with this love (believing that He came from the Father) - many can claim love but prove it is not genuine because they do not trust

If any do not believe Him, then they do not love Him... there are no exceptions to this

The disciples were wrong about their assessment of the clarity of His teaching (more so in degree) yet they were correct in acknowledging His knowing "all things" - their associating this with questioning Him was also correct and a reminder to us not to put more faith in our questions than in knowing His knowing and ultimately His answers

- b. "In that day" is likely describing (precisely) the Day of Pentecost when they would receive the Holy Spirit - in this moment (now) it would not have been possible for the disciples to comprehend the full meaning of what Jesus said "you will not question Me about anything" for this relationship was about to fundamentally change!
- c. For "truly, truly" (absolutely true, no doubt) that if (when) they "ask the Father anything... He will give it to you" - the dependency in this is it must be done "in My name" - this has two general ideas; the first that His name be invoked in these requests as the authority and means to have such a direct access to the Father and, second, that what is in His name is in agreement/harmony with Him, His ways, His teaching
- d. The source of answers... "He will give it to you" (versus Jesus doing so) - this is a profound concept for them to begin to grasp... the inclusion of the Father in the answer also (see also John 14:13-14 where Jesus will also do it) - for up to this point, these had not asked anything in His name (with His authority, giving them full rights to do so) - within hours, this would all be established though Jesus' death and resurrection, winning for them not just the salvation of their souls, but a right/privilege/responsibility they would never have imagined
- e. The result of following this command is "that your joy may be full" (as stated also as a result of obedience (15:11)) - the idea being their continuance in this asking results in a continued filling-up of inner joy/contentment - contentment is a powerful strength in the life of a believer, for its opposite (discontent) is at the core of all sorts of variants of discouragement

## 2. Plain speak about the Father (and the new way of interacting with Him) - vs. 25-28

- a. Jesus had commonly used parabolic/proverbial and even cryptic communication/language in His teaching and often explained much of its meaning to His disciples - but there was a time coming (very soon) when He would no longer use figurative language
- b. When Jesus then tells them that He will "tell you plainly of the Father" when did this happen? We have no place indicated specifically of this, and the context indicates this happening by means of the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit - we see the results of this "plain speak" in the epistles and the rest of the New Testament writings (all after Pentecost)
- c. Continuing with the coming benefits (why it is better for them if He leaves), He adds that when they do ask in His name, they need to know that it will not be He then passing on the request to the Father, but that the Father will deal with them directly in these prayers, and this based in love ("Himself loves you") - though this would have been not only hard to believe but even difficult to comprehend, as we saw back in John 3, it was God's love that gave Jesus for this purpose and then/so this result
- d. This love now personally directed toward them from the Father again demonstrates not only the working of the entire Godhead with them (and us), but this working being personal, close and loving - it is truly "friendly" (from φιλέω, the love of friends, affection) and the same word used of their "love" (close friendship) they had with Jesus - Jesus is their friend, they are His friend and so, naturally the Father is their friend
- e. It is crucial that they know His origin from the Father (from eternity past), not just as a formal, doctrinal point of order to be followed, but that they actually believe this because He had declared it as such and belief in Him included all He taught

## C. "I have overcome the world" - vs. 29-33

### 1. A declaration of understanding and knowledge, but is there actual belief? - vs. 29-31

- a. The disciples respond with confidence that, as they see things, He is already speaking plainly to them - He does not correct them, but they do not know how truly "plain" it will be - at times we all would settle for the way things are now, not realizing how much better it will be on the other side of His bringing us through dark/difficult trials/times
- b. Their belief that He "came from God" was supported in what was now clearly apparent, that in knowing all things, no one even need ask Him a question (for clarification or and answer to a question) since He already knows their questioning, confusion, and doubts and will/does supply an answer as needed and fit for their need - note Heb. 4:13-17
- c. Jesus, truly understanding their take and what they still have yet to come to know, narrows it down to the core need - "Do you now believe?" - are they where they should be as concerns faith? - this is more important than knowledge and perception

Practically speaking, faith is a focus discipline, for fear influences when we look on it more so than our faith/trust in the Lord over whatever happens to be intimidating us in the moment

As clarified before, the Lord sees us not only where we are at but where He is taking us - seeming lapses of courage and doubts attacking faith are but occurrences He will use in our growth

It should be noted that these failures were not deliberate (as those who would seek to wrongfully use grace) - these were truly well-intended and confident of what was right/true, but they had more growth to be brought through

The Lord had to do this alone (with no other human help) since He alone could do (was qualified to do) it

The significance of the two words "in Me" cannot be overstated - all else is "in the world" and will never know this kind of peace since they (the world) will never be without some form of fear and threat (for even in its calmness, the coming end to peace is imminent) - note Rom. 5:1-6

We are encouraged (infused with bravery) knowing He has won - the world is in denial, but cannot change reality - death/judgment comes

- d. With belief (faith) there is growth, so to some degree there are levels - the disciples did believe yet, as Jesus is about to reveal, they are about to be scattered (in fear) - there is foundational faith as the disciples clearly had here, truly believing "You came from God" yet they still needed its full impact (influence) in all areas of their life (as we do also)
- e. They were self-confident in this moment and their soon-coming failure (in fear) will not defeat them for, as Jesus promised, they have and will have "peace" (which is not just a result of faith but also a God-given counterpart to it) - inner calmness encourages faith

## 2. Take courage, even though you will be scattered (temporarily) - vs. 32-33

- a. These two verses provide us with what would normally seem to be contradictory, their being scattered and leaving the Lord alone and yet the peace they will also have, and the command to "take courage" - temporal defeats must never be allowed to lead to despair, just a reminding redirect of where our trust and focus are to remain and return
- b. "It is part of the character and genius of the Church that its foundation members were discredited men; it owed its existence not to their faith, courage, or virtue, but to what Christ had done with them; and this they could not forget." Dodd (as quoted by Carson)
- c. Jesus tells them now that the time (hour) has come for them to be scattered (as Jesus revealed in Mt. 26:31 was prophesied (from Zech. 13:17) as such) - this was in keeping with the Father's plan/will, the immediate result that each will be scattered to "his own" (home or back to their original life... at least so they would think) - with Jesus dead they would have likely thought it was the end of His ministry... but only such thinking would be for a little while
- d. The result (practically) would be Jesus alone (no person to stand/stay with Him) - though our Lord immediately clarifies that He would not be truly alone since the "Father is with Me" - it is essential that we never lose sight of the fact that not only is God always with us, but as the Lord promised, so is He and as we've just covered, so is the Spirit with/within us
- e. Our sense of loneliness is a demonstration of the issue we face with misperception... we are never alone! For us to entertain and dwell on such thinking is sinful!
- f. Note what was the source for these to have true peace - it would not be just a "sense" that comes on them, but would be directly connected to "things I have spoken to you" - they would know first of all that these things were coming (as planned) and that in it, God was in control - peace does not require accommodating circumstance but does require an understanding of purpose in all things and a calmness that comes (even in the storm,) realizing the One in control of it all - this "peace" is a calm assurance in the present and in anticipation of the future
- g. For "in the world" there will be (they and we will assuredly have) "tribulation" (θλίψις - pressing stresses, trouble and threats of trouble) - in this context it would be more in connection with suffering for/with Christ, and therefore the world's rejection and even hatred of us
- h. This, though is met with "take courage" (emboldened (knowing what you know and who is with you in it all), that it is He who has overcome (from "νικάω", victorious, to have "won the day, the war) - the world (this age and its leader has already been conquered in Christ's completed work)

## XXVIII. The "High Priestly Prayer" of Christ - John 17 The prayer for Himself (1-5), for His disciples (6-12) and for all to follow (13-21)

### A. "Glorify Your Son" - His selfless prayer for Himself - vs. 1-5

#### 1. Jesus openly prays with His disciples present (likely still in the upper room) for glory - vs. 1

Imagine being there with Jesus as He was doing this - the silence on the disciples part and then trying to grasp what was happening before them - the Son talking with the Father and much of this prayer regarding them

The possible "glory" in whatever we face must also be focused longterm, with God's overriding purpose in mind

- a. This prayer was clearly meant to be heard also by these disciples and yet was more personal than the prayer in John 11 (at Lazarus' tomb), which was also meant to be openly heard
- b. Here we have an incredible glimpse into the communication/dialog within the Godhead (though this was including the humanity of Jesus also)
- c. "The hour has come" - the time for all that was purposed in His coming sacrifice was now fully in action - as this moment arrives, note clearly how our Lord prays - the first request is to be glorified (in the fullest sense, with all the purpose of the cross and resurrection in view) - this (in retrospect) helps define what this glorification involves, even the shame and pain of the cross - the nakedness, mocking, association as a criminal, publicly dying and the appearance of total loss in His cause - yet all an essential part of this glory - see Php 2:1-11
- d. The purpose of this glory was not self-focused but was for the purpose to glorify the Father

Remember His reference to glory in 13:31-32 after receiving the morsel of bread from Judas

He as God and as man has full judicial and royal power over all humanity (to save and to judge)

See also John 6:37 - all the Father gives Him will come to Him (no chance of failure) and of those coming, none are "cast out"

The Father is made distinct here from all other "gods" as the only TRUE God (the actual one) - all other "gods" can be comprehended and the knowing of them can be completed in much less than a lifetime

There was not and never will be any doubt of God being glorified in His perfect, sovereign will being carried out - it is in no way dependent on people seeing or acknowledging it - we would not know of all these aspects of the glory at work in the crucifixion were it not for our Lord identifying it as such

It should be pointed out there was no "greater glory" of the Father over the Son... so the subordination of the Son to the Father demonstrated no less glory, ever, whatsoever

This is more of getting to know someone better because of what is brought to light by revelation and by examples, teaching and the underlying character (holiness, love, mercy, grace, etc.) of the Father - Jesus shown the light on it by His life (as we should also be such lights in the world - see Mt. 5:16)

Try to imagine what the disciples would have been thinking hearing all of this! It was made clear that they were gifts from the Father to His Son not just for redemption/salvation but for special revelation

e. "Glory" describes something of splendor, transcendence (above/beyond the normal) which Jesus asks be done in all that is about to happen - it is key to understand that Jesus asks in accordance with His human nature though still the "God-Man"

2. Glorifying the Father in His (Jesus') giving true eternal life - vs. 2-3

- a. Eternal life is more than living eternally - many focus on the "eternal" but fail to grasp it fully by not understanding what true life actually is
- b. Jesus references again His authority (as given Him as the God-Man representing man) and this authority over "all flesh" (speaking of humanity)
- c. The glory comes in Jesus' work resulting in His giving them eternal life, yet this is directed specifically at "to all whom You have given Him" - it is an interesting concept to dwell on (Jesus winning and so giving eternal life to those the Father has given to Him - this in direct association with the term used by Peter and Paul... the "elect" (the chosen and so the "given")
- d. But this "eternal life" is clarified as "knowing the only true God" (here in direct reference with the Father) - so eternal life is the "knowing" Him (and this personal/relational knowing of one who is eternal, beyond full comprehension carries with it the necessity of never ending in this growing knowing Him) - see I John 5:19-20 contrasted with Titus 1:15-16
- e. This familial knowing is also of Jesus as "Christ" (the Messiah/Anointed One), again, more than just an intellectual "knowing" but one of intimate belief (our eternal souls and the entirety of our life purpose/priorities rests upon this as a true relation (Him to us, us to Him))
- f. Then ultimately, He as the Promised One who would die in our stead, winning full salvation

3. The Father glorified and Jesus, the Son glorified in glorification together with the Father - vs. 4-5

- a. The usage of "glory" three times in these two verses shows its emphasis (in focus) - Jesus states that He has "glorified" (essentially past tense) the Father, "on earth," in accomplishing the work - it is again seen that the work to come in the cross is true glorification (and here, of the Father) and also that Jesus speaks as it being as good as done since this is still before the crucifixion
- b. Jesus could speak like this since there was no doubt at all that He would do it, so the glorification was assured throughout His life's work on the earth - this is detailed in verses 6-8
- c. This glorification (showcasing/revealing the splendor of His greatness, outshining all else around it, all other "competitors" for glory) was the fulfilling of the Father's work - this entailed the saving of all that were given to Him (so it necessitates the Father's glory even in the later judgment to come on those not being one of His) - this may seem like an unnecessary point, but too many see the reality or even the possibility of judgment (of some not ever being "saved") as dimming in some way His glory... it does not!
- d. Jesus references His preexistent state with the Father "before the world was" and the glory (the unveiled glory) which He in like, completely had with the Father - note that when Jesus was incarnated, it was permanent - His glorification would not be the removal of His body but the inclusion of it (as it will also be with us) in this glory

B. Jesus' prayer for His disciples - "Keep them in Your name" - vs. 6-12

1. Jesus identifies them as He prays for them as those "You gave me out of the world" - vs. 6

- a. To this particular group of men, these who were given to Him, He openly prays that He has done what He was sent to do (in particular to these), that He has "manifested Your name" - this phrase involves far more than just stating or making known a particular name of God the Father, but is the revealing of who He is, His character, His ways and works
- b. These had a profoundly privileged position having been given what they had been given - they had been ones "of the world" (lost, blind, deceived) - they were saved out of this age (with its temporal values and self-focused purposes) and given to Jesus by the Father - some might have concern since Jesus had already told them that he had chosen them (Jn. 15:16), yet this illustrates that Jesus chose what the Father gave Him, and the Father gave what Jesus chose
- c. "They were Yours" - as Father, and Jesus incarnate Son, the Father working in tandem/harmony with His Son gave these who would normally (rightfully) have been condemned with the world, and yet He chose them and gave them to the Lord - compare again to Jn. 6:37
- d. But then Jesus describes them as having "kept Your word" - they had clearly not been anywhere near perfect in following all Jesus said/taught, but Jesus uses the all-encompassing singular for "word," here indicating the receiving of the Gospel overall - they stayed with Jesus to the end and were convinced of who He was