

*A Study
on the
Gospel
of John*

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Bible Study Guides for the New Testament

Writing a book was not on my mind when this effort was initiated some years ago. In fact, it began when a member of my Sunday School class commented that his son had talked about committing suicide the previous week. As a result, I felt an urge to see what the Bible had to say about hope, with a view toward helping his son cope with his suicidal feelings. The result of that effort was an article entitled: “Hope and the Miraculous Three Pound Computer,” located in Chapter 6 of the book [After the Big Bang](#). My next writing endeavor was a fallout from a Sunday School class discussion about temptations, or trials, and their purpose in our lives. An article entitled “The Trials of Job” located in Chapter 7 of the same book resulted from that effort. After this I began to feel a prodding from the Lord to continue studying and writing. The chapters in this book document what I subsequently learned about two of God’s greatest and most marvelous creations: earth and mankind, who He made to exercise dominion over it.

Some of the material presented in these New Testament Bible Study Guides conflicts with commonly held viewpoints, and differs as well on the definitions of some words used to explicate them. One thing I have learned through this effort is that the meaning of many of the words used in the Bible is not uniformly agreed to by expositors, and in many cases, not agreed to by the various versions of the Bible. For example, in the KJV of the old testament (OT), the word “soul” is used over 780 times. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words notes that in over 400 of these uses, the Hebrew word used is misinterpreted. I mention this not to heap criticism on the KJV, for it is my personal Bible, and I love it dearly, but to point out the importance of consulting Hebrew and Greek sources, and good conservative lexicons, when trying to understand difficult scripture. The meaning of some words is not absolutely clear even then. Nevertheless, this is the process I have followed in this effort.

I am a retired engineer: my education and work experience sparked a great interest in details. I found that to understand the technical difficulties and problems that arise in the operation of complex machines, a good understanding of the details of the design is absolutely necessary. What is

presented herein is an analysis of important details in God's creation of the earth and man: his habitat and milieu. However, no description is completely adequate to portray the unbelievable complexity and efficacy of tripartite man. Scientists and engineers have tried to duplicate the various subsystems in God's design of man for years, with limited success. Part of the problem is that we do not understand many of the operational details, but the greatest impediment is probably the fact that man is composed of three parts: spirit, soul, and body, two of which (spirit and soul) are immaterial, and are thus largely beyond the scope of scientific and medical analysis. The third part, the highly complex body, is strongly influenced by these two immaterial parts. God has given mankind a great challenge in trying to understand tripartite man. What better model could we find for our study than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: spirit, soul and body in perfect relationship. When Jesus came to earth He emptied Himself, and was formed in the likeness and fashion of a man. Like us, He was a tripartite being, but without a sin nature. Thus, He was the perfect man, the ideal for all to emulate.

I read a book several years ago by Watchman Nee in which he made the observation that one of the primary ways God speaks to us is through our

intuition. After that I began to try to follow the guidance I received in this manner, and what is presented herein is largely a result of that attempt. I hasten to add that all readers will not agree with my conclusions. I have learned much about God's creation, and His design of man through this effort: that may be the primary purpose He had in mind. My hope is that readers will find new ideas in these words that drive them to the absolute authority: God's Word - the Bible.

As references I have used the King James Version (KJV), the New International Version (NIV), the New Living Translation (NLT), the Revised Version (RV), and Recovery Versions of the bible, as well as the Interlinear NIV Hebrew - English Old Testament (OT), and the Interlinear Greek - English New Testament (GNT). I have also used Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon, the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, and Webster's New World Dictionary for word interpretation. Unless otherwise noted, scripture passages quoted are from the KJV.

The John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible and Dictionary, Authorized King James Version, Chicago 1950, was a primary reference source. This Bible was given to my wife and I in 1957, and is one of my dearest treasures. It has been rebound once, and is in need of a repair job at the present time. Thus, the reader can appreciate the usage it has had over these 62 years, most of which has been during the last 25 years. The book introductions have been generally quoted from this source, with changes (mostly grammatical) made only when considered necessary.

Finally, I want to recognize the lady that takes everything I have written, and makes the necessary changes for placing it on the internet. Ms. Sandra Crosnoe is the daughter of two of my, and my deceased wife's, dearest friends, Ted and Jimmie Crosnoe (also deceased). When God moved us (my wife and I), to a Methodist Church in Pasadena, Texas, in 1962, Ted, Jimmie, and their two daughters were among the group of several families in the church that were touched by God in a mighty way that led to a weekly Bible study, that resulted in many changed lives. As the years passed by, and the families went in different directions, we were not able to maintain the close relationship we had in Pasadena. We settled in Lubbock, Texas, in 1982, and I got the call to start

writing on the Bible. Sometime after that Sandra was in Lubbock and we got together for dinner. When she learned of my involvement in writing on the Bible she immediately volunteered to help in making it available by publishing it on the internet. She may not have known what she was getting into, for God has not ceased from giving me Bible subjects to study and write about. This series on the New Testament has been our greatest undertaking, and Sandra's help (as always) has been essential. She has corrected my grammar, argued with me on interpretation, prepared the pictorial cover pages, and generally polished the appearance of the various books in ways that I could never have accomplished on my own. Without her help, this (and other) documents would never have been made available to the general public. I do so appreciate all her work. I believe Ted and Jimmie will give her a "well done" when she joins them in heaven. Her personal website is [Finding Gems and Sharing Them](#).

These bible study guides are available at no charge to read, print, download and share on a platform called Scribd (no membership is required to read/download). They are all listed and linked as a group in [Bible Study Guides by Jesse C. Jones on Scribd](#). Upon completion, most of them will contain study

questions in the Appendix. Other works available are listed and linked with [Books for Believers and Seekers](#). If you hit a pop-up page on Scribd asking you to become a member to read free, simply click the 'x' in the upper right corner to remove the pop-up and continue to our links on Scribd. My personal website is [Revealed by Fire - Jesse's Studies](#) if you wish to see my latest articles and updates.

It is my sincere hope that these works will guide you to a personal ongoing relationship with Jesus and a life led and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

JESSE JONES

A Study on the Gospel of John

The apostle John does not name himself but states that he is the writer of this Gospel (Chapter 21:24). He and James were the sons of Zebedee and Salome (possibly the sister of the Lord's mother). This Gospel was written by John, known as the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (verses 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 21:20). It is interesting that in all but one of these scriptures the Greek word used for love is "agape," which is defined in 1 Corinthians 13, and is generally referred to as "God's love." In John 20:2, the Greek word used for love is "phileo," which means brotherly love, as with a close friend. In this verse Mary Magdalene is addressing both Peter and John, and that may be the reason for the use of the word "phileo," which expresses (brotherly) love for the two, rather than the more personal "agape" love, used when referring to John by himself. In his Gospel John never refers to himself by name, instead preferring to use the phrase "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and as we have noted above, the principal Greek word for love in this phrase is "agape." Agape love is the highest form of love, and since it is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, it seems reasonable to assume that only those that have received the Holy Spirit

can manifest this kind of love. It is doubtful that it was John's intent to imply that he was the only disciple that Jesus loved in using this phrase, but nevertheless, by referring to himself in this way he has introduced this thought in the reader's mind. There is no question that Jesus developed a special relationship with Peter, John, and James, for He chose them to accompany Him to the Mount of Transfiguration, and on other special occasions. Jesus' relationship with John was even deeper than this, for as He was dying on the cross He gave John the responsibility for caring for His mother, Mary.

John wrote this Gospel while he was bishop of the church at Ephesus, during the period between 80 - 90 AD, and prior to the writing of 1, 2, and 3 John, and the Book of Revelation. This Gospel is often referred to as the "spiritual Gospel," since it focuses on the spiritual aspect of Jesus' ministry, emphasizing His divinity. Thus, he introduces Jesus as the Word, who was with God from the beginning, and is God. This is the only passage in scripture that identifies Jesus in this way, and this has been somewhat of a mystery to me for many years. However, I recently read a book that offered an answer regarding this reference to the Lord as the Word. The writer alluded to the passage of scripture in Genesis 3:15, in which God foretold the future coming of Jesus Christ to "bruise" the head of Satan. He indicated that this passage of

scripture became known as “the Word of God,” in ancient Jewish history, and thus John chose to identify the pre-incarnate Savior in this way.

The books that make up the four Gospels have become identified by the four groups to which they appeal: Matthew wrote for the Jews, Mark for the Romans, Luke for the Greeks, and John is known as the spiritual Gospel, for all.

The Beginning

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended [apprehended] it not” (John 1:1-5).

The sheer poetic beauty of this passage of scripture shows that it did not come from John, but through him. We know that all scripture is given by God (through the Holy Spirit), and the hand of God is manifested here by the thoughts expressed and the manner of expression. This passage of scripture describes the creational work of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior who, being part of the triune nature of the Godhead, was not created as Adam was, but was “begotten.” He was part of the triune God from the beginning, and He came from the Father’s bosom, which I interpret to include God’s heart, undoubtedly the dearest and most representative element of the Father’s nature. We see the pre-incarnate Christ in many different roles in the OT: as

the master-builder, creating the universe in accordance with the Father's overall plan; as the messenger of the covenant sent by the Father to purify and refine, as a prophet of God making covenant with Abraham; (possibly) as Melchisedec, king of Salem and priest of the Most High God, who is described as a priest continually; and as a man clothed in linen whose loins were girded with fine gold, his face like lightening, and his eyes as lamps of fire when He gave Daniel prophecy regarding the last days. We see that the Word (Logos, or the expression of thought), was with God and was part of the Godhead from the beginning. He is the revealed Word and Wisdom of God (see Proverbs 8:1-36).

When the Holy Ghost placed the seed in Mary's womb the Word (Jesus), gave Himself to His creation, and accepted the resulting frailties, faults and evils of mankind. In this Jesus gave Himself up to the death that sin required. This was not just physical death, but it also entailed spiritual death. God took the Holy Spirit from Jesus, which resulted in His cry on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He who committed no sin became sin in our stead, and God exacted sin's penalty, which required that He forsake Him: God and evil cannot coexist.

In the struggle between light and darkness, light was victorious. The darkness did not appropriate the light or eclipse it; darkness does not overpower the light. Thus, light and darkness coexist in the world, side by side. If we are believers we are to broadcast that light to all the world. Just as darkness cannot overcome light, we have victory over Satan and evil through Jesus Christ. We have the power to overcome evil just as a light overcomes darkness, just as when a lamp is lit in a dark room. I believe this is one reason why God chose this analogy to describe Christ: He wanted us to comprehend the unimaginable power given to us through Christ to defeat Satan and evil in every encounter.

The Friend of the Bridegroom

John the Baptist received a Word from God while he was in the wilderness, telling him to go into the country around the Jordan river to preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Luke 3:3), and to prepare the way for the Messiah, who comes to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Luke 3:16). This is thought to have been in 26 AD, for Jesus was crucified in 30 AD, and He ministered for 3 1/2 years. John the Baptist is referred to in the Bible as the “friend of the bridegroom.” This is a metaphor that refers to

actions of the “friend of the bridegroom” in a Jewish wedding ceremony, who cries out when the bridegroom is coming for the bride. John cried out, “make straight the way of the Lord,” signifying that the Messiah was coming, and the bride’s company (the Jews that heard) should make ready.

John the Baptist was a truly humble man for when he was asked if he was the Christ he responded by describing Jesus as the One who, coming after him, was preferred before him, whose shoe latchet he was not worthy to unloose. Later, he also said: He (Jesus) must increase, and I must decrease. When John saw Jesus coming to him for baptism he said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John also bare record of the baptism saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him.” This was a sign to John, for God had previously told him: “Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.” The next day after Jesus was baptized, John the Baptist pointed Him out to two of his own disciples, John and Andrew, Peter’s brother. They followed Jesus and stayed with Him that night. The next day Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. From there they went to Galilee where Jesus found Philip, and said unto him, follow me. Philip found Nathaniel and

brought him to Jesus, who greeted him with the comment, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile”.

In this short period of time Jesus gathered the first five apostles, John, Peter, Andrew, Philip, and Nathaniel. Jesus knew from the outset those God had given Him. The Book of John does not record the selection of all twelve disciples. The other Gospels have different descriptions of when all twelve of the disciples joined Jesus, but it appears to have been during the second period of Jesus’ Galilean ministry. The names of all twelve are given in Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:14-19; and Luke 6:13-16.

Jesus' Ministry Begins

Jesus initiates His ministry with His first miracle at Cana in Galilee. Jesus and His disciples were invited to a wedding in which Jesus' Mother was one of the people in authority (she assisted with the preparations). She may have been kin to the couple getting married, or possibly a close friend. When the wine ran out Jesus' Mother brought it to His attention, thereby implying that He should do something about it. This is an interesting exchange since Jesus had not, as of this time, performed any recorded miracles, nor had He begun His ministry. He responded by telling her that His time had not yet come. By this He meant that the time for Him to start ministering had not come. The Bible records His response in what appears to us as rather harsh language: "Jesus sayeth to her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." (John 2:4 King James Version KJV).

The Greek New Testament (GNT) records this in a slightly different way, "Jesus says to her, What to me and to thee, woman? not yet is come mine hour." This could easily be interpreted, "What has that to do with you and me, it is not the time for Me to begin God's work." All expositors that I have

investigated say that this was not a rebuke, but rather was a gentle and tender expression common in that time. However, the context of John 2:3-5, seems to me to reflect a Mother trying to push her Son to do something to alleviate an embarrassing situation. It is apparent that Jesus gave her some indication of agreement, for in the next verse Mary says to the servants, “whatsoever he sayeth unto you, do it.” Mary must have gotten a word from God, or received some sign from Jesus, for He immediately responded.

There were six waterpots of stone nearby that were used by Jews for washing before meals, etc. There is some disagreement about the size of the pots, for some say that they were of 30 gallon capacity each, while other say they were of about nine gallons capacity each. Whichever of these interpretations is correct, Jesus created a lot of wine out of the water that filled each waterpot, and the created wine was of the finest quality, for after tasting it the governor of the feast asked the bridegroom why he had served the poorer quality wine first, and kept the good wine until later. Can you imagine tasting the wine offered by Jesus? I believe there is considerably more to this miracle than just providing wine for a wedding feast. Consider the following:

1. John the Baptist introduced water baptism, which required repentance from sin and preparation for baptism of the Holy Spirit: purification. Jesus

came to save mankind through the shedding of His blood on the cross, and to give them the Holy Spirit as comforter and sanctifier. We maintain our abiding relationship with Christ, in part, through the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. The word communion as used here means "sharing in the realization of the effects of the blood (i.e. death) of Christ and the body of Christ, as set forth by the emblems in the Lord's Supper, of participation in what is derived from the Holy Spirit" (Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary, page 115). We see from this that we must go from water baptism to baptism into Christ through His blood, which we symbolize through the wine of Communion: Water must be changed into wine (blood).

2. I believe this miracle also foretold Jesus' mission in coming into the world as a man. His purpose was to take something common, like water (representing unregenerate man), and make it into something of great value: heavenly wine (representing regenerated man).

3. In a Jewish marriage the groom makes a covenant or contract promise that assures the bride she will be properly provided for in the proposed union, and that the groom will come for her when the time is right. In this contract the groom states the price he is willing to pay the father of the bride for taking her out of the family. The groom then presents the contract to the bride and if she accepts, she drinks from a cup of wine offered by the groom. This seals the betrothal agreement, and the couple is considered married, although the actual ceremony will come later, after the groom comes for the bride. Jesus' act of giving the wine to the wedding attendees may foreshadow the offering of the cup to the bride, just as He offers His blood for the forgiveness of sin to those who will become his bride (the church).

4. Jesus also used this opportunity to manifest His glory to his disciples, for John 2:11 records the fact that "his disciples believed on him," after He had caused the water to turn into wine.

John 2:13-25 record Jesus' first Passover in Jerusalem. When He saw those that sold oxen, sheep and doves, and the changers of money in the temple, He made a scourge of small cords and drove them out, and turned over the tables of the money changers, saying: "make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." The Jews then asked Him for a sign giving him the authority for

doing this. Jesus answered in the manner He often did when He did not want the unregenerate to understand: by using analogy. He told them “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews retorted that the temple took 46 years to build, so how was He to raise it up in three days? Of course, Jesus was referring to the temple of His body, which the Jews would later destroy, but He would resurrect in three days. As was often the case with the disciples, they did not understand Jesus’ statement until after He was crucified and resurrected three days later.

This was the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, and many believed on Him as a result of the miracles He performed. But Jesus did not trust Himself to them because He knew what was in man’s heart, and he had much to do before going to the cross.

Jesus Teaches the Necessity of Being Born Again

When Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night, He told him that unless a man is “born again,” he could not see the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the realm in which the will of God rules: it is both present (Luke 17:21), and future (Matt. 13:41-43).

Nicodemus did not understand, so Jesus clarified His comment by telling him that a man must be born of water, and of the Spirit, to enter into the kingdom of God. I do not believe that the mention of water here refers to our physical birth: it would seem to be unnecessary to state that a person must be born physically in order to enter the kingdom of God. Nor do I believe that the reference to the water relates to water baptism, which is only the outward symbol of a change that has occurred on inside a person. The fact that the ceremony of baptism is ordained by God is good reason, in itself, to believe that we should be baptized after we have believed into Jesus Christ. Among other things, rising out of the water in baptism is symbolic of being washed clean, or being purified. Ezekiel 36:25-29, lists the things God does when a person is “born again.” Ezekiel 36:25 says, “Then I will sprinkle clean water

upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.” Jesus, when speaking to His followers in John 15:3, indicates that they were clean through the word spoken unto them; and in talking to Peter at the last supper Jesus reiterated that they were clean, but not all (speaking of Judas). They were clean from the teaching ministered by Jesus, and this cleansing was required before the Holy Spirit could come to reside within them. This cleansing is like pruning a vine, it removes the vestige of sins (dead growth) previously committed in our flesh, and unlike cleansing by the blood, needs to be repeated throughout our lives. Titus 3:5 indicates that Jesus saves us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:26 says that Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church by the washing of water by the word. Both blood and water flowed from Jesus’ side when the soldier pierced it with a spear after His death on the cross (John 19:34), and I believe this is symbolic of what happens to us when we are in Christ: we are cleansed by the washing of regeneration (symbolized by the water in water baptism) and the blood is shed for our forgiveness.

1 John 5:7-8 says there are three witnesses to the fact of salvation through Christ in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and there are three witnesses on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood. The parallelism

between these two verses of scripture is striking. God's Holy Spirit witnesses with our human spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:16), thus we know we have the Holy Spirit within us, and that He has claimed us as His own. Cleansing by the washing of water begins with the Father drawing us to Christ through His written and spoken word (John 6:44, 65). Jesus' blood shed on the cross allows our sins to be forgiven, and the sprinkling of His blood within our hearts purges our conscience and cleans us inwardly. Although baptism is a symbol of this cleansing, the purification bath dates from the time of Moses in the old testament (OT). At that time it symbolized the purification of the betrothed Jewish bride as she prepared herself for the coming of the bridegroom. In the same way, we are to prepare ourselves for the return of Christ by the washing of the word and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

This cleansing process, which begins with God the Father drawing us to Christ, continues through our regeneration and subsequent sanctification, by the renewing of our minds. I believe this can be understood by comparing it to taking a bath. We scrub ourselves clean in the bath water, but the dirt remains all around us in the water. When we open the drain the dirt goes down the sewer, forever separated from, and no longer identified with us.

This is like the process involved in believing into Jesus Christ. First, the Father starts the washing process by drawing us. This step in the process often takes years, especially for those of us who are very enamored with the world and ourselves. As God allows us to get into difficulties of our own making, we gradually turn to the spiritual realm for help and the Holy Spirit begins to wash (or teach) us with the word. Finally, we get cleansed outside, and we are ready to become one with the Lord, but we are still dirty on the inside, and our sins (the dirt) is still all around us. We have been washed clean outside by casting our past sins on Jesus, but Jesus had to shed His blood on the cross for our sins to be annihilated (washed down the drain). His shed blood also purges our conscience from dead works (Hebrews 9:14, 10:22), and cleans us on the inside. With the washing of the word and His shed blood Jesus Christ has done everything necessary for us to join Him in His death on the cross: He is the first fruit and we are the following great harvest. It is by joining Christ in death on the cross, by giving up the control of our lives to Him, that He is able to make us part of His glorious resurrection and break the power of sin in our lives. Romans 6:5-6 says, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this,

that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

Our vessels (bodies) must be clean, inside and out, and we must crucify our old man in order for the Holy Spirit to come and take up residence therein. The words of Peter at Pentecost confirm this: “And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized each of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all those at a distance, as many as the Lord our God may call” (Acts 2:38-39 GNT). The Holy Spirit is given to those who are called, and who are “clean,” those whose sins have been remitted. He does this in two ways: He cleanses us from our sins through washing of the word, and purges our conscience (heart) with His blood. This does not happen sequentially in every case. In the new testament (NT) some received the baptism of the Holy Spirit when they received salvation, others received it at a later time when they asked for it.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Some Bible expositors hold to the view that receiving the Holy Spirit is a totally different experience than being baptized in the Holy Spirit. R. A.

Torrey in his book entitled: “What The Bible Teaches,” says this, “In regeneration there is an impartation of life, and the one who receives it is saved; in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit there is an impartation of power and the one who receives it is fitted for service.” I see little Biblical evidence supporting the view that there are two separate experiences. I spent a good portion of my life in the same condition that these new believers in Acts were in before they received baptism in the Holy Spirit. I recognized that Jesus was the Son of God, and that He had forgiven my sins, but I did not know Him personally, and I had never really heard of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. I do not think that I was “regenerated” (defined by Webster as spiritually reborn) at that point in my life. After I had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, everything changed. I received (or was baptized with) the Holy Spirit, but was unaware of it for some time because I was seeking the evidence of speaking in tongues during my prayer time. I had been led to believe that tongues was the only proof that a person had received the Holy Spirit. Later I came to realize that tongues was just one of the blessings that the gift of the Holy Spirit makes available to the believer: all I had to do was to realize that I had received the Holy Spirit and let Him use my vessel to praise and worship God.

Jesus identified the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who would abide with us forever (John 14:16). In John 14:18 He further identifies the Holy Spirit as His Spirit, and in other scriptures the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of God. The work of the Holy Spirit in man is described in many scriptures with some of these attributes:

- 1) As our comforter He provides encouragement and alleviation of grief.
- 2) As our sanctifier He renews our minds and conforms us to the image of Christ.
- 3) He witnesses with our spirit that we are sons of God.
- 4) He gives us understanding of the Word of God.
- 5) He knows the mind of God, thus we have access to the mind of God through Him.
- 6) He sets us free from the law of sin and death.
- 7) He gives us power to be witnesses for Christ.
- 8) He causes us to bear the fruit of the Spirit.
- 9) He brings to remembrance the words of Christ.
- 10) He guides us in prayer, worship, and praise.

One additional point needs to be made before leaving Chapter 3 of John's Gospel. John 3:34 KJV says: "For he whom God sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." At one time I interpreted this to imply that God did give the Spirit to ordinary men by

measure. Later, I discovered that the GNT does not include the words “unto him,” they were added by Bible publishers, supposedly for clarification. I believe this passage means that Jesus did not have to go through the sanctification process in order to speak the words of God, as do all other recipients of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had no sin in His life, so the Holy Spirit was totally free to manifest Himself in His life immediately. We are all born under Adam’s curse, and must get rid of a lot of baggage before the Holy Spirit has complete control (without measure) in our lives.

Jesus Ministers to Gentiles in Samaria

Jesus' ministry was to the Gentiles as well as the Jews (Isaiah 60:3; Luke 2:32; Acts 28:28), even though He spent most of His effort teaching the Jews. He even commented in one case that His ministry was to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:22-28). Although the Samaritans were part Jewish, they were considered to be heathens by the Jews: the same way they considered other Gentiles (non-Jews).

Jesus used miracles to draw people so He could teach them. While at the well of Jacob in Samaria, Jesus struck up a conversation with a woman who came to the well for water. He identified Himself to her as the Messiah, and told her many things about her life. This must have convinced her, for she left and went into the city, and told men there that she had found the Christ. Many Samaritans believed on Jesus as a result of what He told the woman, and many more believed because of His word. He stayed with the Samaritans for two days ministering to them, and many believed on Him.

While Jesus was in Samaria He taught the disciples about the harvest. Although it was four months before harvest time Jesus described the fields as

being white, and ready to harvest. Of course, He was talking about harvesting men's souls. He taught them that one sows, and another reaps, and they both rejoice in the ensuing harvest. In John 4:38, Jesus comments that he sent the disciples to reap what others had sowed. It is not absolutely clear what He is referring to here, but most Bible expositors seem to feel that this refers to previous ministering from OT writings in addition to others, including Himself. Jesus could also have been praying for a plentiful harvest.

Then Jesus came into Galilee, where the people received Him because they had witnessed His miracles in Jerusalem during the Passover. A nobleman came to Him here and appealed to Him to come down and heal his son who was at the point of death in Capernaum. Jesus told him to go his way because his son was healed. When the nobleman met his servants on the road to Capernaum they told him that his son was well. When he asked what time the son began to mend they told him and it was at the same time that Jesus told him that his son was healed. All of the household of the nobleman believed on Jesus as a result of this miracle.

This miracle of healing at a distance seems somehow greater than miracles Jesus did when He was in direct contact with the one in need. However, many, if not most, of the requests we bring to the Father, through

Jesus, are of this type: we are often not in direct contact with the person we are praying for. In our church body we have an e-mail prayer chain that works in just this way, and we see a lot of miraculous answers. Still, there is something especially meaningful about following the admonition in James 5:14-15, for the elders to come and lay hands on the sick, and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. This scripture states that the sick shall receive healing, and if the sick person has committed sins, they shall be forgiven.

Many believers do not accept the teaching in Romans 3:20; and Hebrews 9:15, that state that Jesus took only our “past” sins with Him on the cross. Thus, they do not fully appreciate the need to seek repentance for sins committed after they have been saved. The Bible states that they should hate the sin they have committed after they have become Christians in the same way that Christ hates it, confess the sin to God, and turn away from the sin to go in the exact opposite direction. Thus, when we join Jesus in His death on the cross, He erases our past sins, and provides forgiveness through repentance for sins committed after salvation.

Jesus Heals the Impotent Man at the Pool of Bethesda

Jesus went up to Jerusalem to a feast of the Jews. The particular feast is not identified so we do not know for sure which Jewish feast this was.

However, it was the Passover season so it could have been the Feast of Unleavened Bread. There was a pool at the Sheep Gate called Bethesda, which had five porches. In these porches a great multitude of impotent people (blind, halt, and withered), waited for the moving of the water in the pool. An angel came down at certain times and troubled the water in the pool, and the first one into the water was made whole. There was a certain man there on one of the porches who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him He asked, “wilt thou be made whole?” The impotent man responded that he had no man to put him into the water when it was troubled. Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” The man was immediately healed, and he picked up his bed and walked.

Some of the Jews that were there told the man that it was not lawful to carry his bed because it was a Sabbath day. He responded by telling them that the man who had healed him told him to pick up his bed and walk. They asked

who it was that had healed him. He said that he did not know, for Jesus had left the area because of the large crowd of people that were there. Later, when Jesus was in the temple He encountered the man, and told him to sin no more for a worse thing could come upon him. The man then departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus that had healed him.

It seems clear from Jesus' statement to the man who was healed that "he should sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon him," that impotency (lameness) is, at least in some cases, a result of sin. We also know that there are many other reasons for bodily frailties; e.g. in Matthew 8:5-13, a Roman centurion came to Jesus asking for healing for his servant. When Jesus offered to come to heal him the centurion responded by saying, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Jesus then said to them that followed that He had not seen such great faith in all Israel, and He told the centurion that his servant was healed.

In another example Jesus saw a man who had been blind all his life, and His disciples asked Him who had sinned, this man or his parents? Jesus responded by saying, "Neither this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:1-2). In many cases

involving healing in the NT, Jesus gave no reason for the disease, or infirmity, but commented that the person was healed because of their faith, or the faith of others with them. He also commented during one of His sojourns in Galilee, that few miracles could be performed there because of their lack of faith. In spite of the wide divergence in the cause, need, method, and purpose of the many healings Jesus performed that are recorded in the NT, it is possible to draw some conclusions here:

1. Many of Jesus' healings were on the Jewish Sabbath. It seems that Jesus did this purposely to teach the Jews about God's view of keeping the Sabbath holy, and to emphasize that the needs of hurting people were more important than their interpretation of the law.

2. We know that Jesus did not heal every hurting person that He encountered, but the many healings He did perform lead us to the belief that God's desire is for us to be whole. He has given believers the power, through the Holy Spirit, to know His will. 1 John 5:14-15 (KJV) says, ". . . if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." In John 14:12, Jesus says that believers will do greater works than He did while on earth because He goes to the Father.

3. Who should we pray for? We should pray for ministers, for those that God has “put on our plate” (John 17:9), for sick members of the body (James 5:14-16), for any brother that sins not unto death (1 John 5:16), for our children (1 Chronicles 29:19), for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:2-3), for the city in which we live (Jeremiah 29:7), for Israel (Isaiah 62:6-7), and for those that despitefully use us (Luke 6:28).

We can't leave the subject of prayer without mentioning intercessory prayer. Oswald Chambers gives a good description of intercession. In “My Utmost for His Highest” he says, “In intercession you bring the person or circumstance that impinges on you before God until you are moved by His attitude toward that person or circumstance. Intercession is really putting yourself between God and the situation and trying to bring about God's will for that particular need.” This means that we must discover God's will for the intercessory prayer to be fruitful. Now I have a good idea about what God's will is, generally. I know Him and His nature, and I have His written word that I can rely on. But many times I don't know what God's will is about a particular situation. There are usually facts related to the need that I do not know. I cannot look into the heart of the one in need like God can, so if I feel

the call to become an intercessor in a certain situation, I need to talk to God about it. Depending on the situation, I may either:

1) Bring the situation to God's attention, feel that He has heard my plea, know that my request is in agreement with His Holy nature, and hope to see an answer. This is the type of prayer often given when praying in a group situation, not conducive to an intensive and focused interceding prayer.

2) Feel that I need to talk to God about the situation before I pray, to see if I can get His mind about the need. The Holy Spirit knows the mind of God in all situations and thus, this will be an interchange between my human spirit and the Holy Spirit. I think that prayer associated with the 2000 National election is a good example of this. Many recognized that our nation was on a downhill skid and that we had rejected God and His protection. Like many others, I felt an urgent need to cry out and intercede. I was trying to get God to direct events that were taking place. I cried out to Him admitting that we deserved His justice, but asking Him to instead, show His mercy toward us. I did everything I could think of to convince Him of this. The part of the body of Christ of which I am a member joined many others across the country in fasting and praying for God to place a man in the White House that could

commune with Him, and obtain His guidance. I believe these prayers were answered in a miraculous way. But, unfortunately, not in every case.

3) I may be so involved in the situation that I cannot carry on a conversation about it. I just cry out in fear and trembling, asking God to intervene, and I keep on asking, maybe even bawling and getting loud. This is the kind of prayer I lifted up when my oldest son was in the hospital in California, and things seemed to be going downhill. I was not so interested in God's will in that situation, but more interested in having Him to agree with my will. Therefore, I cried out, I begged, I yelled, I did whatever I thought I had to do to get Him to respond favorably, and He did! Incidentally, I never blamed God, nor got mad at Him for what had happened to my son. That would have been unthinkable.

4) I may not feel that I know God's will but am willing to accept it whatever it is. Thus, I ask God to talk to me through His Holy Spirit. Usually, the answer comes in a unique way that I could never have imagined; but I have come to realize that God always acts uniquely.

5) I may feel that I need to just listen to God and let Him talk to me. He will usually open my eyes to some things that I need to understand.

It is interesting that Jesus' response to the disciples asking Him to teach them how to pray included the parable about the friend coming at midnight to ask for three loaves of bread. This parable is about the need to pray with importunity, to keep asking until you get a response. The message I get from this is: 1) We must want an answer so much that we keep asking until we receive it; 2) God loves for us to keep reminding Him of His natural desire to respond to our requests; 3) In some way God seems to measure how bad we want something by how persistent (importune) we are in talking it to Him about it.

There are lots of other types of intercessory prayer but this covers some of the main ones. I don't have any problem discussing anything with God, from things that I need to bring to His attention, to things that He needs to bring to mine. God asks us to reason (confer, argue) with Him, and I sure want to do what He asks.

I believe that the church has missed the point in what little teaching we hear on intercessory prayer. Most members of the body of Christ seem to believe that intercessory prayer is praying for others, and their needs. It is of course that, but so much more. God's Holy Spirit places the burden of interceding on those He has prepared. These are the ones who will "stand in

the gap” for a particular need, and will recognize and accept the burden for intercession. The intercessor responds to the burden by talking to God about how to pray, and what end-result to pray for. They “stand in the gap” between God and the need, and refuse to budge until they receive direction. This is a two-way conversation, with God and the intercessor reasoning together until finally arriving at a decision about the end result of the prayer. The intercessor keeps praying for the need until he sees the answer, or until God tells him that He will respond to the request and the answer is forthcoming. I do not see that intercessory prayer is ever unanswered. If an understanding has been reached between God and the intercessor regarding the particular need, then the answer is sure to come, but not in accordance with our timetable, and not necessarily in the way we might have thought. We are always more impatient than God, and only He knows the appropriate time for the answer to be received, and the ideal solution to the problem.

The word intercession is used in the KJV of the bible nine times, four in the OT, and five in the NT. The important teaching from both the OT and the NT regarding intercession is that Christ is our intercessor. He is the one that acts as our advocate to the Father. He appeals to the Father on our behalf, for He has been tempted in all points as we, yet without sin. I think this

explains how the sins we commit after believing into Christ continue to be forgiven. Jesus Christ stands at the right hand of the Father continuing to intercede for our mistakes and failures. Romans 8:26 says that the Holy Spirit (within us) also acts as our intercessor. When we do not know how to pray about the situation the Holy Spirit intercedes with groanings which cannot be uttered. I believe that this means the Holy Spirit actually petitions Christ on our behalf when we do not know how to pray.

Finally, I should mention two very good books on the subject of intercession. Dutch Sheets' book entitled: "Intercessory Prayer" covers the fundamentals of intercessory prayer very thoroughly, and Norman Grubbs' book: "Rees Howells, Intercessor", describes a man so surrendered to God in intercessory prayer that he "learned to love the unlovely, found the key to prevailing prayer, and became the channel of mighty revival."

Jesus Describes the Authority Given to Him by the Father

John 5:17-47, describes the authority of Jesus, given to Him by the Father. The Jews questioned Jesus because they thought that He was making Himself equal to God the Father, but several verses in this passage of scripture point to the fact that Jesus could do nothing of Himself. What He heard from God He

did, for He sought to do the Father's will in all things. It is clear that the Father gave Jesus essentially unlimited authority in His dealings with mankind. The only thing I can recall that the Father does, and that the Son seemingly does not do, is to choose those that will come to Him. Man is unable to believe without God's empowerment (Romans 3:1-19; Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Timothy 1:9). Those chosen (the elect), will be drawn to Jesus by God; and Jesus says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44). Jesus Himself has said that the Father is greater than the Son (John 14:28).

The authority given to Jesus as the judge of all men is also addressed in this passage. The Bible makes it absolutely clear that all men will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 2:3, 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 6:2, 9:27), and be judged by their works (1 Corinthians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 11:15; Ephesians 6:8; 2 Titus 4:14; Revelation 3:15-16, 14:13). There are three judgments alluded to in the Bible: these judgments are described below.

1. Judgment of Saints Resurrected or Raptured

When Jesus Christ returns in the clouds (Thessalonians 4:16-17) he will send out His angels to gather His elect. Although this judgment is not

described specifically, there are many scripture references that make it clear that the believer will be judged at this time, not for his sins, but for his works. Our works will be tested by God's refining fire to determine of what sort they are. 1 Corinthians 3:14-15 says, "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Works that were accomplished in accordance with guidance from the Holy Spirit within, will survive the refiner's fire and will be rewarded accordingly. God seems to place especially high value on works for which we did not receive credit on earth. If a man's works are burned he will be saved through severe trial.

2. Judgment of the Nations

This judgment is described in Matthew 25:31-32, and, as indicated, it occurs after the Battle of Armageddon, after Jesus Christ has come to His throne at the beginning of the millennium. Many people will be left on earth after this battle, and only believers (sheep) will be allowed to enter the millennium reign of Christ. Christ's judgment is righteous, and the sentence rendered correctly assigns the sheep (believers who have done the works of Jesus) to the right, and those who have not done His works to the left with the

goats (Matthew 25:32-46). He tells the sheep they have inherited the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, but He tells the goats to depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. This is obviously a reference to the lake of fire and brimstone. The sheep were apparently unaware of the good works they had done, for they question Christ as to when they saw Him hungered and fed Him, when they saw Him thirsty and gave Him drink, when they saw Him as a stranger and took Him in, when they saw Him naked and clothed Him, when they saw Him sick and visited Him, and when He was a prisoner and they came unto Him. These were obviously humble people who did their good works without becoming prideful, without even thinking they were doing anything noteworthy. These acts were not an effort, but were just an expression of God's love, and who these people were. By the same token, the goats never were aware of the needy surrounding them.

3. The Great White Throne Judgment

The Great White Throne judgment is described in Revelation 20:11-15. This is the final judgment, and it must include all those that have not been judged previously. Most expositors refer to this as the judgment of all unbelievers, and the scripture reference only mentions the resurrected dead, which lends some credence to this interpretation. However, we must recognize that the millennium ends with many believers (and unbelievers) still alive. In accordance with 2 Corinthians 5:10, all men must be judged, so, unless we surmise a judgment not mentioned in the Bible, the believing and unbelieving alive at the end of the millennium must be judged here. The wording in Revelation 20:11-15 does not prohibit the inclusion of these millennium survivors, but no mention is made of other than the resurrected dead. Some of these survivors may be believers. Revelation 20:15, may imply that some believers could be included in this judgment, but the wording is certainly inconclusive.

Jesus Feeds the Multitude

John 6:1-14 describes the incident when Jesus and His disciples were in Galilee and a great company of people came for ministry and healing. When evening came and they had no food to feed such a multitude, Jesus asked Philip where they were to get food to feed them. He was testing Philip to see what his answer would be, and Philip answered by saying: “Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them . . .”. Two hundred pennyworth represents about \$35, and since there were probably as many as 20,000 people there (including men, women, and children), Philip observed that \$35 dollars would not buy enough bread for everyone to have a little. Andrew spoke up and stated that a lad in the crowd had five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what were they among so many? I believe it is clear from this that the disciples were beginning to see that Jesus had some purpose in bringing this up, and Andrew’s report was a result of surveying the crowd to determine what food was available. He seemed to have some confidence that Jesus was going to do something about the situation. He knew that Jesus had changed water into wine at Cana, and possibly He would do something miraculous here. Then

Jesus told the disciples to have the crowd sit on the ground, and He took the loaves and fishes and blessed them, and then asked the disciples to distribute them to the crowd, telling each one to take as much as they wanted. When the disciples gathered up the fragments that remained after all had been filled, there were twelve baskets of fragments. There is no indication in any of the records of this miracle that the disciples demonstrated any surprise at what Jesus did. They were present when He turned the water into wine at the wedding in Cana and although this miracle involved a larger number of people, they were beginning to realize that Jesus had the power to speak physical, as well as spiritual things, into existence.

As was often Jesus' habit, He departed from that place alone, and went into a high mountain. He did this to escape the crowd, and to spend time in prayer talking to the Father. The disciples got into a boat and started out for Capernaum, which was across the Sea of Galilee. It was after dark and a storm blew up, and Jesus had not joined them. They were having difficulty moving the boat because of the wind and waves, and then they saw Jesus walking on the water coming to them, and they were afraid. Jesus called out to them to say, "It is I, do not be afraid." They were relieved to see Him, and welcome Him into the boat. As soon as He entered the boat it was

immediately at the shore where they were going. The multitude on the other side of the Sea were confused by the fact that Jesus had not been with the disciples in the boat when it departed. When they found Him at Capernaum, they questioned Him by saying “Rabbi, when camest thou hither?” Jesus did not answer their question directly, but instead used His answer to teach them a hard saying, viz. that the Father chooses who will come to Jesus, and that none of them will be lost but will be resurrected to everlasting life “at the last day.” Jesus further identified Himself as the bread that came down from heaven. If any man eats Jesus’ flesh (bread), and drinks His blood (wine), he will live forever. In this message He taught the following:

1. The Father chooses us, we do not choose Him (John 15:16). There is nothing “good” in man, the imaginations of his heart are evil continually (Genesis 6:5). John 6:65 says, “. . . no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him by my Father.” There is nothing within man that would cause him to come to Jesus Christ: this act is totally a result of saving faith alone (Hebrews 4:2) which comes as a result of the Father drawing him (John 6:44). John MacArthur’s Study Bible says, “We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative on their part, nor to God’s anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is

solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7, Titus 3:4-7, 1 Peter 1:2).” John Owen, in his book entitled: “The Holy Spirit,” says, “In the Bible we are taught that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God (2 Corinthians 3:5). See also 2 Corinthians 9:8, John 15:5, and Philippians 2:13. To say that there is some good in us which is not the work of the Holy Spirit destroys the gospel, and denies both that God is the only good, and that he alone can make us good.

2. No man can pluck Jesus’ sheep out of his hand (John 10:28-29). Those that the Father has chosen, cannot be robbed of their inheritance by man. Sadly, we have seen many men of God succumb to the sin brought about by lust. We know that lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life are the enticements Satan uses to draw men into sin (1 John 2:16). See also James 1:14-15. I cannot find an absolute statement in the Bible saying that the believer cannot turn back of his own volition, but the only sin that is unto death is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. I take this to mean that loss, or rejection of the Holy Spirit is the only way that God could lose a person that had been chosen.

3. Jesus Christ will raise those that belong to Him to everlasting life when He returns in the clouds at the rapture/resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

4. In order to maintain this personal relationship those in Christ's body must eat His flesh and drink His blood. This refers to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the great need of the church (Christ's body) to partake of the bread and wine often, and correctly. Jesus says that this is spiritual food, and as such it enlivens our human spirit: without it we "have no life." I know of no other "food" that gives life to the human spirit.

These were hard teachings of Jesus and many refused to accept them. John 6:66 says, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Jesus asked the twelve if they also would go away, and Peter responded "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the loving God" (John 6:68-69). Jesus answered by reminding them that He had chosen them, and that one of them was a devil (referring to Judas Iscariot).

Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles

John Chapter 7 describes Jesus' appearance in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles. The men of Israel were required by law to make an appearance in Jerusalem at three Jewish feasts: the Feast of Unleavened Bread in March/April, the Feast of Weeks in May/June, and the Feast of Tabernacles in September/October. Jesus' brothers (James, Joses, Simon, and Judas) encouraged Him to attend the feast, but He declined saying His time had not yet come. He was referring to his crucifixion, for the Jewish leaders sought to kill Him. His brothers seemed to be baiting Jesus with their taunts that "no man doeth any thing in secret" and "if thou do these things, shew thyself to the world." They did not believe in Him at this time. Jesus told them He was not going to the feast, and for them to go on ahead without Him. After they departed He also went up to the feast, but not openly. About the middle of the feast He made Himself known by teaching in the Temple. The Jews were amazed at His knowledge and authority and they questioned Him about this, but He responded by saying that His doctrine was not His own, but God the Father's, who sent him. He then accused them of wanting to kill Him. They

were still incensed that He had healed the lame man at the pool on the Jewish sabbath. Jesus was still trying to teach them that the sabbath was made for man, and man was not made for the sabbath. As a result of these sayings the Pharisee's sent officers to take Him but, as before when they tried to take Him, they were unsuccessful.

On the last (great day) of the feast, Jesus taught that if any thirst let them come unto Him, and drink. If they believed on Him they would have rivers of living water flowing out of their belly. He was referring to the Holy Spirit that they would receive after His glorification. The Holy Spirit could not be sent until Jesus was in heaven by the Father's side. Many believed on Him at this time, but there was a division among the people because of Him, and the Pharisees sent officers to take Him. When the officers returned without Him, they reported to the Pharisees that no man had ever spoken like Jesus. The Pharisees then began asking whether any of the rulers, or Pharisees believed on Him. Nicodemus, at some risk to his position, spoke up asking "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" Their weak excuse was to respond by asking whether any prophet ever came from Galilee. In frustration they then departed unto their own homes.

Jesus and the Woman Taken in Adultery

Jesus returned to the Temple the next morning, and all the people came unto him for teaching. The scribes and Pharisees, seeking to test Him, brought a woman taken in the act of adultery. They said that Moses law demanded that they stone her, but they wanted to trap Jesus so they asked what He would do? They clearly thought that they could get Jesus to reject Moses' law and they would then be able to accuse him. It is not mentioned in this passage but the law actually requires that both the woman and man caught in the act of adultery to be stoned to death (Deuteronomy 22:22). John 8:1-11 tells the story about how Jesus dealt with these men. When confronted by the accusers restraining the woman, He knelt down and started writing in the dirt with His finger, acting as if He did not hear them. I believe Jesus was talking to the Father just as we should when dealing with a difficult situation, we need to seek His will. When the accusers continued pressing Him for an answer He lifted Himself up and said to them: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." In this He was following the OT guidance in Deuteronomy 17:7, that witnesses (who assumedly had not committed that

crime) could start the execution. Jesus then stooped down and again began to write on the ground. In the OT the people themselves often had to fulfill the duties of both judge and executioner. Where two or three witnesses certified the guilt of the person, the execution could proceed with the witnesses throwing the first stones, followed by the rest of the people. It is never made clear in this story that the woman's accusers were actually witnesses to the act, although they do say that she was taken in the act. Although it may have been allowable for lawyers (scribes), and church hierarchy (Pharisees), to take the law into their own hands in this case, their own consciences convicted them when Jesus brought it down to a personal issue: are any of you clean of sin so that you can act as judge and executioner over this woman? They then departed, one by one, and when Jesus lifted Himself up they were all gone. He and the woman were left alone, and Jesus asked her, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" The woman answered and said, "No man, Lord." And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Jesus basically forgave the woman her sin and sent her on her way with the admonition to "sin no more." It is significant that the woman addressed Jesus as "Lord." The recognition on her part of who He was, may have given Jesus reason to believe that she would do what He told her.

Jesus Teaches in the Temple

In John 8:12, Jesus states that He is the light of the world, and those that follow Him do not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. The Pharisees immediately challenged Him for making this statement, since He had earlier said that if He bore witness of Himself, his witness would be false (John 5:31). Jesus continues in John 8:14 GNT, to say that “Even if I bear witness concerning myself, true is my witness, because I know whence I come and whither I go.” It seems irrefutable that Jesus contradicted His earlier statement here, and the use of the word “Even,” in this verse seems to indicate that Jesus knew that the Pharisees were referring to His earlier statement when they challenged Him. I must admit that this apparent contradiction surprised me, and I immediately assumed that it could be explained by a misinterpretation, or misunderstanding of the Greek words used here. In analyzing this however, I could not find any explanation that seemed to clarify this. Thus, I conclude that Jesus is amplifying and clarifying His earlier statement, which may have been made pursuant to Deuteronomy 19:15, which says that out of the mouths of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. Thus, in John 5:31, Jesus may have been referring to the fact that

only one witness (man or woman) cannot establish the truth; whereas in John 8:14 He is speaking as the faithful and true witness (the Amen), through which the purposes of God are established (Revelation 3:14). He continues to explain this in John 8:18 when He says: “I am one that bears witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me,” thus satisfying the requirement for two witnesses.

For the remainder of Chapter 8 Jesus continued His teaching of the Jews, focusing on who He was. John 8:29 seems to summarize the message of this passage: it says, “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that please him.” Many of the Jews believed on Him when He spoke those words, and He told them that if they would continue in His word they would become His disciples, and they would know the truth, and the truth would make them free. Some of the Jews questioned Him about this statement, arguing that they were Abraham’s seed, and thus were never in bondage to any man, so why talk about being made free? Of course, Jesus was referring to spiritual bondage, and He went on to tell them in John 8:34-36, “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

When God created man He gave him free will. Adam was created in the image of God, and that image is conveyed to man in part by the human spirit that God forms, and gives us while we are still in the womb (Ecclesiastes 12:7, Zechariah 12:1). James 2:26 says that the body is dead without the spirit, and I believe that the death spoken of here is “separation from God.” Adam initially received guidance from God, but God did not force him to follow this advice. Adam could also hear and communicate with Satan, for Satan spoke to Eve in the Garden of Eden, and Adam joined her in disobeying God. Adam was free to choose to obey God’s warning and not eat the forbidden fruit, or to succumb to Satan’s enticement to become like God,”knowing good and evil.” As a result of Adam’s decision he lost the ability to fellowship with, and receive communication from God, for God told him in Genesis 2:17, that if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would surely die. In this warning God was referring to the death of Adam’s human spirit, for it was through his spirit that he was able to fellowship and communicate with God. From this time on mankind sunk into the filth of sin until finally God said, in Genesis 6:5-6, “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and

it grieved him at his heart.” This is the condition of unregenerate man to this day, we are all born in sin and have no way to fellowship with God, nor to reflect His image. We do not receive His guidance, but we are still receiving guidance from Satan. 1 Corinthians 15:45 says, “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening [life-giving] spirit.” We inherited a “natural” body from Adam, but Jesus Christ regenerated our dead human spirit, giving us life, and leading us into sanctification to be conformed to His image. In the condition described above (unregenerate) man does not have free will. He is fully able to hear and respond to Satan’s guidance, in fact, he is a slave to this old nature. Ephesians 4:18 describes this as, “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”

Unregenerate man cannot respond to God: 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” There are many, many scriptures in the Bible that convey this same message: unregenerate man is guided by only one source of information.

Ephesians 2:2 says, “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of

this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”

In this discourse Jesus describes what happens when we join in His death and resurrection: you shall be free, just as Adam was in the beginning. This happens as a result of God regenerating (quicken) our dead spirit (Ezekiel 36:26). When this happens we are once again able to have fellowship with, and receive communication from God. Instead of talking to God face to face as Adam did, He talks to our spirit through His Holy Spirit that He also places within us (Ezekiel 36:27). But He does not quit here; we must be changed within so that we can receive this new guidance He now provides. He does this by giving us a new heart, by purging our conscience from dead works through the blood of Christ, so that we can receive this God-given wisdom in our hearts and make it part of us. This makes us free, indeed. We are no longer slaves, but now are free to obey the guidance we receive from the Holy Spirit, or to follow the demands of our human body's lusts and pride, and become enticed again by Satan's lures. We are now fully free to make decisions that are good, or evil: we now have free will. If we follow the Holy Spirit's guidance we gradually become ruled by God's Spirit: then we can gratefully identify ourselves as slaves (or bondservants) of Jesus Christ.

These new believing Jews could not receive this teaching of Jesus. When He told them they would inherit eternal life if they could keep His teaching, they could not receive it. They could not accept the fact of who Jesus was, and they insisted that their Father Abraham was greater. When in John 8:58, “Jesus said unto them, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am,” they took up stones and tried to kill Him. Jesus then passed by them unimpeded, just as He did on other occasions when the Jews tried to kill Him before the time appointed.

I have this concern that this is the problem with many Christians today. They have been taught a milktoast Gospel message, and when they encounter a difficult aspect of God’s nature, they refuse to consider it in the light of God’s written Word. I worry that when times become difficult for Christians, their lack of understanding the true nature of God may cause them to fall away, just as did these Jews. Note the implication in John 8:34-35: the one that sins is a servant in God’s house who “abideth not in the house forever.” This is certainly a clear warning to believers that fall into sin. As we draw ever closer to the end many will fall prey to Satan’s minion, antichrist. Those with only a superficial knowledge of who God is will be the most vulnerable.

Jesus Heals the Blind Man

Chapter 9 of John's Gospel tells the story of the blind man Jesus and the disciples saw when they left Jerusalem. John 9:2-3 records an interesting question the disciples asked Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." In answering their question Jesus did not deny that this man's sin, or even that the (result of) the sin of his parents, could cause bodily infirmities, but in this case it was neither one. That sin often results in damage to our bodies could hardly be denied. There are many instances in the Bible that refer to this. Ezekiel 18:20 says, The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." One passage of scripture that relates indirectly to this is Proverbs 17:22: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones."

The immune system, and its function in the process of protecting and healing the body is most pertinent to our discussion about healing. The following information about the immune system is from Yancy and Brand's book entitled "In His Image." The immune system is a complex network of defenses against microorganisms and foreign substances entering the body: it neutralizes and destroys invading organisms that try to harm the body through infection or poisoning. The primary fighters in this war are the white blood cells which are formed by the billions in the body's bone marrow and lymph glands. White blood cells can move on their own, and travel through cell walls; thus, they can move rapidly to the site of infection or injury. They attack invaders by releasing antibodies that attach to the surface of invaders and neutralize them, or make them susceptible to ingestion by scavenging cells. They also can release enzymes and chemical agents, such as histamines, that assist in the ingesting process. A remarkable characteristic of the immune system is its ability to recognize and remember past invaders; thus, it is able to respond quickly when another attack occurs. Certain white cells called lymphocytes are designated as memory cells, and they have the ability to store the important features of the invader, and respond if the invader is spotted again. In God's design memory resides in more than one location within the

body. When an invader is spotted antibodies guide the white cells to the target organism. These antibodies are only 1/1000 the size of bacteria, but they cling to the surface of the invader and soften it up for the approaching white cell. Antibodies also neutralize the invader's spiked-shape defense mechanism. Because of the staggering number of potential invaders a single person can encounter in a lifetime, the body stockpiles an enormous memory bank of data. The body has the astounding ability to manufacture whatever defense is necessary through a process of mystery and chemistry at the molecular level referred to as GOD (an acronym for Generator of Diversity). I have no doubt that the One behind the mystery is the Great Chemist of the Bible, the Creator and Master Designer of everything that exists.

I believe God uses the marvelous and unbelievably complex design of the body in the healing process. When I consider the intricate control of the body effected through the brain, blood, and other organs, I am even more awed by what God did in the creation of man. I have a new appreciation for the many scriptures in the Bible that allude to man's health being a function of keeping our bodies in good condition; and most importantly, what we let God do on the inside: what is the condition of our (biblical) heart? We not only have the Bible as authority for this, but secular medical evidence as well. If we are full

of faith the internal bodily systems seem to function more smoothly, and our immune system seems able to cope with many, if not most, of the problems it encounters. Our hearts do not fail us for fear, nor from the broken-heart syndrome, and our faith makes (or keeps) us whole. I was surprised to come across a featured article in the Lubbock Avalanche Journal of March 3, 2005, entitled: “Mind Over Disease,” documenting the battle of a person with renal cell carcinoma. This gentleman used a guided-imagery technique called mind-activated antigen recognition to conquer kidney cancer. According to the article, he prayed and meditated with family members, and worked on breathing and visualizing his immune system conquering the cancer, and he had been cancer free for nine years in 2005.

Believers have the Spirit of the Great Healer within their bodies, and the power of faith can heal many of the diseases and other health problems that arise. If problems come along for which we need additional support we should cry out to God in prayer, and/or call for the elders to come and anoint us with oil and pray. James 5:14-15 states that you will be healed and, if you have committed sins, they shall be forgiven. James 5:16 goes on to say that we should confess our faults to one another, so I take this to mean that we need to confess our sins to those that are praying for us. There is something about

getting our failures exposed to the light of God through confession that restores peace to our hearts. We also have a wonderful medical infrastructure in the US, and we know that God uses good doctors, believers as well as unbelievers. Be ever mindful that your life is in your blood, keep it clean and healthy.

To return to Jesus' healing of the blind man, it is not likely that this healing was accomplished through the body's own healing mechanisms; however, I suppose it is possible that Jesus' actions in this case could have triggered some response through the power of faith within the body that corrected the problem with this man's ability to see. Mark 8:22-26 records the story of Jesus healing another blind man by using somewhat the same procedure. In this case Jesus used spittle (only) on his eyes, whereas in the case of the man born blind, He spit on clay and placed that on the blind man's eyes, and told the man to go wash in the pool of Siloam. In two other instances of healing blind men He did not follow this same procedure, but instead asked them a question (Matthew 9:27, 20:30-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43).

In these cases it seems that Jesus knew what was required to release the power of faith (persuasion) in these men: He had unimpeded access to the will of the Father through the indwelling Holy Spirit. In two of these healings

Jesus told them that the power of faith had made them whole. In the other two cases he applied spittle to their eyes, possibly to increase their faith. In each of these cases it seems that Jesus' words and actions engendered a response of belief from the power of faith (persuasion) working within the blind to effect the healing. I am inclined to believe that this is the way He accomplished many of the healings recorded in the NT. The body formed in the womb is equipped with unbelievable healing ability, but it requires (substantial) conviction to release it in some cases. Jesus had no problem with this except early in His ministry, when He was in Galilee where He commented that He could do few mighty works because of their lack of faith to encourage belief. In another situation a woman with an issue of blood came from behind Jesus, when He was in a crowd (Mark 5:25-34). The woman had considerable faith, for she said to herself that if she could just touch Jesus' garment she would be made whole. After she received healing Jesus turned to her and told her that her faith had made her whole. The interesting thing about this encounter is that Jesus felt power go out of Him when the woman touched His garment. It was apparently her openness to the power of faith flowing from Jesus that generated belief within the woman's body that resulted in her healing. I believe a reasonable conclusion we could derive from this is

that when we respond to the power of faith and believe we have what we ask for (Mark 11:24), the body immediately initiates action to solve the problem, just as it did in the case of this woman. The power flowing from Jesus acted through the woman's willingness to believe, causing the woman's flow of blood to cease immediately, apparently by using the woman's glands, organs and internal systems to effect the healing.

Before moving on in John's Gospel we need to address the question as to what causes such frailties as blindness, as well as diseases. We will rely totally on God's Word in seeking an answer to this. The list below identifies many of the causes of disease and infirmity in man:

- 1.** Sin in a person's life can result in disease, as well as infirmities (Psalm 38:7).
- 2.** God can bring on sickness and plague as punishment for sin (Deuteronomy 28:61).
- 3.** Hoarding of riches results in eating in darkness, and sorrow and wrath with sickness (Ecclesiastes 5:17).
- 4.** Some sicknesses are for the glory of God (John 5:5-9, 9:3, 11:4; Luke 6:6-11).
- 5.** The presence of evil spirits (Matthew 8:16, 8:28-34, 9:32-33, 16:22-28; Mark 1:23-26; Luke 4:33-35, 13:11)
- 6.** Weakness of faith (Romans 14:23)
- 7.** Sickness and infirmity can be passed down from ancestors through defects in the DNA strain. I believe this was what Jesus implied in John 9:3. Such defects can be

caused by sin in the life of a person, but it is not the sin itself that is passed down, but rather the consequences of the sin (see Ezekiel 18:19-20).

8. We are exposed to contagious diseases almost continuously. Our immune system responds to most of these, and keeps us from becoming really sick, but bacteria and viruses are widespread, and if our bodies are in any way susceptible, we can develop mild or severe symptoms.

9. Bad habits, e.g. smoking, can cause sickness and disease. The Bible teaches moderation in all things such as: alcohol, food, sex, television, computer games, etc. Such things can have serious health consequences in our lives.

The Bible tells us that God warrants our bodies for seventy years, and if we are especially diligent about taking care of both the inside and outside, we can extend that to eighty years (Psalm 90:10). I think this says that God designed and formed our vessels to nominally last from seventy to eighty years, and under normal circumstances we should expect body parts to start wearing out in that time frame. Obviously, there are exceptions to this rule, with some people dying at ages less than seventy, and some living to longer than eighty, but I believe most people would agree that this does seem to be the norm. If we desire to achieve, or extend our warranty I believe we should follow the guidance in Psalm 90:13, which says, “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

Chapter 9 closes with Jesus telling some of the Pharisees who were with Him that “If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” By this saying He was repeating a well known saying that before you can begin to correct a problem you have to realize that you have it. These Pharisees were like the church at Laodicea: they thought they were rich and in need of nothing, but they were blind. People that feel they already have or know everything are not open to new teaching. This is the reason that Jesus’ ministry was primarily to the needy (Luke 4:18).

Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd

In this chapter Jesus tells the parable of the good shepherd, and in verse 11 He identifies Himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. This is the same group of Jews that He was teaching in Chapter 9, and they continue to chafe under His teaching. Jesus teaches several important principles in this passage of scripture:

1. He is the door to the sheepfold and if anyone tries to enter by any other means, he is a thief and a robber.

2. To Jesus only the porter (God) opens the door, and the sheep follow Him for they know His voice. The sheep will not follow a stranger for they do not recognize his voice. In His spiritual being Jesus is (the Son of) God, and thus, He is the door to the kingdom of God. In His earthly presence He is the Good Shepherd, whose voice the sheep hear and follow.

3. The thief comes not but for to steal, kill and destroy, but the Good Shepherd comes that the sheep might have abundant life. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep, whereas the hireling abandons the sheep at the first opportunity for more money, power, or at the sign of losing either of

these. Sadly, present day church hierarchy is largely structured to promulgate the hireling approach for shepherding the sheep. Zechariah 11:16-17 has this to say, about the evil shepherd, “For lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.”

4. In verse 16 Jesus is talking about the Gentiles, when He says, “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” I believe Jesus is talking about the time after His death when ministry to the Gentiles was really accelerated, to the time of the end, when He comes in the clouds to collect the dead and living believers.

5. In verses 17-21 Jesus angers the Jews when He tells them that God is His Father who loves Him and who has given Him power to lay down His life and to take it up again. They accused Him of having a devil, but others asked, “Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?” We see from this that one of the purposes of Jesus’ healing ministry was to prove that He was the Son of God.

The remainder of Chapter 10 deals with Jesus' teaching at the Temple in Solomon's Porch, during the Feast of Dedication, Chisleu 25 (Kislev or 9th month in Jewish calendar usually November-December). The Jews questioned Him as to whether He was the Christ, and He tells them that they believe not because they are not His sheep. His sheep hear His voice: He knows them and they follow Him. In verse 28, Jesus says that He gives His sheep eternal life, and no man can take them from Him. Verse 29 emphasizes this by saying that His Father gave them (the sheep) to Him, and no man is able to pluck them out of His Father's hand. In verse 30 He stirs them up again by saying that He and the Father are one. At this they take up stones to stone Him because "...thou, being a man, maketh thyself God." Jesus then refers them to Psalms 82:6, "I have said, Ye are Gods; and all of you are children of the Most High." Psalm 82 is a prophecy to earthly judges, who are referred to as "gods," probably because they were to administer God's judgment to the people. The Jews sought to take Jesus after this, but He escaped out of their hands, and departed to a place beyond Jordan, where John baptized at first. There many believed on Him.

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

John Chapter 11 relates the well-known story of the raising of Lazarus, a friend of Jesus, from the dead. There are several interesting aspects to this story that need to be brought out. When Jesus was informed that His friend Lazarus was sick, He was beyond the Jordan River, where John the Baptist made his call to repentance for sin, and began baptizing. This was a few days journey to Bethany, where Lazarus lived with his two sisters, Mary and Martha. Instead of immediately going to Bethany, Jesus tarried two days in that place, and then said to His disciples, "Let us go into Judaea again." His disciples were alarmed at this, and reminded Jesus that the Jews were bent on stoning Him. Jesus answered them saying that as long as a man walked in the will of the Father he would not stumble. By this He meant that nothing could happen to Him that was not allowed by God the Father. Jesus added that He was glad that He was not there when Lazarus died so that the disciples might believe.

It is clear from this narrative that Jesus delayed going to Bethany purposefully to insure that Lazarus was dead when He arrived. His comment when He was first advised about Lazarus was that this sickness was not unto

death, but that the Son of God should be glorified. It seems that He was already aware that Lazarus was sick, and that the Father wanted to glorify His Son through the miracle of raising Lazarus. Thus, Jesus waited until He knew Lazarus would be dead when He arrived. Jesus was coming to the close of His life and ministry on earth, and it was needful that He be fully manifested in all His glory and power. In raising Lazarus from the dead He left no choice for those who witnessed this miracle other than to recognize that He had power over life and death: in other words He was from God, and was actually the Son of God, as He had claimed.

When Jesus arrived in Bethany He first met Martha who said, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.” Jesus then told her that her brother would rise again, and Martha said “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus answered that He was the resurrection and the life, and those that believe into Him though they be dead, shall live again. Martha ended the conversation by confessing that she believed that Jesus was the Christ, the very Son of God, who was to come into the world. It seems obvious here that Martha was a very spiritual person, somewhat different from the picture of her we get from Luke 10:40-42, when

Jesus seemed to chastise her for being careful and troubled about mundane things. Martha then went to tell Mary “secretly” that the Master was coming, and was asking for her. When Mary saw Jesus she fell down at His feet and wept. At this Jesus was moved to groan in His spirit and weep. As Jesus came to the grave of Lazarus He told them to take away the stone over the entrance. Martha commented that the body would stink, for he had been dead four days, but Jesus reminded her that if she would believe, she would see the glory of God. When they took away the stone, Jesus lifted up His eyes and thanked the Father that He had heard Him. This He said for the people standing by, so they would believe that the Father sent Him. He then called out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth.” Lazarus then appeared bound hand and foot in his grave clothes, and his face was covered with a napkin. The grave clothes were then removed, and many of the Jews believed on Jesus because of this miracle, but some went to the Pharisees and told them what had happened.

The chief priests and the Pharisees reacted as expected, they agreed that if they did nothing the Jewish people would believe on Him, and, based on their view of Jesus’ mission, the people would rise up in insurrection, causing the Romans to take away their rights and freedom. Caiaphas, the high priest then prophesied that Jesus should die for the people, so the nation would not

perish. This prophecy was not about the Jews only, but the children of God “scattered abroad.” Although Caiaphas meant his words for evil, God caused him to prophesy Jesus’ purpose in coming to earth: to bring salvation to all the children of God everywhere and through all time. From that time on Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but He went to the city of Ephraim and there abided with His disciples, waiting for the coming of the Passover.

Mary Anoints Jesus' Feet

Six days before Passover Jesus came to Bethany, to the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. While they were at supper in the home of Simon, the leper (Matthew 26:6; Mark 14:3), Mary brought a pound of very costly ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. This upset Judas, who was the treasurer for Jesus and His disciples. He asked why the ointment had not been sold for three hundred pence (thought to be about a year's wages), and given to the poor? This was said, not because Judas cared about the poor, but that he wanted to control the money himself, for he managed their money. Jesus' response to Judas in John 12:7-8, is very interesting: "Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always." It seems that Mary knew that Jesus was going to His death, and instead of waiting to use this ointment at His burial, she chose to use, at least part of it, to anoint His feet. This was obviously an act of great agape love, which Mary seems to have had for the Lord from the first. She was known for placing importance on fellowship with Jesus, over that of housework.

Jesus' reference to the poor seems a little out of character, considering the fact that He taught in Luke 4:18, that He was anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor. I think that He recognized Mary's act of love for what it was: a way of showing the glory of God on His life, which was largely given to ministry for the poor. He also knew that Mary's act of love would be memorialized forever wherever the Gospel was preached (Mark 14:7).

Palm Sunday

On Sunday, the next day, Jesus rode into Jerusalem fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel 9:25 and Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." When the people heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem they took the branches of palm trees and went forth to meet Him. His notoriety had spread greatly as a result of raising Lazarus from the dead, and they were ready to make Him King of Israel.

In John 12:23-41, Jesus is teaching certain Greeks that came to the Passover Feast. He begins by talking about his upcoming death, or glorification, by referring to the teaching in 1 Corinthians 15:35-50. This passage of scripture compares our natural body to a seed placed in the ground.

The new life, the pattern of which is contained within the seed, rises out of the seed only after the seed loses its identity (dies). Through Jesus' death and resurrection much fruit was to be produced. He is described as the firstfruit, and believers make up the great harvest that follows. If we love our lives to the extent that we cannot accept our death with Jesus on the cross, we will end up losing eternal life with Him in heaven. We must make serving Him the primary goal of our life, and our desire must be to be with Him wherever He is (wherever He takes us).

In John 12:27 Jesus says that His soul is troubled, and He asks rhetorically whether He should say, "Father, save me from this hour." He then goes on to answer, "but for this cause came I unto this hour." He then says, "Father, glorify thy name." A voice answered from heaven saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." Many of the people there heard the voice and thought it was thunder, but others said it was an angel that spoke to Him. Jesus then said that the voice was for the benefit of the people there. He added that his death would result in the judgment of the world, and it's prince, Satan. Jesus then stated that if the Son of man were lifted up from the earth, He would draw all men unto Himself: this He said referring to the manner of His death. The people then questioned Him as to who the Son of man was,

and what He meant by being lifted up? Jesus answered by talking about Himself as the light that they should believe in while He was with them, but they believed not. Even though He had done many miracles before them they did not believe the saying of Isaiah 53:1, about their eyes being blinded, and their hearts hardened: meaning they could not see the truth nor accept salvation through the gospel.

Some of the chief rulers were there, and they believed on Him, but were afraid to confess their belief for fear of being put out of the synagogue. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Jesus tried to make them see that if they believed on Him they were really believing on the Father, who sent Him. In John 12:48 Jesus says that He came not to judge those that would not receive His word, but that the words He spoke would judge them in the last day. Belief into Jesus involves more than intellectual assent, it requires a wholehearted commitment of your life to Him, and establishment of a subjective, personal relationship that culminates in being filled with the Holy Spirit. These rulers basically denied Jesus, and therefore were not really committed to be His disciples.

The Last Supper

John Chapter 13 introduces the last days of Jesus' life on earth. Jesus' life fulfilled the Jewish Feasts in every way, and the circumstances of His death and resurrection are certainly no exception. Jesus was the perfect Passover sacrificial Lamb, and the timing of His death had to be in accordance with the scriptures. Exodus 12:5-8 KJV describes the origin of this celebration as follows: "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it out from among the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post [lintel] of the houses, wherein they shall eat it." Leviticus 23:5-7 KJV describes the Passover feast: "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein." The Jewish day began at "even" (after sunset), and continued through

the next day until sunset. Thus, Jesus must have celebrated the Passover dinner with His disciples after sunset on a Wednesday (by the Jewish calendar, but actually Tuesday evening by our calendar). From there He went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, and later, He was arrested. The sacrificial lamb had to be killed on the Jewish day of Nisan 14, so that preparation could be made for the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, scheduled to start at sunset on Nisan 15, which was a high sabbath, or holy day. Since Jesus was the sacrificial Lamb His death had to occur before sunset on Nisan 14.

Some confusion arises between the Passover meal on the fourteenth, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread on the fifteenth. At the first Passover the Jews were instructed to slay the lamb in the evening of the fourteenth, and to eat the roasted lamb later that evening in preparation for leaving Egypt early the next day. In later observations of this celebration, such as Jesus' last Passover meal with the disciples, the custom seems to have been to have the meal after sunset in the evening on the fourteenth, in celebration of the Passover, and recognize the following day (actually the same day by the Jewish calendar), until sunset, as the Day of Preparation. Thus, the Passover meal was celebrated on Nisan 14, after sunset, and the following daylight hours of the next day, which was still Nisan 14, were used to prepare for the Feast of

Unleavened Bread, scheduled to start after sunset on the Jewish day of Nisan 15. On the Day of Preparation the sacrificial lamb was to be slain, and thus Jesus had to be slain on the Day of Preparation, as recorded by John 19:31. The seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread would then start with a feast that night, after sunset, and continue for seven days (Nisan 15 - 21). The first and last days of the seven-day period were high sabbaths: no work could be done on these days, other than that associated with the feast itself. Time has blurred the distinguishing features between these two celebrations (Passover and Unleavened Bread), and it is quite common now for the entire period to be referred to as the Passover (Luke 22:1).

After Jesus' Passover meal with the disciples He arose from the table, laid aside His garments, took a towel and began washing the disciples feet. When He got to Peter he questioned Jesus and said, "Lord , dost thou wash my feet?" Jesus answered by telling Peter that he would not understand what He was doing now, but that he would understand later on (after Jesus was crucified). Peter continued arguing by telling Jesus that He would never allow Him to wash his feet. Jesus then said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." By this time Peter had gotten the message of how important this symbolic washing of the feet was, and he told Jesus to wash his hands and head, as well.

Jesus then told Peter that they (the disciples) were already clean every whit, but not all (referring to Judas). Jesus was referring to the fact that they were clean through the Word taught them (John 15:3). They were clean from the teaching ministered by Jesus, and this cleansing was required before the Holy Spirit could come to reside within them. This cleansing is like pruning a vine, it removes the vestige of sins (dead growth) previously committed in our flesh, and unlike cleansing by the blood, needs to be repeated throughout our lives. Titus 3:5 indicates that Jesus saves us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:26, says that Christ sanctifies and cleanses the church by the washing of water by the Word. Both blood and water flowed from Jesus' side when the soldier pierced it with a spear after His death on the cross (John 19:34). I believe this is symbolic of what happens to us when we are in Christ: the blood is shed for our forgiveness, and we are cleansed by the washing of regeneration (the water and the blood).

In washing the disciples feet Jesus was also teaching them the need to be humble and to have the attitude of a servant. "For if any man thinketh himself to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is in vain. Pure religion and undefiled before the God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep

himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:26-27). Jesus set the example and He told them they would be happy if they followed it.

John 13:18-30 describes events occurring at the dinner related to Judas’ upcoming betrayal of Jesus. Jesus identified Judas as the one who would betray Him to the Jewish leaders when He was asked by John who it was that would betray Him. Jesus replied: “He it is whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.” John 13:27 records the fact that after Jesus had given Judas the sop, Satan entered into him. Jesus had identified Judas as a devil earlier in John 6:70, so we know this must refer to a more complete control of Judas’ body. The Greek word used here for “entered,” has two meanings: “to enter into or to take possession of” (Moulton’s Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised). Satan influenced Judas (his slave) to make the final decision to betray Jesus, and Jesus recognized it. Jesus gave the sop to Judas after Satan took full possession of him. Jesus then told him to do what he had to do quickly. This is certainly a strange sequence of events, giving rise to several questions. Why would Jesus tell the disciples that one of them would betray Him? The only clue we have seems to come from John 13:18, in which Jesus says, “that the scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.” From this we could possibly conclude that Jesus considered it important for

the disciples to understand that His betrayal had been prophesied from old, in Psalm 41:9. So, why would He tell them who would betray Him in such an unusual manner? It seems from the way the disciples acted after Jesus told them who it was, that they were still uncertain, but it seems clear enough from Jesus words and actions. It may be that the disciples did not really understand the magnitude of Judas betrayal, and what it would lead to, and therefore did not react as we might expect. It should also be pointed out that Matthew's version of these events is slightly different than what is recorded in John's Gospel. Matthew 26:21-25 records these same events and concludes with Judas asking Jesus if he is the one that will betray Him. Jesus responds, "Thou hast said."

The disciples were also confused by Jesus' comment in verse 33, that He was going to a place that they could not follow. He clarifies this later in verse 36, when He says, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Of course He was talking about heaven, where they could join Him after the rapture/resurrection.

In John 13:36-38, after Peter made the brash comment that he would lay down his life for Jesus, Jesus tells him that before the cock crows he would deny Him three times.

Jesus Comforts the Disciples

In John Chapter 14 Jesus is trying to comfort the disciples by reaffirming who He is, and where He is going. He begins by telling them that their hearts should not be troubled for He is going to His Father's house to prepare a "place" for them, and He will return to take them with Him so they can be with him there. John 14:2 GNT says, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places. . . I go to prepare a place for you." The KJV of the Bible uses the word "mansion," for the "dwelling places," that Jesus goes to prepare. The Greek word interpreted "dwelling," in this verse means "without accompaniment" (Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised). The most basic meaning of the Greek word interpreted "place," is a "designated area," (Mounce's Complete Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words). We gather that there is a designated dwelling place in the Father's house for each individual believer, waiting to be occupied by the designee at rapture/resurrection. 2 Corinthians 5:1 says that if our earthly house (natural body) is dissolved we have an eternal house (spiritual body or abode) in heaven. In 2 Corinthians 5:2 GNT the phrase "dwelling place," is used to interpret another Greek word, the

meaning of which is given by Moulton as, “topically the personal abode of the soul.” The word topically means, “of or for a particular part of the body.” We know from the context of this verse that the reference is to our eternal body we will receive at rapture/resurrection.

To sum up the meaning of John 14:2, Jesus is telling the disciples that He is going to the Father’s house (temple) in heaven, which is not a building, but instead consists of the raptured/resurrected believers clothed with their eternal body, each of which has a designated place assigned to them. Note that Revelation 21:22, indicates that there is no temple in the New Jerusalem, and it is not clear that there is a temple building (as such) in heaven (see Revelation 3:12).

There is a very close analogy between this passage of scripture and the groom’s preparation for the bride in ancient Jewish marriages. In the Jewish marriage the groom builds a wedding chamber (chuppah) in (or attached to) his father’s house for his bride. When the bridegroom’s father says that the wedding chamber is ready, the bridegroom goes to retrieve his bride. In this scripture the “place” (wedding chamber) that Jesus goes to prepare corresponds to our designated location in the Father’s house. John 2:21, identifies the Father’s house as the temple of His (Christ’s) body. Through Christ’s death and

resurrection His body is now the church, including all believers, who have been born again through participation in His death and resurrection. Thus, we are the temple on earth and in heaven, and when the time is right the Father will tell Jesus to go to take His bride from the earth. We will meet Jesus in the clouds and from there accompany Him to the Father's house, where our works will be judged in accordance with 1 Corinthians 3:13-17. We will receive our eternal body at that time and be assigned to our place in heaven. This will not be just a location assigned to us, but will undoubtedly include the position and authority the Lord gives us based on the level of commitment we made to Him while on earth.

Thomas and Philip, undoubtedly representing the feelings of the other disciples, questioned Jesus about where He was going, and what He meant by saying that the Father was in Him, and if they knew Him they knew the Father. Jesus responded by reiterating that the Father was in Him, and the Father was the One that did the works they had seen. He closed this part of the discussion by telling them that they should believe on Him, for He was in the Father and the Father was in Him, or else believe Him because of the works they had seen. He told them that if they believed on (or into) Him they would do even greater works because He was going to the Father, and whatever

they asked in His name He would do. This was a load for the disciples, and it is obvious from their actions during the crucifixion they did not understand, at least at that time. Jesus was talking about spiritual things, and they were still focused on believing in what they saw; they could not grasp what Jesus meant by saying that the Father was in Him and He was in the Father.

Most believers do not have a problem understanding that we have Christ in us, the greater difficulty is understanding what it means for us to be in Christ. Ephesians 1:1-20, uses the term “in Christ” twelve times, so we know that this phrase is important. This passage of scripture refers to the riches given to those that are in Christ:

Faithfulness
Spiritual blessing
Being holy and without blame
Foreordained to be chosen
Redemption
Remission of offenses
Knowing the mystery of His will
Grace
Wisdom and prudence
Restoration to perfect unity
Inheritance
Sealed by the Spirit of promise
Hope
Power

This list includes most, if not all, of the blessings that believers inherit through their being in Christ. Still, this does not seem to translate into a working knowledge of what it means to be in Christ. I believe the key to the personal realization of what being in Christ means is related to discernment of the earthly body of Christ (the church). Jesus Christ spoke the church into being to create a special relationship with those that believe into Him. He identified them as His body. Ephesians 5:22-33 describes this relationship after we have believed into him; for comparison is made to a man and woman after they are married and the union has been consummated. Christ gathers us together into His mystical body and begins the process of sanctification, the renewing of our minds, so that we can think and act like Christ. This is referred to in the Bible as conforming us to the image of Christ. The analogy of the union between a man and woman in marriage is perfect. When a man and woman come together as one flesh each one must undergo some reprogramming (renewing) of the mind so they can come together in agreement on issues that initially were divisive: they can become one flesh. In the same way, the Holy Spirit shows us God's will in the situations and decisions we face, and if we accept His guidance, gradually we become more Christlike: spiritually we become one with Christ. John 16:14 says that the

Holy Spirit receives from Christ and declares it unto us. The decision to follow God's guidance is a question of the will, which resides in our soul. Ephesians 6:6 GNT says that we do the will of God from our soul. Most English versions of the NT substitute the word heart for soul in this passage. To summarize what being in Christ means:

- 1) Christ has gathered us into His mystical body where we reside (abide) under his protection, safe from unwarranted attacks of the evil one.
- 2) The purpose that Christ tries to fulfill in the members of His body is that of conforming us to His image: making us like Him in every thought and deed. He does this through the renewing of our mind (heart), which continues for the rest of our lives on earth.
- 3.) When Christ's body is functioning as it should He can nourish and teach us through the gifts that are in operation. Spiritual gifts are given specifically to buildup and temper the body. The fruit of the Spirit is also manifested mightily in this environment. Agape love (1 Corinthians Chapter 13) is the principal fruit that should be manifested by the body. It is God's love that identifies us as being Christ(ians).
- 4) When we are in Christ and Christ is in us we are living proof of the answer to Jesus' prayer in John 17:21-23.

In John 14:15-31 Jesus tells the disciples about the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send to them after Jesus ascends to heaven after His resurrection. The Holy Spirit will be their comforter for Jesus will not be with them in the flesh after that time. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of both the Father and Jesus; through Him They make their abode with those that love Jesus and keep His commandments. The Holy Spirit comes to teach and bring all the things that Jesus has taught them to their minds. Through the Holy Spirit the peace of Jesus is given to His disciples.

It is interesting that the Holy Spirit could not come into believers until after Jesus was back in heaven at the right hand of the Father (John 16:7). In John 14:17 Jesus tells them that the Holy Spirit is with them, but shall be in them. Obviously, being with them was something different than being in them, not only for the believer but also for the Holy Spirit. It is possible that this has to do with the Holy Spirit's omnipresence for Jesus says that when He (the Holy Spirit) comes into believers it is forever (John 14:16). The Holy Spirit seems to complete His role as comforter when the church is raptured/resurrected (Revelation 10:7).

Jesus Christ the True Vine

In John 15:1-8 Jesus gives an analogy about Himself and those that belong to Him. He describes this relationship as being like a vine and its branches: Jesus is the true vine and we are the branches. Jesus goes on to say that His Father is the husbandman. The use of the word “true,” in verse 1 probably refers to the OT prophecy in Hosea 10:1 in which Israel was characterized as a false vine that raised fruit unto itself. Matthew 21:33 also tells a story about a certain householder (God), who leased his vineyard to a husbandman (the Jews) and then went to a far country. When he sent his servants (prophets), to collect the fruits of the harvest the husbandman beat and killed them. Then the householder sent his son (Jesus), thinking that the husbandman would honor his son; but instead the husbandman killed the son also. This is clearly a reference to God the Father sending His prophets, and then His Own Son to the Jews and their crucifixion of Jesus.

John 15:2 cautions that if the branch is not bearing fruit the Father takes it away. This seems to say that if the believer (branch) is not bearing fruit of the Spirit, his relationship with Jesus (the vine) will be severed, a very sobering

warning indeed. If we treasure our relationship with the Lord we must be baptized into the Holy Spirit and allow His guidance and direction to lead us in all things: we must renew our minds (become sanctified). When He is free to control our lives we will bear much fruit. In John 15:3 Jesus is apparently reassuring the disciples that they are not about to be “taken away” or cut off from the vine, since they have been made clean through the Word which He has taught them. In John 15:4-8 He continues to emphasize the need to abide in Him (the vine), for the branch (believer) cannot produce fruit on its own. The believer must be constantly led by Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, in order to bear any fruit, but if we are fed by the living sap of the vine much fruit will be produced and we will glorify the Father thereby. The works we do through the guidance of the Holy Spirit while on earth are those that withstand the refiner’s fire, and for which we will receive a reward in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:13-15). John 15:2 seems to make it clear that the Father is the One that trims and purges the vine in order to make it more fruitful.

Jesus’ Agape Love

In John 15:9-15 Jesus tells the disciples that they must keep His commandments in order to abide in His agape love. He then goes on to

emphasize that agape love is the chief commandment: they were to love one another as He had loved them. 1 Corinthians 13 provides a beautiful description of agape love: it suffers long and is kind, it envieth not, is not puffed up nor does it behave itself unseemly, does not seek its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never fails. Jesus goes on to say that the disciples are no longer servants, but are now called friends, if they do what He commands them to do.

The Disciples Are Chosen and Ordained

In John 15:16 Jesus tells the disciples that they have not chosen Him, but He has chosen them. The fact that God chooses those that belong to Him is undoubtedly one of the most difficult biblical teachings for believers to accept. Our concept of justice rebels at the thought that God would choose only some for salvation and leave the others, indirectly condemning them to eternal punishment. We refuse to accept the fact that God could act in a way that conflicts with our own sense of right and wrong. This is the problem addressed by Paul in Romans 9:18-21: *“Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he*

yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter the power [a right] over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour?" God is the Creator of all men, but He is Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18). God the Father administers justice with wisdom, kindness, mercy, and love far beyond our comprehension. As His children we must recognize His authority over us in everything.

I wrestled with this teaching for many years. As a result, I have some understanding of the difficulty in accepting it, and making it part of one's belief system. I struggled for many years trying to find a way to make God's teaching on predestination and foreknowledge palatable with my own sense of justice, but in the end I gave up and decided to totally abandon my own idea and just accept what I was repeatedly being confronted by in God's Word. John 15:16 says, *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you."* Since I accepted the fact that God knows a lot more than I do, I have come to appreciate why God chose us in

lieu of waiting and hoping that we would choose Him. The reverence and awe I have for God's majesty has only increased as a result.

I believe this is a decision of the will: through our will we accept this as God's plan, or refuse to accept it, and continue to believe as we have in the past (Philippians 2:13). Thus, I am including summary information only on the words *election* and *chosen* and their derivatives, and basing my principal argument on only one single scriptural truth out of hundreds in the Bible that allude to God's choosing those who would receive eternal life.

1. *Election* refers to God the Father choosing (predestinating) those that would be regenerated, saved, and sanctified, before the foundation of the world. By choosing certain people God seems to commit Himself to doing what is necessary to insure that these chosen ones are "called," to Jesus Christ. The word "elect," is used in the OT three times, all in Isaiah. Two of these references pertain to God's election of Israel, and one refers to the coming Messiah. The word elect (elected, election, elect's) is used 22 times in the NT, 21 of which refer to the election of those in the body of Christ (the church), and one to elect angels (see 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 9:11; Revelation 17:8). None of the uses of these words refer to men on their own volition electing to come to Christ.

2. *Chosen*, as used in the NT, conveys the idea of choosing recipients to bestow special favor and privilege. The word *chosen* is used in the OT 94 times, 21 of which refer to God the Father choosing Israel, or the Savior. Chosen is used in the NT 30 times, nine of which refer to those in the body of Christ (the church) being chosen out of the world (see John 15:16; Ephesians 1:4-5, 11; Romans 8:29; 2 Timothy 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13). The evidence from study of the six words choose, chooseth, chooseth, choosing, chose, and chosen, as used in the KJV of the bible, exclusively supports the fact that God chooses men, men do not choose God. Of the 216 times these words are cited, 78 relate to God choosing a man, men, Israel, or the elect. The remaining citations are unrelated to this search.

It seems clear from analysis of the words *election* and *chosen*, as used in the Bible, that God chooses those that belong to Him, and man's free will is not involved in this decision in any way at all. In fact, the Bible teaches that unregenerate man does not have free will in regard to choosing or not choosing God (see Romans 9:10-24).

John 15:17-25, warns the disciples that they will be persecuted because He has chosen them out of the world and the world will hate them because of that. If anyone hates Jesus they also hate the Father for He is in the Father.

The Jews hated Jesus for it was prophesied that they would hate Him without cause (Psalm 35:19, 69:4). As members of Jesus' body we should be asking ourselves if we are being hated because of the One that in us. If not, we need to "gird up our loins," and make sure that the world knows who we represent.

Jesus closes this discourse by encouraging the disciples: the Holy Spirit will come and testify of Him, and they will bear witness for they have been with Him from the beginning.

Jesus Talks About Going Away and Sending the Comforter

In John Chapter 16 Jesus continues to prepare the disciples for His going away by explaining to them some of the things that will happen after he is crucified. He tells them that they will be cast out of the synagogues, and when they are persecuted, and killed, their tormentors will believe they are doing service to God. He wants them to remember these things after He is gone so they will understand what is happening to them. In John 16:5 Jesus says, “But know I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?” This was apparently in reference to John 14:5, when they did ask where he was going. Beginning with verse 7 to the end of Chapter 16, Jesus is teaching them about the coming of the Holy Spirit, and how the Holy Spirit will fill the void left when He departs this mortal life. When the Holy Spirit comes, He will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He goes on to explain what this means in verses 9-11, where He says that the world will be convicted of sin because it does not believe on, or into, Him. Gill’s Commentary on the Whole Bible says, “. . . by "the world" is principally meant, the Jews; the world among whom Christ personally was, who knew him not,

disbelieved him, rejected him as the Messiah, hated and persecuted him, even unto death.” Jesus’ coming into the world certainly made clear the difference between unregenerate and regenerate man: those that are in Christ have had their lives changed: they have the witness of the Holy Spirit, and they manifest the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. Unregenerate man cannot receive things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14). God only is righteous; therefore, man can do no righteous deeds unless he has the Holy Spirit within.

The Holy Spirit will convict the world of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. I believe this refers to Hebrews 2:14, which says that Jesus destroyed the devil and took the power of death from him. This occurred when Jesus descended into Hades after His death, but before His resurrection. Colossians 2:15 says, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” Ephesians 4:8-9, makes reference to Jesus descending into the lower parts of the earth to lead those who belonged to Him (captives primarily from the OT) to heaven. Peter also refers to the fact that Christ’s soul was not left in hell. Acts 2:31 KJV says, “He seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left

in hell [Hades], neither his flesh did see corruption.” Revelation 1:18 also confirms that Christ has the keys of hell and death when He appears to John. From this it appears that one of the principal purposes of Jesus coming to earth was to take victory over His adversary, Satan. I think this victory occurs in two stages: the first being spiritual victory, which Jesus took after His death and when He descended into Hades, and the second is earthly victory, which will occur in the future when Christ returns to claim those that belong to Him and destroy those that do not. God’s Word and the Holy Spirit convict us of this by giving believers the confidence that we will be with Christ when He returns to earth, and later, following the millennium, in New Jerusalem. Unbelievers do not have this confidence and are thus judged already: their names are not written in the Book of Life and they are cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:15).

In John 16:7-15 Jesus talks about the mission of the Holy Spirit. When He comes He will guide believers into the truth. He will not speak of Himself, but whatever He hears (from God), He will declare to the believer’s human spirit. The Holy Spirit will show the believer things to come, and will glorify Jesus by declaring all that Jesus is and has for them. This includes all that the Father has as well, since Jesus has all that the Father has.

In John 16:16-22 Jesus begins to tell the disciples that He is going away, but that He will return to them. They did not understand what He meant by saying that “A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me.” Jesus then describes what will happen by comparing it to the travail of a woman in childbirth. When the woman’s time is come she has sorrow because of her travail, but when the child is delivered she no longer remembers the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world. By this He was referring to His coming death by crucifixion, His resurrection on the third day, and subsequent appearances to the disciples over the next forty days. Jesus tells them that after His departure they will no longer ask Him for guidance, but instead will ask the Father in His name. They are told to ask the Father in His name, and they will receive whatever they ask, so that their joy may be full. Jesus emphasizes that He does not mean for them to ask Him to ask the Father, but that they should ask the Father using the “power of attorney” that Jesus gives to those that belong to Him. The Father loves those that love Jesus and believe that He came from God. Therefore, He will respond to their requests.

In John 16:30 the disciples state that they now know that Jesus knows all things and that He came from God. Of course, they did not really

comprehend what was about to happen and recognizing this, Jesus responded by telling them they would shortly leave Him and be scattered. They only began to really understand when He appeared to them after His resurrection: then they understood what He had been trying to teach them in these passages from John Chapters 15 and 16.

“The” Lord’s Prayer

John Chapter 17 records Jesus’ prayer to God the Father asking Him to glorify His Son, so that the Son may glorify the Father. Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible says, “. . . the hour is come; to depart out of the world, to suffer and die for His people, which was agreed upon between Him and his Father from all eternity; . . . so now at his suffering and death, for the salvation of his chosen ones, the wisdom, grace, justice, holiness, power, and faithfulness of God are greatly glorified.” These believers have eternal life, for they “know” the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom God the Father has sent. This “knowing” is a spiritual recognition of Jesus Christ as Lord of the individual believer’s life, and is likened to Jesus’ relationship to the church, which is Christ’s spiritual body (Ephesians 5). John 17:6 says, “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.” John MacArthur’s Study Bible comments on this verse saying, “The statement, . . . thine they were, is a potent assertion that before conversion they belonged to God. That is true because of God’s election. They were chosen before the foundation of

the world (Ephesians 1:4) when their names were written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 17:8)." Acts 18:10 emphasizes this same point when it says that God had many people in Corinth who belonged to Him, but they are not yet saved.

In John 17:9 Jesus says that He does not pray for the world, but for them that God has given Him, for they belong to the Father. Unbelievers do not belong to God, and are not part of His family; in fact, Satan is the father of unbelievers (John 8:44; 1 John 3:10, 5:19). Judas was apparently one of these, for verse 12 identifies him as the "son of perdition," the only disciple that Jesus "lost," that the scripture might be fulfilled (see Psalm 41:9). The term "son of perdition" is also used to describe the antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Much has been written about Judas' intent in his betrayal of Jesus, but the only prophecy pertaining to this seems to be that in Psalm 41, where David is complaining about his enemy, and prophesying about Jesus' enemy. Here Judas (Jesus' enemy) is described as speaking evil of Jesus, of speaking vanity when talking to Jesus, of harboring iniquity in his heart, of bearing false witness against Jesus, and not believing that Jesus would be resurrected. John describes Judas as a thief and implies that he did not care for the poor, but merely put up a front of having compassion for them (John 12:6).

In John 17:14-19 Jesus talks about His disciples and how He has given them God's Word and the world hated them for they are not of this world. He asks God to keep them from the evil one but not to take them out of the world. He sends them into the world to carry the message of hope and salvation through Jesus death on the cross and subsequent resurrection, and He asks God to sanctify them so that they should know the truth.

For the remainder of Chapter 17 Jesus talks about all those that shall believe on Him through the word of the disciples. This includes all believers, for we are all drawn to Christ by hearing the Word of God, and mixing it with saving faith (Hebrews 4:2). Here Jesus talks about believers being in Him, and Him being in them. This was discussed in our comments on Chapter 14, and will not be repeated here other than to note that this prayer is answered in the life of the believer when he joins Jesus in His death and resurrection and receives the Holy Spirit. If we receive the Holy Spirit when we receive salvation then we have Jesus in us. Those believers that did not receive the Holy Spirit at salvation only need to ask the Father and He will give it to them (Luke 11:13).

Our being in Christ is a process ongoing for most of us for the rest of our lives. Of course, God sees us as being in Christ when we join Him in His death

on the cross, but the process of making us into the image of Christ is the process of sanctification, which continues until we lay down our mortal bodies. Being in Christ is an ongoing process of sanctification, or renewing of our minds referred to in Romans 12:2. I believe this can best be explained by referring to the three avenues through which Satan appeals to us in trying to divert us from following the Holy Spirit's guidance. Satan appeals to us through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. As the sanctification process works in our lives these three areas of vulnerability gradually lose their power of enticement, and we are not as susceptible to being drawn away by our lusts and pride (see James 1:13-15). Jesus emptied Himself of his divine attributes and took the form of a servant when He came to earth in the form of a man. His goal in our lives is to cause us to empty ourselves of our earthly attributes (lust and pride), in readying us to come to heaven. To the degree we empty ourselves while still on earth, we allow our bodies (or temples) to be used by God for the work of building up the body of Christ and drawing men to Him.

As I have gotten older I have become increasingly aware of Jesus' encompassing presence over my life. I can never get away from feeling that He is in me, and I can't get away with anything: I take Him into whatever thought

process, or act I pursue. This seems to be something more pervasive than the warnings I get from my conscience, or the guilt I feel after thinking or doing something questionable, whether it's a sin or a misstep. This relationship results in what I would call a proactive correction: there are things that I cannot (or will not) take Him into, and the consequences of Him leaving, and me getting out of Him (even for a short period of time) are greater than I want to contemplate. This is what I think being in Christ really feels like: it is difficult and great at the same time.

Jesus' Betrayal and Trial

After He had finished praying, John records that Jesus and the eleven disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus told the disciples to wait while He went to pray nearby. He took Peter, John, and James, and asked them to watch with Him for His heart was exceedingly sorrowful and very heavy. Then He went a little farther and fell on His face, praying “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou will” (Matthew 26:39). He then returned to the three disciples and found them asleep and He asked them if they could not watch with Him one hour? Then He went away to pray a second time saying, “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will will be done” (Matthew 26:42). When He returned to the disciples and found them asleep again He went away and prayed for the third time. When He returned to them He told them to rise up, for the betrayer (Judas) was at hand. These three prayers of Jesus have been analyzed by many different expositors and the main point of discussion seems to be, did Jesus know that what was about to happen was the will of the Father, and was His sorrow and heaviness due to

physical dread of His impending crucifixion, or to the burden of sin that was about to be placed on Him? In prayer, and especially intercessory prayer, the first order of importance is for the intercessor to get the mind of God about the situation. In Jesus' prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane it seems reasonably clear that this was what He was doing. His first prayer was a question about whether there was some other way to reconcile mankind to God: other than His receiving the cup (which represented God's judgment). In His second prayer Jesus tells the Father that if there is no other way for reconciliation to be realized, He will drink the cup. The Bible does not record the third prayer, other than to say that He prayed the same words He did in the second prayer. However, we note the progressive acceptance of the will of the Father from the first to the second prayer, so it would seem reasonable to assume that Jesus' third prayer reflected full acceptance of what was ahead.

The second question concerns what it was exactly that sorrowed Jesus, and weighed on Him so heavily? As mortal men who dread physical pain our natural inclination is to think that Jesus was dreading the whips with rock or metal fastened to the end of the straps to tear skin, and to insure maximum impact on the victim. Or possibly He dreaded the nails driven through His wrists and feet, and the pain of supporting His weight on the these nails when

He was on the cross. Or He may have dreaded the terrible pain and difficulty of raising Himself up on these nails trying to get enough air in His lungs to speak. The record does not answer these questions, but I do not think it was physical pain that Jesus was dreading. He who knew no sin was about to take on the full burden of the sin of mankind with all its filthiness. And worse, He was becoming sin, and as such the Holy Spirit within Him would have to forsake Him. I believe it was the spiritual burden and abandonment by God that caused Jesus to come to the Father one last time to reaffirm that there was no other way in which to redeem mankind. Jesus never appeared to fear physical pain and death. He said as much in Luke 12:4, when He told the disciples that they should not be afraid of them that kill the body, but can do no more. I am sure that Jesus knew exactly what He had to do when He came to earth: He had to become the sacrificial Lamb of God, and He knew exactly what this would entail: becoming sin, and abandonment by God, and these were likely the burdens on His mind as He came to God in prayer on the Mount of Olives in the Garden of Gethsemane.

When Judas and the soldiers came to arrest Him, Jesus stepped forward and identified Himself. As He said “I am he,” the arresting party fell backward to the ground. As they regained their composure Jesus asked them who it was

they sought. They responded that it was Jesus of Nazareth, and Jesus again identified Himself, and told them to let the disciples go. He was trying to protect them, for He had said earlier that He would lose none of those that God the Father gave Him. At this point Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant. Jesus chastised Peter by confirming that He must drink the cup the Father had given Him, and then He healed the servant's ear. After this they bound Jesus and led Him away to appear before Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest. It was Caiaphas that suggested that it was expedient that one man should die for the people so that the whole nation should not perish (John 11:50).

It is difficult to understand how these men could have arrested Jesus after seeing these two miracles: falling backward at Jesus' word, and healing the servant's ear. The only way I can understand this is to believe that these men were not among those the Father had given Jesus, and they were blinded to spiritual occurrences. They must have passed them off as the skills of a magician and nothing more. We see this blindness every day, even among those who identify themselves as Christians. They cannot recognize spiritual things for they do not have the Holy Spirit of God within (1 Corinthians 2:11). I am intrigued by the inclusion of the high priest's servant's name in this

passage of scripture. In many places in the Bible I have noticed the inclusion of names, locations, items, and events that contribute little or nothing to the subject matter being discussed, but add immeasurably to the veracity and exactness of God's Word. If only those that doubt had seeing eyes.

John 18:15-18, 25-27 tell the story of Peter's denial of knowing Jesus. In John 13:38 Jesus prophesied that Peter would deny Him three times before the cock crowed and Peter's denial is described here. Peter was first accosted by a damsel who tended the door to the court of the high priest, and he denied knowing Jesus. Later, as he was warming himself with the servants and officers of the court, Peter was again asked if he was not one of Jesus disciples. He again said that he was not. Then one of the servants of the high priest who was kin to the man whose ear Peter had cut off asked him, "Did I not see thee in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied this emphatically by cursing and swearing, and saying "I know not the man": and the cock immediately began to crow (Matthew 26:74). Peter's heart was deeply wounded when he realized that this was exactly what Jesus had prophesied and he wept bitterly (Matthew 26:75).

While Peter was undergoing this temptation, Jesus was first questioned by the high priest emeritus (Annas) about His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus

answered him by saying that He had always spoken openly and not in secret, often in the synagogue. He told the high priest that he should ask those that heard Him teach, because they knew what He had said. One of the officers that stood nearby then struck Jesus for answering in what he interpreted as being a disrespectful manner. Matthew records that Jesus then asked the officer why he had struck him, since He had not spoken evil. Jesus knew that Annas had no authority to try Him, and by asking that witnesses be questioned He was basically asking for a fair trial by proper authority. Annas then sent Him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the Jewish scribes and elders were assembled. They were seeking false witnesses against Jesus so that they could put Him to death. One of the two witnesses they were able to find testified that Jesus said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and build it in three days" (Matthew 26:61). Caiaphas attempted to get Jesus to respond to this witness, but He kept his peace. Finally, Caiaphas commanded Jesus to tell him under oath whether He was the Christ, the Son of God. To this Jesus responded in the affirmative, that what Caiaphas had spoken was the truth, and he added that hereafter He would be sitting at the Father's right hand and He would return in the clouds of heaven. At this the high priest tore his clothes, feigning deep grief, and he accused Jesus of blasphemy. The soldiers

then spit on Him and hit Him with their hands, and mocked Him saying, “Prophecy to us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?” (Matthew 26:68).

These appearances before Annas and Caiaphas occurred during the night and early morning of the day of preparation for the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover).

Later in the morning of the day of preparation they led Jesus to the Hall of Judgment, to appear before Pilate, governor of Judea. The Jews who were accompanying Jesus did not enter the Hall of Judgment lest they should be defiled and not be allowed to participate in the Feast that would begin later that day, after sunset. Pilate was very insecure in his governorship, and when Jesus was delivered to him he tried to get out of being involved by telling the Jews that they should judge Him by their own law. The Jews responded that they did not have authority to put any man to death. When Pilate found out that Jesus was a Galilean, and therefore under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, he sent Him to Herod, hoping to relieve himself of a difficult, and potentially explosive situation. Herod questioned Jesus, but He refused to answer, and Herod, in frustration, sent Jesus back to Pilate (Luke 23:8-12). Pilate then asked Jesus if He was King of the Jews? Jesus answered by saying that His kingdom was not of this world, but that if it was, His disciples would

fight and He would not be delivered to Pilate for judgment. Pilate then asked Jesus again if He was a king. To this Jesus told him that He was born to be a king, and that He came into the world to bear witness to the truth, and everyone that is of the truth hears (responds to) His voice. This was too much for Pilate and he went back to speak to the Jews, asking rhetorically, what is truth? Pilate told the Jews that he could find no fault in Jesus, and since they had a custom of releasing one prisoner at Passover would they agree to release Jesus? Matthew records that when Pilate sat on the judgment seat, his wife sent him a note saying that he should not have anything to do with that just man (Jesus), for she had a very disturbing dream because of Him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask for another notorious prisoner named Barabbas, and condemn Jesus to death.

Pilate's wife's dream adds an interesting note to this narrative. We assume this dream came from God, and if that is so, what does this mean? I do not believe that God would have inserted this fact here unless it had some purpose. However, because of some personal experiences, I recommend caution in the spiritual interpretation of present-day dreams. The dreams described in the Bible have great significance. I have found no commentary on this particular dream, nor have I been able to find any clarifying context in the Bible, so any

meaning we suggest is strictly conjecture. Nevertheless, there are some conclusions we can draw about the note from Pilate's wife. She recognized Jesus as being a just man, and something about Him seems to have caused her to realize that He represented a serious threat to her husband. In her note to Pilate, she mentioned that she had suffered many things this day in her dream because of Him. The inclusion of the phrase "this day" might possibly imply that this was a vision, and not a dream while sleeping during the nighttime. While it is possible that Pilate's wife was a "closet" believer that Jesus was a prophet, or holy man, some early documentation suggests she may have been converted to Judaism. If this interpretation is correct, then the dream may have been given to her as a warning for her husband. Why would God do this? I can think of three possibilities:

1) To test Pilate - he knew that Jesus was innocent, and now he had a warning from his wife. It would probably have cost him his job as Governor if he refused to condemn Jesus. This is a lesson for present-day believers - will we stand up for Jesus when we know that it will cost us dearly in this world?

2) The real guilt here lies with the Jews - possibly God was trying to force their hand. If Pilate refused to act favorably as a result of the note, they would have been faced with a dilemma: kill Jesus themselves, or admit failure. This is

another timely lesson - in the unbelieving world we live in, Satan and his minions must either “kill” Jesus, or admit defeat. We see great evidence of this today - take God out of everything.

3) After Pilate received the note from his wife he tried to find a way to get out of a sticky situation, but the Jews would not let him off the hook. He then took water and washed his hands, saying I am innocent of the blood of this just man. Some people may be inclined to sympathize with Pilate here, but notice the perverse application of one of the great principles of the NT: the blood of Jesus washes away sin. In Pilate’s mind he believed that he could be cleansed of the blood of Jesus by washing his hands in water.

Judgment and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

Another ploy by Pilate to give the Jews an opportunity to release Jesus, rather than a known thief failed when the Jews chose to pardon Barabbas rather than Jesus. Pilate then had the soldiers to scourge Jesus, and apparently gave permission for them to mock and ridicule Him as well. Thus, the soldiers made a crown of thorns and placed it on His head, and then they put a purple robe on Him to mock the fact that He had been called king of the Jews. They also hailed Him king of the Jews while they hit him with their hands. Some expositors have suggested that Pilate allowed this in the hope that the Jews would feel sorry for Jesus so that he could then release Him. At any rate, Pilate then brought Jesus before the Jews again saying that he could find no fault in Him, but when the chief priests and officers saw Him they cried, “Crucify Him, Crucify Him!” At that point Pilate told them to take Jesus and crucify Him for he could find no fault in Him. Pilate kept trying to get the Jews to deal with Jesus so that he would not be responsible, but the Jews argued that Jesus had claimed that He was the Son of God, and therefore, he should die. The Jews did not have the authority to crucify Jesus, and thus they insisted

that Pilate, the local representative of the Roman government, order His crucifixion. At this turn of events, Pilate was more afraid than ever, so he went into the place where Jesus was and asked Him, Where did you come from? He was really beginning to wonder who it was that he was dealing with. Jesus did not answer Pilate, so he asked Him again, “Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee and have power to release thee?” Jesus responded by saying, “Thou could have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.” This is such a wonderful teaching, for it basically says that God controls everything that comes into the life of those who belong to Him. If a believer feels that someone is mistreating him he needs to realize that God has either allowed it, or has brought it to pass. All these things come into our lives to teach us, and to conform us to the image of Christ: to make us more holy through sanctification. If we can accept this it will save us considerable grief when others mistreat or bear false witness against us.

The second part of Jesus’ answer refers to the fact that the chief priests (Annas and Caiaphas) were the real culprits in delivering Jesus to Pilate, and they will suffer the greater penalty for their actions. Pilate tried to protect Jesus from their plot, but in the end he was too weak to stand up to them and

the reaction he undoubtedly would have received from Rome. Thus, Pilate sat down in the judgment seat about noon on the Day of Preparation and said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" With this he delivered Jesus to the chief priests to be crucified. They replaced the purple robe with His own raiment, and led Him away to crucify Him. Pilate prepared a wooden sign with wording in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, saying "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS," which was then placed on the cross. The chief priests objected to this and asked that the sign be changed to read, "I am King of the Jews," but Pilate answered them by saying, "What I have written I have written." Thus, Pilate reflected his feeling of disapproval back in their face, so to speak. Jesus bore the cross until they found a Cyrene by the name of Simon, who took the cross from Jesus and carried it to a place called "the place of a skull," known in Hebrew as Golgatha. Mark's gospel adds the interesting fact that Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus: the inclusion of insignificant names like this not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible seems to add authenticity to God's Word. Before they put Jesus on the cross they offered Him wine mixed with myrrh, which He refused. This was a common practice of the Romans during crucifixion in order to deaden the pain. It also may have reduced the struggling of the victim during the process.

Jesus' cross was placed between the crosses of two thieves, and Luke (only) records the fact that when Jesus was being ridiculed, one of the thieves joined in, saying, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." But the other thief rebuked him saying, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward for our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." And he said unto Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And Jesus said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." This thief somehow recognized who Jesus was, and confessed this belief through his rebuke of the other thief, as well as in his comment to Jesus. Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb of God, had the authority to forgive this man of his sins, and to tell him He would meet him in Paradise later that day. This raises the question about where Paradise is located. Paul seems to identify Paradise as the third heaven in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, but this is not the interpretation that some expositors have. For instance, Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown, indicate that this narrative by Paul describes two different places: the third heaven, and Paradise. There is certainly an argument for this in the way Paul describes this (or these) event(s), as if they were two separate occurrences. Another argument for this interpretation is the answer to the question: "Where did

Jesus' spirit/soul go when He died on the cross?" I have always understood that He went to Hades, burdened with the sin of the world, and dumped this repulsive load of filth at Satan's doorstep, triumphing over him in the process. From there my understanding is that He proceeded to Abraham's Bosom, where He preached salvation to the captives and subsequently took them to heaven. One additional argument in favor of this interpretation is that if this thief died under the old covenant he would necessarily have had to go to Abraham's Bosom, and from there accompany Jesus to heaven with the rest of the OT saints. If this is correct it would seem that Jesus must have been referring to Abraham's Bosom as Paradise in His comment to the thief. The third heaven that Paul refers to must be the heaven where God's throne is located, and where Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father. By this it is assumed that the first heaven is the heaven we see when we look up into the sky. It may roughly correspond to the earth's atmosphere. The second heaven would then be the stratosphere, including the sun, moon, and stars: the rest of the universe that man can observe with the eye, and with telescopes that allow us to see heavenly bodies many millions of light years away.

After the soldiers had nailed Jesus to the cross they divided His garments among the four of them, but His vesture was woven without a seam from the

top throughout, and they decided that they would cast lots for it. This was as prophesied in Psalm 22:18: “They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” Jesus’ mother, her sister, Mary Magdalene, and John stood by the cross, and when Jesus saw them He said to His mother, “Woman, behold thy son!” and to John He said, “Behold thy mother!” This was a strange statement to make since Mary had four other sons, and more than one daughter who possibly could have cared for her. From that time on John took Mary into his house and she spent her last years in a small house that John provided for her outside of Ephesus, where he was bishop of the local church.

Jesus last seven words from the cross were:

- “Father forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)
- “Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43)
- “Woman, behold thy son!” (John 19:26)
- “Behold thy mother!” (John 19:27)
- “Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani?” being interpreted, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)
- “I thirst.” (John 19:28)
- “It is finished.” (John 19:30)

The words “Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani?” have always mystified me. I do not understand why these words were not interpreted as were all the others words spoken and interpreted in English versions of the Bible. “Eli” is a Hebrew word meaning God, the rest of this passage is in the Aramaic language. Mark’s Gospel uses the word “Eloi”, which is Aramaic, and also means God. Jesus spoke Aramaic and it seems strange that this phrase was left in Hebrew and Aramaic by the scribes. Possibly the significant meaning of this cry by Jesus as He neared death on the cross caused them to feel inadequate, or unable, to understand what was happening to our Lord, and to interpret His words. We know that the Holy Spirit was guiding them in this, so it was purposeful. When Jesus took our sins upon Himself, God viewed Him as a sinner. In this He symbolized the scapegoat of the OT. After he took on our sins the Holy Spirit could no longer reside in His body, which was rendered unclean. This must have been the reason that Jesus cried out “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” while He was on the cross. Once Jesus had accepted the sin of the world the Holy Spirit could no longer reside within Him, and He was forsaken by God from this time until His death on the cross.

As Jesus neared the end of His passion He said, “I thirst.” John points out that this was to fulfill the prophecy in Psalm 69:21, “they gave me gall for my

meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” It seems clear from this scripture that this was not an act of kindness; but more ridicule. Although John says that Jesus received the vinegar, both Matthew and Mark seem to indicate that He did not take it. After Jesus refused the vinegar, He cried again with a loud voice, “It is finished,” and with this He yielded up His human spirit (gave up the ghost). Matthew records that at this time the veil in the temple “was rent in twain from top to bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the city, and appeared to many.” (Matthew 27:51-52) When the soldiers who were watching Jesus saw the earthquake and the other things that happened they feared greatly, and the centurion said, “Truly this was the Son of God.” We know the torn veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies in the temple, signifies that those that are in Christ can, from this time on approach God the Father without fear. This was not the case before Jesus death on the cross, for the high priest was the only one that was allowed into the Holy of Holies. The high priest entered into the Holy of Holies only once each year, on the Day of Atonement, to offer the yearly sacrifice for the sins of the nation. As God’s designated representative of the people, he alone was

allowed to enter this inner Sanctuary. As indicated above, this all changed with Jesus death on the cross.

In regard to the graves being opened, and saints rising out of the graves and going into the city to be seen by many, this is much more difficult to understand. Matthew is the only Gospel in which this event is described, so we do not have any additional explanation to help us in understanding this wonderful miracle. The Bible does not give us any further information about these saints, so we do not know for sure what happened to them. One possibility is that these were the immortal bodies of the OT saints whose spirit/souls Jesus released from Abraham's bosom and took with Him to heaven. This would thus be a precursor to the rapture/resurrection that occurs when Christ returns for His bride (the church). In describing this event in the "Epistle to the Trallions," Ignatius recorded, "He was truly persecuted, and truly died, in the sight of beings in heaven, on earth, and under the earth . . . By those under the earth, I mean the multitude that arose along with the Lord. For says the scripture, 'Many bodies of the saints that slept arose', their graves being opened. He descended, indeed, alone, but He arose accompanied by a multitude; and rent asunder that means of separation, which had existed from the beginning of the world, and cast down its partition-wall." We do not know

the exact purpose of this event, but possibly God was determined to show the Jews the magnitude of what they had done, and the great glory of His Son Jesus. Jesus, together with this multitude, made up the first-fruits presented to the Father.

While Jesus' body was still on the cross the Jews came to Pilate and asked him to order the soldiers to break the legs of those on the cross in order to hasten their death, for this was the Day of Preparation, and the sabbath was only hours away. The soldiers then broke the legs of the two thieves crucified with Jesus, but when they got to Jesus they found Him already dead, thus fulfilling scripture and prophecy (Numbers 9:12, Psalm 34:20). One of the soldiers took a spear and pierced Jesus side, and when he did, blood and water came out, again fulfilling scripture (Zechariah 12:10). All four of the Gospels record the fact that Jesus was nailed to the cross at 9:00 A.M.; Matthew, Mark and Luke record that darkness fell at 12:00 Noon; and all four Gospels record that Jesus died at 3:00 P.M.

Joseph of Arimathaea, a rich man and a member of the Sanhedrin, who was also a disciple of Jesus, came to Pilate secretly, and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission, and he and Nicodemus came and took Jesus' body from the cross. Nicodemus brought spices, about 75 pounds of mixed

myrrh and aloes to be used to cover the body after it had been wrapped in linen. They placed Jesus in Joseph Arimathaea's new tomb, which was hewn out of rock, and was located in a garden nearby. They were hastening because they needed to bury Jesus before the end of the Day of Preparation, which must have been imminent, for Matthew 27:57 records that they came at "even." The NIV records this, "as evening approached." After they finished burying Jesus, they rolled the stone covering the entrance to the tomb over the door, and departed. But the chief priests and Pharisees weren't satisfied yet. They came to Pilate saying, "Sir, we remember what that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first" (Matthew 27:63-64). Pilate replied that they had a watch and they should go their way and make it as sure as they could. So they went and made the sepulchre sure by sealing the stone over the door, and setting a watch.

HE AROSE!

On Sunday morning before sunrise Mary Magdalene came to the sepulcher and found the stone rolled away from the door. Matthew 28:1-6 states that there was a great earthquake and an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled back the stone, which was very large. The angel told Mary that Jesus had risen and told her to go tell the disciples. Mary ran to Simon Peter and John, telling them that they had taken Jesus from the tomb, and she didn't know where they had laid Him. She obviously thought that the chief priests and Pharisees, or possibly the Romans had removed Him from the tomb. Peter and John then ran to the sepulcher. John got there first, and looked inside and saw the linen burial clothes lying where Jesus' body had been, but John did not venture into the tomb.

When Peter got there he went into the tomb and saw the linen burial clothes, and the napkin that was over Jesus' head lying separately. John then followed Peter into the tomb, and, seeing what was there, he understood for the first time the scripture that said Jesus must rise from the dead. Peter and John then departed, but Mary stayed by the tomb weeping. As she looked

down into the tomb she saw two angels sitting at the head and feet where Jesus had lain. The angels asked Mary why she was weeping and she told them that they had taken her Lord, and she knew not where they had laid Him. When she had said this, she turned back and saw Jesus standing close by, but she did not recognize Him. Mary thought Jesus was the gardener, and she asked if he was the one that moved Jesus, and, if so, where he had taken Him. Then Jesus called Mary by her name, and she immediately recognized Him, and addressed Him as Rabboni, meaning Master. Jesus told her not to touch Him for He had not yet ascended to God the Father. This is a very enigmatic statement. Most Bible expositors say that Jesus was telling Mary not to try to hold onto Him, for His relationship with them would not be as it had been before. We know that He had been in Hades until just before that time, for He went there to take the keys of hell and death from Satan, and to deliver the captives (take the OT believers to heaven (Ephesians 4:9-10; 1 Peter 3:19)). We also know that when a believer dies his spirit/soul goes to heaven to be with God, to be joined later to his immortal body (at rapture/resurrection). If Jesus was in Hades in spirit/soul form, which we have assumed in our study, then this is the first time we encounter Him in bodily form after death. This was before His ascension to the Father, and thus, we assume, before He was given His immortal body.

This must have something to do with His telling Mary not to touch Him. Mary went immediately to tell the disciples about her encounter with Jesus, but they did not believe her.

We cannot leave the subject of the Lord's crucifixion without addressing the confusion regarding the scripture in Matthew 12:40: "*For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*" I want to quote from a website entitled:

"Yeshua's Resurrection When?" that is the most authoritative article I have found on this subject. I would recommend this article to readers interested in this subject for it contains strong proof of the scripture in Matthew. "One of the most well known facts of history is the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah, Jesus the Christ. Scholars have long argued the time frame between 29 AD and 33 AD as the time of the crucifixion and resurrection of the Messiah. It is one of the most well documented facts of history that He died on a Roman Cross, and in 3 days rose again from the dead. There has always been a cloud of uncertainty regarding the exact day and year. The fact of the resurrection of the Messiah gives a blessed hope to all mankind. We can now know that there is only one date that agrees with all the Gospel accounts. That date agrees with our modern Roman Gregorian

calendar, Hebrew calendar, the modified Jewish calendar, and also the letter of Pontius Pilot, written on April 5, 30 AD. The Messiah died on a Roman cross in Jerusalem on Nisan 14 at 3:00 pm, on Wednesday, April 3, in 30 AD. In 3 days and 3 nights, exactly 72 hours later, on the Sabbath at 3 pm, Saturday, April 6, in 30 AD, Yeshua the Messiah rose from the dead. The Lord of the Sabbath, rose from the dead on the Sabbath, Nisan 17, on Saturday, April 6, 30 AD.

On the same day (the first day of the week), in the evening, the disciples were assembled together in a room for fear of the Jews, and Jesus came and stood among them, saying “Peace be unto you.” He showed them His hands and side to convince them that it was assuredly Himself, and then they were glad. The wording here gives the impression that Jesus had changed in appearance. Then He said again, “Peace be unto you: as my father hath sent me, even so I send you.” After this He breathed on them saying, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. We know the disciples did not receive the Holy Spirit until some forty days after this, so I am inclined to accept the explanation in Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament, which argues that what they received was an earnest of the gift; an effusion of the Spirit. We know that the breath of God has power to give spiritual life, and it

may be that Jesus' breathing on the disciples quickened their human spirits, and gave them new life. They were going to require a quickened spirit to which the Holy Spirit could minister within their bodies. The second part of this word they received from Jesus is difficult for us to grasp, as well. John MacArthur says that this statement does not give Christians the authority to forgive sins, but rather the authority to recognize and proclaim a sinner's redemption when they believe into Christ. A somewhat parallel passage in Matthew 16:19 says, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This passage of scripture is a little harder to apply MacArthur's comment to, although he does interpret it in the same way: that believers only recognize what has been bound or loosed in heaven. Vincent's comment is considerably more bold. He says that the statement about the keys of the kingdom referred to Peter's being the first to open the gates of heaven to the Gentiles, as he did with Cornelius' family. As to the binding and loosing he says, "No other terms were in more constant use in Rabbinic canon law than those of binding and loosing. They represented the legislative and judicial powers of the Rabbinic office. These powers Christ now transferred, and that not in their pretension, but in their

reality, to his apostles; the first, here, to Peter, as their representative, the second, after his resurrection, to the church (John 20:23).” I believe Vincent has the more correct interpretation, for other scriptures allude to forgiveness of sins through prayers of the elders (James 5:15-16). It is the failure of the church to maintain holiness that causes us to be afraid of ministering God’s authority.

Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus came to them for the first time, and when they told him they had seen the Lord he said that unless he saw the nail-scarred hands, and put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side, he would not believe. The next time Jesus appeared to them was eight days later, and Thomas was with them. Jesus told Thomas to look at his hands, and thrust his hand into his side and be not faithless, but believing. Then Thomas said “My Lord and my God.” Jesus then said “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are those that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

After His resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples five times:

First: To the disciples in Jerusalem when Thomas was not there

(Mark 16:14, Luke 24:36-43, John 20:19-25),

Second: To Thomas and the others (John 20:26-29)

Third: To seven of the disciples by the sea of Galilee (John

21:1-24).

Fourth: To the eleven in Galilee (Matthew 28:16-20, Mark

16:15-18).

Fifth: At Jesus' ascension (Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:44-53).

In addition, Jesus appeared to Mary at the tomb before resurrection, and to Cleopas and another follower of Jesus on their way to Emmaus, a town about seven miles from Jerusalem. 1 Corinthians also records appearances by Jesus to 500 brethren, to James, and to himself (Paul). In most of these appearances Jesus seems to be reassuring the disciples, and insuring that they stay together as the Day of Pentecost approaches.

Appearance at the Sea of Tiberias (Galilee)

Chapter 21 describes Jesus' appearance at the Sea of Galilee. Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, John, James, and two unnamed disciples, had been fishing all night, but had caught nothing. When morning came Jesus stood on the shore, but they did not recognize Him. He called out to them, "Children, have ye any meat? They answered Him, No". He then told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat and they would find fish. When they did they could hardly draw the net in. it was so full of fish (153 in all - another amazing Bible statistic). At this John recognized that it was the Lord, and he told Peter. Peter, who was naked, gathered his coat around him and dove into the water and headed for shore. The other disciples steered the boat to land (about 300 ft. away), dragging the fish net with them. When they got there they saw that Jesus had started a fire, and had fish and bread cooking. Jesus told them to bring some of the fish they caught and come and eat with Him. This is an interesting exchange, for Jesus had asked them to tarry in Jerusalem until they received power from on high (Luke 24:49). It seems that one of the reasons Jesus appeared to His disciples was to keep them together, and encourage them

while they were waiting for something they did not understand: baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' Exchange With Peter

After they had dined Jesus said to Peter, "Simon Peter, son of Jonas, lovest (agapeo) thou me more than these?" Peter answered by saying, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee." Jesus responded by saying, "Feed my lambs." Then Jesus asked him a second time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (agapeo) thou me?" Peter again answered Him saying, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee." Jesus responded by saying, "Feed my sheep." Then a third time Jesus asked Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (phileo) thou me?" Peter was grieved because Jesus asked him for the third time and he responded by saying, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee." Jesus responded by again saying, "Feed my sheep." This passage of scripture is so full of undercurrents of meaning that it is difficult to feel comfortable trying to interpret it. We know that Jesus was testing Peter's love by subtly referring to the earlier encounter when Peter stated that he would lay down his life for Jesus (John 13:37-38). Later, Peter denied Jesus three times (Matthew 26:70; Mark 14:68; Luke 22:57; John 18:17),

and here Jesus asks him if he loves Him three times. Peter was fearful when he denied Jesus, so we know that he did not have “agape” love at that time, for “agape” love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). But this is not the whole story, for Jesus is asking whether Peter “agapeos” Him, and Peter is answering that he “phileos” Him. Agape love is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Since it is a spiritual attribute it would seem logical to assume that Peter would need a spiritual nature in order to receive and manifest it. We know that Peter had not yet received the Holy Spirit, so he could not have manifested agape love, but if we assume his human spirit was quickened when Jesus breathed on him (John 20:22), then he was equipped to receive and recognize agape love at that time. Jesus may have been asking Peter this question to see if he had advanced to that stage of spiritual maturity, or, possibly Jesus was trying to draw Peter’s attention to the difference between God’s love and brotherly love. We know from Peter’s previous thrice denial of knowing Jesus, that he had overestimated the depth of his love toward Him in the past. Here, Jesus was testing Peter’s love again in a most perceptive way. In this exchange Jesus appears to restore Peter’s relationship, for He asks Peter to shepherd the believers.

It is interesting that the disciples did not recognize Jesus at first. This was His third appearance to the disciples since His resurrection, and you would

suppose that He looked the same this time as He did the other two times.

This is not a sure thing however, because we know He appeared in a different form to the two on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12). Another possibility is that their eyes were restrained from recognizing Him, as in Luke 24:16. The Bible mentions several appearances by Jesus in which His acquaintances did not recognize Him immediately, so we know that He can appear in different ways. We also know that He appeared in different forms in the OT. Jesus describes Himself in different ways to John, in dictating the letters to the seven churches of Revelation. In these cases He describes Himself in a manner reflecting the judgment of that particular church:

- to the church at Ephesus He spoke as One holding the seven stars in His right hand and who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;
- to the church at Smyrna He spoke as the first and last who was dead and is alive again;
- to the church at Pergamos He spoke as One who holds the two-edged sword;
- to the church at Thyatira He spoke as One who has eyes like flames of fire and feet as burnished brass;

- to the church at Sardis He spoke as One that had the seven Spirits of God;
- to the church at Philadelphia He spoke as the One that is holy and true, that has the key of David that opens and no man can shut, and shuts and no man can open; and
- to the church at Laodicea He spoke as the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

In John 21:18-19 Jesus speaks of Peter's future death on a cross: "When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst where thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." According to church tradition, Peter was crucified by Nero, and, at his own request he was placed on the cross head down, for he refused to be crucified in same manner that Jesus was. At this Peter asked Jesus what would happen to John. Jesus answered saying, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" As a result, it was widely rumored that John would not die until Jesus returned, and in actual fact that is what happened. In Revelation 1:13-18, Jesus appears to

John as “. . . one like the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot,
and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.”

APPENDIX

Questions from the Gospel of John

Chapter 1:

1. Explain why John refers to Jesus as the Word.
2. Explain why Genesis 1:2 says the Spirit of God “moved” upon the face of the earth, and John Chapter 1 says that Jesus “made the world.”
3. What does it mean to be a “Son of God?”
4. Verse 18 says, “No man has seen God at any time,” but did not Moses see God in Mt. Sinai? Explain
5. What were the names of Jesus’ first two disciples?
6. Name the disciples that came to Jesus in John Chapter 1?
7. What did Jesus mean when He said to Nathaniel, “Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man?”
8. How did John’s baptism differ from that of Jesus’ baptism?
9. Why did the priests and Levites from Jerusalem ask John if he was Elijah?

Chapter 2:

1. Why did Jesus’ mother go to Him when they ran out of wine at the wedding?
2. Do you believe that Jesus was drinking wine at the marriage celebration?
3. Explain John 2:10.
4. Why do you think Jesus chose this as His first miracle?
5. What is the significance of the Jewish Feast of Passover?
6. Did Jesus’ action at the temple have anything to do with the temple of our bodies?
7. Explain John 2:24-25.

Chapter 3:

1. Explain Jesus' meaning in referring to "the kingdom of God" (see Luke 17:21).
2. Explain the term "born again."
3. Explain John 3:8.
4. Explain the difference in believing "in" Jesus as opposed to believing "into" Him.
5. Does John 3:19 say that the world is destined for darkness?
6. Did Jesus baptize anyone in water? If not, why?
7. Explain John 3:29.
8. Explain John 3:34.

Chapter 4:

1. Why did the Jews hate the Samaritans?
2. What water was Jesus talking about in John 4:14?
3. What was Jesus talking about in John 4:21?
4. Many Samaritans believed into Jesus while He was there. What does this say about the belief that man's works are involved in receiving salvation?
5. Why does Jesus say that a prophet has no honor in his own country? How did this affect His ministry in Galilee?
6. Why did Jesus heal the nobleman's son?
7. Is it significant that Jesus did not "come down" to Capernaum where the son was.
8. What was the actual means through which the nobleman's son's healing was effected? It wasn't Jesus presence because He was not with the son, and it was not the Father because He had given this authority to Jesus. Therefore, it must have been the Holy Spirit.
9. If this is true, how is healing effected in today's world, where the Holy Spirit's ministry is within believers?
10. Can unbelievers be healed through our prayers?

Chapter 5

1. Why would God have an angel go down and trouble the water at Bethesda at a certain season, and limit healing to the first person in the water afterward?
2. Many of Jesus' healings were on the Sabbath. What do you think He was trying to teach the Jews in this?
3. The Jews hated Jesus for implying that He was equal with God. Is Jesus equal with God?
4. Explain John 5:24.
5. Explain John 5:26.
6. What is Jesus referring to in John 5:31?
7. Explain John 5:45.

Chapter 6.

1. Are there any similar instances in the OT to Jesus' feeding of the multitude with five loaves and two fishes?
2. What was the result of this miracle?
3. Does man have the authority (in Christ) to change climatic conditions? How about Elijah?
4. Explain Jesus' answer in John 6:29.
5. Explain John 6:44, 65 in the context of believing into Jesus Christ.
6. What does it mean to eat the bread of life?
7. Explain John 6:56.
8. Discuss John 6:66 in the light of Matthew 20:16.
9. How could Peter answer Jesus as he did in John 6:69 if he was still dead spiritually?

Chapter 7

1. Were Jesus' brothers trying to get Him killed by urging Him to go the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem?
2. Does man have it within himself to will to do God's will (John 7:17)? God said that the heart of man is evil continually. (Genesis 6:5)
3. Explain John 7:27.
4. Explain why Jesus' earthly ministry was to the Jews, and not the gentiles (John 7:35, Matthew 15:26).
5. Explain the purpose of Jesus' ministry in John 7:37-39 in the light of Ezekiel 36:25-27.
6. Why did the Jews feel that no prophet could come from Galilee?

Chapter 8

1. Did the scribes and Pharisees that brought Jesus the woman taken in adultery meet the requirements of Moses' law as witnesses?
2. What do you believe Jesus was thinking as He stooped down and began writing on the ground?
3. Do you believe Jesus had any reason to think that the woman taken in adultery would not sin again?
4. The Pharisees accused Jesus of bearing record of Himself in John 8:13 because He had said before in John 5:31 that if He bore record of Himself, His witness would not be true. Comment on this.
5. Explain John 8:16 in the light of Moses' law that two witnesses are required (Deuteronomy 17:6).
6. Explain John 8:21.
7. Explain John 8:28.
8. Explain John 8:32-36 in the light of man's supposed "free will".
9. The Jews that Jesus was talking to in this chapter thought they were God's children in the same way that many contemporary churchgoers feel they are Christians. Is there a message here?

Chapter 9

1. Can a man's sin result in disease or infirmity? Can parent's sin result in the child's disease or infirmity?
2. Jesus often applied spittle when healing blindness. Explain why Jesus did what He did in the case of the blind man in John 9:1-7.
3. Why would Jesus seek out the man who was healed after he had been cast out of the temple by the Jews?
4. Explain John 9:39.
5. Explain John 9:41.

Chapter 10

1. Who are the porter, sheep and shepherd referred to in John 10:1-3?
2. What is the OT description of an hireling (see Zechariah 11:16-17).
3. How does John 10:13 relate to the practice of the organized church in moving preachers on the basis of promotion?
4. Explain John 10:16.
5. Explain John 10:18.
6. Does John 10:28-29 justify the belief known as "once saved, always saved"?
7. Explain John 10:34-35.

Chapter 11

1. What was Jesus' purpose in delaying His coming to Bethany to pray for Lazarus?
2. From Martha's conversation with Jesus as He was coming to Bethany do you believe that she expected Jesus to raise Lazarus from the dead?
3. What is Jesus referring to in John 11:42?
4. Why did the chief priests and Pharisees think that if they did not kill Jesus the Romans would take away their "place and nation"?
5. Explain John 11:52.
6. What does the scripture mean when it says that Jesus wept? For instance, did He cry out loud?

Chapter 12

1. Why do you think Mary used her hair to wipe Jesus' feet when He was at dinner in Simon the leper's house? (see Matt. 26:6-13)
2. What does this incident say about Judas' real reason for following Jesus?
3. Explain John 12:8.
4. What was the relationship between Mary's anointing of Jesus' feet and his burial?
5. What effect did Jesus' healing of Lazarus have on the Jews in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday?
6. How did Jesus' entry into Jerusalem relate to the prophecies in Zechariah and Daniel?
7. Explain John 12:26.
8. Explain John 12:31.
9. Explain Isaiah's prophecy about why the Jews could not believe into Jesus (see Isaiah Chapter 6).

Chapter 13

1. What did Jesus mean about being “clean every whit” in John 13:10?
2. What did Jesus mean in John 13:14?
3. How could the disciples fail to see what Judas was about to do after the supper?
4. Explain the term “glorified” in John 13:31-32.
5. What kind of love is Jesus talking about in John 13:34-35?

Chapter 14

1. Discuss the “abodes” that Jesus has gone to prepare for us in heaven in light of 2 Corinthians 5:1-3, 10.
2. What does John 14:6 say about religions other than Christianity?
3. Explain John 14:9.
4. Explain John 14:12.
5. Why do we feel that our prayers are sometimes not answered in view of John 14:13-14?
6. Explain the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit after Jesus has ascended into heaven.
7. Explain John 14:20.
8. Explain John 14:28.

Chapter 15

1. Explain John 15:1-2.
2. Why did the disciples need to be clean?
3. What kind of love is Jesus talking about in John 15:12?
4. Is this love for friends a decision on our part or is it a result of attraction for a kindred spirit?
5. Explain why many Christians do not feel that they were chosen by God, but that they chose Him (John 15:16).
6. What is the mission of the Holy Spirit within man?

Chapter 16

1. Why did Jesus have to be in heaven before the Holy Spirit could come to mankind?
2. Explain John 16:8.
3. Explain John 16:14-15.
4. What does Jesus mean in John 16:23, 26?
5. In what ways did Jesus overcome the world (John 16:33).

Chapter 17

1. What does the word “glorify” mean in John 17:1-5?
2. Explain John 17:2, 6.
3. Who is the “son of perdition”? Give scripture reference.
4. Give the significance of Jesus’ request in John 16:15.
5. Who is Jesus praying for in John Chapter 17?
6. Explain John 17:23.
7. Explain John 17:24.

Chapter 18

1. From the narrative in Matthew 26:36-46, explain the three prayers of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane in the light of John 18:11.
2. Why does the Bible record the name of the high priest’s servant in John 18:10?
3. What was the significance of Jesus asking for witnesses in John 18:21?
4. Explain Peter’s reaction (in the other three Gospels) to the cock crowing in John 18:27.
5. Explain Pilate’s feelings and actions in regard to Jesus’ trial.
6. What did the Jews accuse Jesus of doing that was worthy of death (refer to Matthew 26:60-65)?

Chapter 19

1. How is Pilate similar to politicians of today?
2. Explain the significance to us in our relationships of Jesus' answer to Pilate in John 19:11.
3. Why was Caiaphas' sin greater than Pilate's?
4. Explain Pilate's placing the sign on the cross and his response to the Jews when they objected.
5. Explain the significance of Jesus' vesture woven from the top without seam.
6. Why do you think Jesus gave charge of His mother to John since he had four brothers, and at least one sister?
7. In offering Jesus vinegar on a sponge were the soldiers being kind?
8. Why do you think Jesus died before the soldiers came to break His legs?
9. Explain the significance of the blood and water flowing from Jesus' side when the soldier pierced it.
10. Discuss the need for Jesus to be crucified on the Day of Preparation.

Chapter 20

1. Explain how Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Matthew 12:40.
2. Why do you think the "napkin" that was wrapped around Jesus' head was "wrapped together in a separate place"?
3. List the things that Jesus did after He was placed in the tomb until He appeared to Mary on Sunday morning.
4. Why did Jesus tell Mary not to touch Him for He had not yet ascended to His Father.
5. Why did Jesus fail to mention His feet in John 20:20?
6. What happened to the disciples when Jesus breathed on them?
7. Explain John 20:23.

Chapter 21

1. Why were the disciples at the Sea of Galilee fishing when He had asked them to tarry in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit?
2. What do you think the purpose of Jesus' visitation to the disciples was in this case?
3. Why would the Bible record the number of fish caught in the net?
4. Explain what was going on between Jesus and Peter in John 20:15-17.
5. Is it significant that Jesus used the word "agape" twice before finally reverting to the word "phileo"?
6. Why did Peter respond using only the word "phileo"?
7. What was Jesus referring to when He answered Peter in John 20:22?

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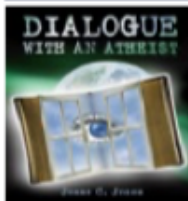
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