

# JOHN

**Author :**

John was one of the original disciples of Christ. See Matthew 4:21,22. He does not mention himself by name in this Gospel, but calls himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (see notes at 21:20,24).

**Date :**

Sometime in the first century A.D., probably toward the end of that century.

**Theme :**

John himself gives the reason for writing this Gospel. See 20:31. He presents those words and deeds of Christ which most clearly prove who He is – God incarnate and the one anointed by God the Father to be the giver of eternal life to all who believe in Him. He records some events in Christ's life, some miracles of His, and a number of His teachings not found in any of the other Gospels. Some key words are: Father, Son, believe, eternal life, love, light.

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**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** This same *One* was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through him, and without him not one thing was made that was made.

**4** In him was life, and that life was the light of men. **5** And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not comprehended it.

**6** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify about

the Light, that all *men* through him might believe. **8** He was not that Light, but *was sent* to testify about that Light.

**9** *That* was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him. **11** He came to his own, and his own did not receive him.

**12** But as many as received him, to those who believed in his name, to them he gave the right to

**1:1,2** "Beginning" – 17:5; Gen 1:1; 1 John 1:1,2. When God made the universe the "Word" was already in existence. The universe had a beginning but the Word was eternal, one with the Creator of all things. The verses which follow, especially v 14, make it clear that the Word is the Lord Jesus Christ. "Word" suggests communication, speech. The Lord Jesus is the full expression of the mind of God, the completion revelation of God's heart, God's nature (v 18; 10:30; 14:9; Heb 1:3).

"God" in these verses (except for the phrase "the word was God") evidently means God the Father (note at Matt 5:16).

"With" – to say the Word was with God means that He was not the same as the Father. Two distinct persons are in view here.

"Was God" means He fully shared the nature of God. See other references about this truth in notes at Phil 2:6 and Luke 2:11. Verse 1 does not say that "the Word was a god," or "the Word was in some measure divine." Any such translation is false to the language of the original. The Greek plainly states that the Word (the Lord Jesus) was God. Father and Son are distinct persons, but (together with the Holy Spirit) are perfectly united in one Godhead, sharing the same divine nature (see notes on the Trinity at 5:30; Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14).

**1:3** Genesis chapter 1; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2. The Father worked with and through the Son in bringing the universe into existence. The world is not the work of some inferior god, but the creation of the only Supreme Power there is.

**1:4** The "Word" was not a mere idea in the mind of God, not some principle of God's action. The Word was a living person through whom all life in the universe came into being. See 5:26; 6:57; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15,16. And it is through Him now that men can receive new spiritual, eternal life – vs 12,13; 3:16; 5:24; 17:2; 20:31. Life is a constant theme of John's gospel, used 36 times. Light is another word often found in John. Here "light" means truth, spiritual reality. The Lord Jesus is the one who brings God's light to men (8:12; 9:5; 12:36,46). He enables us to see the truth about God, about ourselves, about salvation, about all the important things relating to spiritual life.

**1:5** God's light continually shines. The reason why men do not understand it is given

in 3:19; Rom 1:18-21; 2 Cor 4:4.

**1:6** This John was not the author of this gospel, but John the Baptist. See notes at Matt 3:1; 11:1-15.

**1:7,8** Verses 15-36; 5:33.

**1:9** Verse 4 – the Lord Jesus was the "true" light in contrast to false lights – those who claimed to be the light or whom others regarded to be the light and who were not. Jesus is the true light because He enables men to see the truth about God, about salvation, etc. He sheds His light on all, to the whole world (8:12), though all will not receive it.

**1:10** "In the world" refers to His birth and life on earth. Men did not recognize their Creator. Sin had dulled their minds, killed their spiritual understanding, separated them from God and His ways. Compare Isa 1:2,3; Eph 4:18; Col 1:21.

**1:11** His "own" means Israel, the Jewish people. Not only did the world fail to recognize Him, His own nation, for the most part, refused to acknowledge Him (5:18,40; 7:47; 8:59; 19:6-15). But some of them did, as the next verse makes clear.

**1:12** Here is one of the great promises of the whole Bible. It includes certain very important truths. Men are not the children of God by nature – they must "become" His children. Compare 3:6; 8:44; Eph 2:1,2; etc. By nature they are created beings who, by their own choice, are in rebellion against their Creator and separated from God (Jer 17:9; Gen 8:21; Isa 24:5; 59:1,2; Rom 3:9-19). They can become God's children only by receiving the Lord Jesus who is the Word and who is the Light God has sent to men, the Lord through whom the worlds were made (which is the emphasis in the preceding verses), and the Saviour He has appointed (Matt 1:21; Acts 4:12). Receiving Him means believing Him.

"Believe" is one of the most important words of this Gospel (as it is of the whole Bible). In its various tenses it is used nearly 100 times, more than in any other book of the Bible. We receive Him by faith and become God's children by faith (3:15,16,36; 5:24; 6:47; Acts 16:31; Rom 10:9; Gal 3:26). Believing in His name is believing in Him – in what He is and who He is, and in what He has done, as revealed in the Bible.

"He gave the right" – salvation from beginning to end is God's gift. See 4:10; Rom 3:24; 4:4,5; 6:23; Eph 2:8.

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

14 And the Word became flesh, and lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 John testified about him, and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is superior to me, for he was before me.'"

**1:13** "Born" – this means receiving a new spiritual life from God. It does not refer to their birth into the world in the past, or to another physical birth in the future. If we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, here and now we experience this new spiritual birth and become God's children. See John 3:3; 5:21,24; Eph 2:1-5; Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23; 2:2; 1 John 3:9.

This does not come because of natural descent. No one is a child of God because his parents or ancestors were children of God (3:6). Each individual must personally receive Christ as Lord and Saviour and receive new life from God (compare Matt 3:9). Spiritual life cannot be passed on by physical means. And no person's will can in any way make another a child of God. Only God can do that and He does it only as men receive the Lord Jesus (v 12). God alone can produce spiritual children, and the whole of mankind is divided into two groups – those who are born of God and those who are not.

**1:14** "Word" – v 1. "Flesh" – God became a man and had flesh and blood, real human nature. Coming into the world He took the name Jesus. See Matt 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-35; Gal 4:4; Heb 2:14,17. The two natures of Christ are perfectly united in one person. The person of Christ (one person, two natures, the God-man) is a great mystery revealed by God, and so one we should receive by faith even though we cannot understand much about it.

"Lived" – or "tabernacled", as it could be translated.

"Glory" – this probably refers to both the transfiguration (2 Peter 1:16,17; Matt 17:1,2), and His life and ministry which they saw for three years and which was full of grace and truth and glorious activity from beginning to end (compare 2:11).

"Grace" – note at Rom 1:7. This is one of the great words of the New Testament. In it the grace of God is referred to more than 100 times. Some important references: v 17; Acts 15:11; 18:27; 20:24; Rom 1:7; 3:24; 5:2,20,21; 6:1,14; 2 Cor 8:9; Gal 1:6; Eph 1:6; 2:5-10; 2 Thess 2:16; Titus 2:11; 3:7; Heb 2:9; 4:16; Jam 4:6; 2 Pet 3:18. Grace is the kindness of God in action. Grace is God giving salvation freely to undeserving sinners. He gives all they need to be saved and live for Him in this world and the next. Grace was God giving His Son to die for us and His Spirit to live in us. God's grace is revealed very clearly and wonderfully in Christ. See 2 Cor 8:9.

16 And from his fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

18 No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has revealed *him*.

19 And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to

"Truth" – the revelation of truth is at the very heart of Christ's incarnation. John's Gospel alone uses the word 25 times (see 4:24; 8:31,32; 14:6,17; 16:13; 18:37). In the Old Testament also God is the "God of Truth" – Ps 31:5. Jesus is His incarnation.

"Only begotten" – in Greek this expression does not mean that Christ had a beginning. It is an emphatic way of saying that Christ was unique. He was one of a kind. It could be translated "one and only." God had only one Son who shared His nature and essence as God.

In this Gospel God is referred to as "Father" 122 times, much more often than in the other Gospels. Note on God the Father at Matt 5:16.

**1:15** Verses 6, 30. John was born before Jesus and his ministry came before that of Jesus. John is here speaking of the existence of Jesus before He came to earth.

**1:16** The Greek of this verse indicates grace continually flowing, one act of grace following another like the waves of the sea. And the one and only channel of this grace of God is the Lord Jesus.

**1:17** Law refers to the old covenant given at Sinai through Moses. It is the foundation of nearly all of the Old Testament. See notes at Exodus chapter 19. John does not mean there was no revelation of God's grace and truth in the writings of Moses. He means that in Moses' writings there is an emphasis on law, and in Christ we have the embodiment of grace and truth, the full blaze of spiritual light, the perfect display of grace. He is contrasting two ways – the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ. The law could not save men and it did not reveal all the truth men needed.

**1:18** Individuals sometimes saw a manifestation of God's glory, or His appearance in human form (Ex 24:9-11; 33:22,23; Isa 6:1). But no one ever saw God as He is in spirit, in His overwhelmingly glorious and holy essence (1 Tim 6:16).

"In the bosom of the Father" – this indicates the closeness, the love existing between the Father and the Son. Observe too that they are two distinct persons. Men cannot see God, but in the life and acts and words of the Lord Jesus we have a complete revelation of God's character. One of the great purposes He had in coming to earth was to reveal just what God the Father is like (compare 8:19; 10:30; 14:9; 17:6).

**1:19** John was becoming very famous and the religious leaders of Israel wanted to know

ask him, "Who are you?"

20 And he declared, and did not refuse to say, but declared, "I am not the Christ."

21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you that prophet?" And he answered, "No."

22 Then they said to him, "Who are you? So that we can give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

23 He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way for the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah said."

24 And they who were sent were of the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, saying, "Why do you baptize then, if you are not the Christ, or Elijah, or that prophet?"

26 John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but one is standing among you whom you do not know. 27 He it is, who coming after me, is superior to me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to loosen."

28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward

him, and said, "See the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. 30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who is superior to me; for he was before me.' 31 And I did not know him, but I have come baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel."

32 And John testified, saying, "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and remain on him. 33 And I did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I saw, and testify that this is the Son of God."

35 Again the next day after this John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and looking at Jesus as he walked by, he said, "See the Lamb of God!"

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" They said to him, "Rabbi (which means, being translated, Teacher), where do you live?"

39 He said to them, "Come and see." They went

what was happening. Note on priests at Ex 28:1.

"Levites" – Num 1:47-50.

**1:20** Note on "Christ" at Matt 1:1. John knew he was not that person and he did not try to claim such an honor for himself (unlike some today who try to make out they are great ones and accept honor as so-called godmen and whatnot).

**1:21** The Jews believed that Elijah would come again before Christ appeared (Mal 4:5). See notes at Matt 11:14; 17:10-12.

"The prophet" – the Jews based this question on Deut 18:15-19.

**1:23** Isa 40:3; Matt 3:3. John's aim was not to call attention to himself or make any claims of greatness. He was willing to be a mere voice which prepared the way for the Lord Jesus. He was glad to be nothing if Jesus could be everything to men (v 27; 3:30). In this he was an example to us all. It is humility God wants to see in us and not a desire to be famous or great or a craving to receive honor from fellow men.

**1:24** Note on Pharisees at Matt 3:7.

**1:25** Note on baptism at Matt 3:6.

**1:26** He meant the Lord Jesus. As yet no one had recognized Him as the Messiah, the Son of God. Compare vs 10,11.

**1:27** See Matt 3:11.

**1:29** The word "lamb" brings to mind the sacrifices described in the Old Testament. See Lev 1:2,10-14; 3:6-8; 14:12,21,24; Ex 12:3-13; Gen 22:7-14. John meant that God the Father would make the Lord Jesus a sacrifice to take away sin. Compare Rom 3:25; 1 Cor.5:7; Eph 5:2; Heb 9:26; 10:12; 1 Peter 1:19. This sacrifice would not be merely for individuals in Israel or for the

whole nation, as some of the sacrifices of the Old Testament were. It would be for the whole of mankind. The Lord Jesus took away the sin of man, all the burden of debt that man owed God. This does not mean that all men are saved. It means that the way of salvation and perfect forgiveness has been opened to all men.

**1:30** Verse 15.

**1:31** John did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah until God revealed it to him. But he knew what his work was – v 23.

**1:32** Matt 3:16. Notes on God's Spirit at 14:16,17.

**1:33** The one who sent John was God.

"Baptizes with the Holy Spirit" – Matt 3:11; Acts 1:5. This is an immensely important part of the activity of the Lord Jesus.

**1:34** Note on Son of God at 3:16; 5:18-23; Matt 3:16,17; 11:27.

**1:35-37** John did not want to make disciples for himself. He wanted men to be Jesus' disciples. See 3:26-30. In this too he is an example for us to follow. The word translated "disciples" means "learners." See note at Matt 10:1.

**1:38** The Lord Jesus does not want anyone to follow Him without good reason. Idle curiosity is not enough to make a disciple. Compare Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-27.

"Rabbi" – the usual term the disciples used of a guru. It means "my teacher." These two men indicated by their words that they wanted to be with Him and learn of Him – a desire all men should have but which comparatively few actually do have.

**1:39** This gracious invitation to those two men is now given to everyone in different words (7:37; Matt 11:28; Rev 22:17). By

and saw where he lived, and stayed with him that day, for it was about four in the afternoon.

40 One of the two who heard John  *speak*, and followed  *Jesus*, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah (which means, being translated, the Christ)."

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus saw him, he said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You will be called Cephas (which by translation means, A stone)."

43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the town of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found the one about whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

46 And Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said about him, "See an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

48 Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

49 Nathanael answered and said to him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel."

50 Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these."

51 And he said to him, "Truly, truly I say to you, hereafter you will see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man."

**2** And  *on* the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there, **2** and both Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding.

**3** And when the wine was gone, the mother of

accepting His invitation we will see that His eternal home is by the side of the Father (v 18), and we shall live there with Him forever.

**1:40** Matt 16:17,18.

**1:41** The way the truth still spreads on earth is by one telling it to another from person to person. Compare v 45; 4:28-30; 15:27. Note on "Messiah" at Matt 1:1.

**1:42** "Cephas" is a word in the Aramaic language (a sister language to Hebrew, and spoken by the Jews in Israel in those days). Peter (Petros) means the same in Greek.

**1:43** Compare Matt 4:19-22; 9:9.

**1:44** Bethsaida was a town north of the Sea of Galilee.

**1:45** This showed some good knowledge of the Old Testament. Compare Luke 24:27, 44. He calls Joseph the father of Jesus. God was His real Father (5:17,18; Luke 1:35); Joseph was His legal father while He was on earth.

**1:46** Nathaniel's question reveals that the town of Nazareth was a place of no reputation, and completely insignificant.

"See" - a good word to all who are doubtful about Christ. Let them come, let them taste and they will understand His greatness and goodness (Ps 34:8).

**1:47** An Israelite indeed was one who was what a man of Israel should be in heart and life - without insincerity and hypocrisy. Compare Rom 2:28,29; Matt 3:9,10.

**1:48,49** Apparently the fig tree was far enough away that Jesus could not have seen Nathaniel or heard his words except by supernatural means. Nathaniel immediately understood this and called Jesus God's Son.

"King of Israel" - notes at Matt 1:1; Ps 2:6; Isa 9:6,7.

**1:50** Observe that the Lord Jesus accepts these words of Nathaniel as true and says

that He will give much greater evidence of their truth. Compare 20:28,29.

**1:51** Jesus used this expression "truly, truly" 25 times in John's Gospel. In Greek the words are "amen, amen." Amen is a Hebrew word sometimes used by the writers of the New Testament. It comes from a verb meaning to sustain, to support, to be firm, stable, to be faithful, trustworthy, true, sure, certain, to be something one can lean on. Amen if used as an adjective means "firm, faithful." As an adverb it means truly. Doubled is emphatic - indicating something absolutely true, beyond doubting. Only in John's Gospel is the word found doubled. It is a very solemn and emphatic way of speaking. It seems Jesus used it when He uttered truth that might seem to people strange and difficult to believe.

Here Jesus is referring to Jacob's dream recorded in Gen 29:12. In the dream there was a ladder between heaven and earth. Jesus is saying He Himself is that ladder. He is the way God's communication and God's blessings come down to men, the way men can rise to God's presence. Nathaniel (and all of Christ's disciples) would see this in due course. Note on angels at Gen 16:7. Note on Son of man at Matt 8:20.

**2:1** Cana was a small town about 15 kilometers north of Nazareth. It seems from what follows that Mary the mother of Jesus was helping the host at the feast.

**2:2** The Lord Jesus approved the institution of marriage and honored it with its presence (compare Matt 19:4-6; Heb 13:4).

**2:3** In the midst of a formal and joyous occasion, this would have been very humiliating to the host. Mary expresses her concern and implies that Jesus might do something about it. Up to this event Jesus had performed no miracles, at least in

Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."

4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what have I to do with you? My time has not yet come."

5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

6 And six stone waterpots were placed there, according to the custom of Jewish purification, containing eighty or a hundred and twenty liters each.

7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he said to them, "Now draw *some* out, and take *it* to the master of the feast." And they took *it*.

9 And when the master of the feast tasted the water that had been made wine, and not knowing where it came from (but the servants who drew the water knew) the master of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 and said to him, "Everyone at first sets out the good wine, and the inferior *wine* after men are intoxicated. *But* you have kept the good

public (v 11). But Mary knew He was no ordinary person (Luke 1:35).

**2:4** "Woman, what have I to do with you?" – using the word "woman" in this way was unusual, but not in any way disrespectful. Compare 19:26 (it is interesting that in the Gospels Jesus never once called Mary His mother). Here the meaning of Jesus' remark seems to be this: The Lord Jesus was beginning His ministry as the Son of God and as the Messiah of Israel. The old relationship He had with Mary in their Nazareth home was to be no longer in force, so He does not use the word "mother" when addressing her. She could have no influence on His decisions, and must not attempt to direct His activities in any way; He would get His directions from God the Father alone (compare Matt 12:46-50; John 4:34; 5:36; 8:28,29; 17:4).

As the servant of God He was behaving as He later called on His disciples to behave – Luke 14:25,26; Matt 10:37-39. For Christ the only important thing in life was putting God the Father first in everything, was knowing and lovingly doing the will of God, at whatever cost to Himself. And He would not permit any human ties, any personal aims or interests to influence Him in the slightest. He is our example.

**2:5** Jesus' manner of speaking evidently indicated to Mary that He was going to do something. Her word to the servants was appropriate to them then and, in a higher, fuller sense, to all men always. We can never go wrong by doing what the Lord Jesus tells us. We will certainly go wrong if we do not.

**2:6** Mark 7:1-5.

**2:9** There is no description of the miracle itself. All we are told is that water went into the jars and wine came out. The wording in no way suggests that it differed from the wine drunk before, except that it was better. Wine is fermented grape juice. The Greek word for wine ("oinos") is used 33 times in the New Testament, including here, and is seen to be intoxicating when drunk to excess. This is clear from v 10, Eph 5:18, and Matt 9:17 (wineskins would not burst if there were no continuing fermentation).

Is it possible that what Jesus made was unfermented grape juice which miraculously tasted like real wine and completely deceived the master of the feast? There is no hint whatever in the Bible itself that this

is what happened. In fact John 4:46 clearly states that Jesus "made the water into wine (oinos)." In any case, can we think that Jesus who is the Truth (John 14:6) and who hates all forms of lying and deception, would use deception in this the first of his miracles?

In those days the drinking of wine at meals was a common practice, and it was not regarded as harmful. Usually it was mixed with water – one part wine to three parts water. Some commentators have suggested that wine used in this way acted as a water purifier in that time when there were no filters, chlorination of water, etc. Of course, drinking wine in excess (or any other alcoholic drink) is everywhere condemned in the Bible. See notes at Gen 9:21; Prov 23:29-35; Eph 5:18; 1 Tim 3:8; Titus 2:3.

The word "wine" is sometimes used in the Bible as a symbol of something good (Prov 9:1,2,5; Isa 55:1; Matt 26:37-39). In Matt 9:17 the Lord Jesus used "wine" as a symbol of the gospel. His gospel was new "wine" in contrast to the old covenant of the law. Here He makes wine from water that came out of jars the Jews used for washings related to their religion. This may be a little picture of what Jesus came to do: He came to establish His Kingdom of grace and joy which would replace the old covenant.

As for the drinking of wine now (or any kind of alcoholic beverage) Christians should follow certain principles clearly laid down for us in the New Testament. We should all study and practice Romans 14:1-4,10,13, 19-23; 15:1-3; 1 Cor 8:9; 9:19-23; 10:23, 24. In these days some Christians may be stumbled if they see or hear of other Christians drinking even a little wine. Therefore it is better to abstain completely than to indulge oneself and be a cause of stumbling to any of God's people. Loving one's brothers and sisters in Christ and trying to encourage their faith is the important thing, not eating and drinking (Rom 14:17). And giving our money to help those in need, or for the progress of the Gospel, is far better than using it for self-indulgence or self-pleasing.

**2:10** The man was making a statement about feasts in general. He is not saying that people at this wedding feast were getting drunk. The Lord Jesus would not have participated in a feast where the guests got stupefied by drink, nor would He have provided more wine for such.

wine until now.”

11 This, the first of *his miraculous* signs, Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, his mother, his brothers, and his disciples, but they did not stay there many days.

13 And the Jewish Passover was at hand. And Jesus went up to Jerusalem, 14 and found in the temple *compound* those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting *there*. 15 And when he had made a whip out of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, together with the sheep and the oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned the tables, 16 and said to those who sold doves, “Take these things out of here. Do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.”

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written,

Zeal for your house has consumed me.

18 Then the Jews responded and said to him,

“What *miraculous* sign do you show to us, since you are doing these things?”

19 Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

20 Then the Jews said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?”

21 But he spoke of the temple of his body. 22 So when he had risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this to them, and they believed the Scripture, and the words Jesus had spoken.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, on the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miraculous signs which he did. 24 But Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he knew all *men*, 25 and did not need anyone to testify about man, for he knew what was in man.

**3** There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus at night and said to him, “Rabbi, we

**2:11** “Signs” – in Greek there is only one word here, which can mean either signs or miracles or both – miracles that are signs. Eleven times in the Gospel of John the miracles of the Lord Jesus are called “signs.” This is because they are full of meaning; they point to spiritual truth. They are evidence that God was working through the Lord Jesus, that He was the Messiah of Israel, the Son of God, the King from heaven. They made known His power, grace and love. Their object was to lead people to faith in Christ. See v 23; 3:2; 20:30,31. They are parables, not in words, but in action. They were one way the Lord Jesus made God the Father known (1:17,18). See note on miracles at Matt 8:1.

“Glory” – 1:14. His disciples had already begun to believe. Because of this sign their faith increased and was confirmed.

**2:12** Capernaum was a town on the lake of Galilee. It became Christ’s headquarters in Galilee (Matt 9:1). Jesus’ brothers are mentioned in 7:3; Matt 12:46; 13:55.

**2:13** Notes on the Passover at Exodus chapter 12; Lev 23:4-8.

**2:14-16** Matthew, Mark and Luke all record an event similar to this which occurred shortly before Christ’s crucifixion. See notes at Matt 21:12,13. John refers to a time toward the beginning of Christ’s ministry. It appears that Jesus twice cleared the temple of things which didn’t belong there.

**2:16** They had perverted the proper use of the temple and thought only of the profits they could make through it. Compare 1 Tim 6:5.

**2:17** Ps 69:9.

**2:18** Verse 11.

**2:19-22** These words of Jesus were later

twisted and used against Him at His trial (Matt 26:61). Jesus here very early in His ministry speaks of His death and resurrection. His body was a temple – the dwelling place of God (compare 1 Cor 6:19,20). They would put it to death but He would raise it. The Jews misunderstood Him and mocked. Even the disciples did not grasp His meaning until after His resurrection. See Matt 16:21,22; Luke 18:31-34.

**2:22** See 14:26. As used in the New Testament the word “Scriptures” means the Old Testament. “Scripture” in the singular may refer to a single verse or promise such as Ps 16:10.

**2:23** Verse 12. Believing in His name means to believe in Him, to receive Him (1:12).

**2:24,25** Some put their trust in His name but He did not put His trust in them. Jesus was God in the flesh (1:14) and had God’s knowledge of human nature – 1 Kings 8:39; Jer 17:9,10. There are several examples in this Gospel of His supernatural knowledge (1:48,49; 4:17,18; 5:42; 6:26; etc). He knew that all men have a sinful nature and that even believers are sometimes fickle, superficial in their faith, and unreliable. Even His closest and best disciples were often spiritually dull, did not always follow His ways, and were no help in the time of His greatest crisis (Matt 26:36-56).

**3:1** See note on the Pharisees at Matt 3:7. Nicodemus was a good representative of the religion of the Jews with its law-keeping, ceremonies and religious activities. In the conversation which follows, the Lord Jesus shows that all of that put together was not enough to make anyone a child of God.

**3:2** We do not know why Nicodemus came at night, but we do know that Jesus received



know that you are a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miraculous signs that you are doing, unless God is with him."

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

4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time

into his mother's womb, and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be surprised that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but

him just as he was (compare John 6:37), and taught him some great truth - truth at the very heart of God's revelation in the New Testament. On "Rabbi" see 1:38. Evidently he regarded Jesus only as a teacher from God and not as the Messiah and Son of God. But he could see that the miracles Jesus did proved His connection with God. See notes at 2:11; Matt 8:1.

**3:3** The reply of Jesus is very abrupt. It is as though He was saying, "Do you really believe that? Then I will teach you what you need to know". Do we now say that Jesus is a teacher come from God? Then we too should let Him teach us, and examine very carefully every word of His in the Bible. On the phrase "truly, truly" see 1:51. On "born again" see note at 1:13.

"Again" - the Greek word means "anew" or "from above." The new birth does not mean reincarnation. The teaching that men are born again and again into this world in a physical way is contrary to Biblical teaching (notes at 9:1-3; Job 11:12; Luke 16:26). Even if repeated births were possible it could never result in new spiritual life. All men are sinners and repeated births would mean repeated lives of sin and greatly increased guilt.

By the new birth Jesus means a creative act of God here and now. This glorious work of God makes people new creations, spiritually alive and wonderfully changed in heart; it is like passing from death to life (5:24; 2 Cor 5:17,18; Eph 2:1-5). Without this no one can have any part in the kingdom of God. Jesus was saying to Nicodemus that without the new birth being born a Jew and keeping the law and observing ceremonies and being religious came to nothing. On the kingdom of God see note at Matt 4:17.

**3:4** Nicodemus either did not understand what Jesus was saying, or else he was questioning the possibility of it and was asking, "Can old men be radically changed?" There are still many religious leaders who are in the same condition as Nicodemus. The answer to such a question is that any person, young or old, can experience the new birth by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**3:5-8** In these verses the Lord Jesus reveals how the new birth is brought about. It is produced in the individual by the Spirit of God. The expression "born of the Spirit", is here thrice (vs 5, 6, 8). The words "born of water" in v 5 have been interpreted in several different ways.

Some say "water" here stands for

purification as it often does in the Old Testament. See Ex 30:17-21; Num 19:9; 31:23; Ps 51:7-10; Isa 44:3; Jer 4:14; Ezek 37:25. Compare Ezek 36:25,26 with the words "born of water and the Spirit." Observe in Ezekiel that the "sprinkling of water" is something God does, not man. So it refers to the cleansing of the heart from sin, not to water baptism. Compare Titus 3:5 - there the new birth itself is called a "washing." It cleanses the heart as water cleanses the body. Water baptism is not there in the picture at all. Others say that "born of water" means born of the Word of God. They take water here to be a symbol of God's Word. As a basis for this they point to such verses as 15:3; Eph 5:26; Jam 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23.

Others say that "water" here is a symbol of God's Spirit, as in 7:37-39. They think that "born of water and the Spirit" is two ways of saying the same thing and saying it very emphatically.

Others think "water" here indicates physical birth into the world. As though Jesus was saying "Man's first birth was not enough; birth by God's Spirit is also necessary for entrance into God's Kingdom."

Others say that "water" here refers to the repentance and confession which are symbolized by water baptism (see notes at Matt 3:6).

Still others say "water" here means water baptism and insist that this is necessary for the new birth, that God's Spirit works with this ceremony to produce new life in people.

The author of these notes thinks there is something to be said for any of the above interpretations except the last one. Certainly the Lord Jesus never taught anywhere else that baptism is necessary for the new birth. The new birth occurs when individuals receive the Lord Jesus by faith (1:12,13), not when they participate in the ceremony of baptism. Baptism should follow the new birth; it does not produce it. Only God can perform the miracle of the new birth and He does so as people repent and trust in the Lord Jesus. And this is what is absolutely necessary for salvation and entrance into God's Kingdom.

**3:6** "Flesh" here means what man is by nature (see notes at Rom 7:5,18). Man can produce children like himself but can never produce new spiritual life (1:13). All his attempts to do so will come to nothing. Only God's Spirit can produce spiritual life (notice that the word "water" is now dropped).

**3:8** "Wind blows" - or "Spirit breathes." The work of God's Spirit and the inner life of those

cannot tell where it comes from and where it is going. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

9 Nicodemus answered and said to him, “How can these things be?”

10 Jesus answered and said to him, “You are a teacher of Israel, and do you not know these things?”

11 Truly, truly I say to you, we speak what we know, and testify to what we have seen. And you do not receive our testimony. 12 I have told you earthly things, and if you do not believe *them*, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 And

born by the Spirit are both mysterious. They are like the wind which is unseen and unpredictable in its movements, and which is known to ordinary men only by its effects.

**3:9** Nicodemus is still puzzled. We should be glad for his question because in answering it the Lord Jesus gave him some very beautiful and important truth.

**3:10** As a teacher in Israel, familiar with the Old Testament, he should not have been so puzzled. He should have known the sinfulness of men and the need for a radical change in heart and life taught in many places there (for example, Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; Jer 13:23; 17:9). And he surely knew such verses as Jer 31:31-33 and Ezek 11:19; 18:31; 36:26. Today there are still many who have not learned the most vital truth themselves but who still try to teach others. Gross spiritual ignorance may be in the most educated and famous of men.

**3:11** When the Lord Jesus taught, He was not merely expressing opinions on religious subjects. He knew exactly what He was talking about, and spoke with divine authority (7:16,17; 8:38; 12:49,50; Matt 7:28,29). If we refuse to listen to Him the great loss will be ours.

**3:12** He had spoken to Nicodemus of water and wind and the new birth which takes place on earth and in men of the earth. Heavenly things are things more directly related to heaven. These He speaks of in the verses which follow – His own eternal dwelling place in heaven (v 13), His coming down to take away man’s sin by the sacrifice of Himself (v 14), eternal life (v 15), and the love of the God of heaven and what it caused Him to do (v 16).

**3:13** In this verse He reveals how He can speak with such authority, and how He could speak of heavenly things. He is the only person born into the world who ever lived in the immediate presence of God in God’s own home, in the highest heaven. And He came down from there with God’s revelation for men. Compare v 31; 1:1,14; 6:38; 8:23.

“The Son of man who is in heaven” – compare 1:18. He came down from heaven and was a man among men. But at the same time He was in heaven. This could be true only of someone who is God, for only God can be in more than one place at the same time. Note on Son of man at Matt 8:20.

**3:14,15** See notes at Num 21:4-9. Moses

no man has gone up to heaven except he who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of man who is in heaven.

14 “And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, 15 so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 “For God did not send his Son into the world

lifted up the serpent, and people who were dying physically lived. For people dead in sin (Eph 2:1) to live spiritually it was necessary that Jesus be lifted up. This lifting up was on the cross (compare 12:32,33). In these verses the Lord Jesus links His sacrifice for the sins of men with the new birth. People can be born again and receive eternal life only because Christ was the Lamb of God bearing away the sins of the world (1:29). Sin destroys people and condemns them to eternal punishment. But when anyone repents and believes in Christ and His sacrifice for them, God’s Spirit creates new life in them (v 5). And this holy spiritual life goes on forever.

**3:16** Here in one verse is the heart of John’s Gospel, indeed, the heart of the Bible. God had pity and compassion for men lost and perishing in their sins. He does not love men because they are good or worthy of His love (if they were good and worthy they would not be perishing). He loves because it is His nature to love (see Ex 34:6,7; 1 John 4:8). And His love was not merely in words but in deeds. He proved His love once and forever by giving His only Son (Rom 5:8; Titus 3:3-5; 1 John 3:16; 4:9,10). And God’s love was not for one nation only (as many Jews thought), but for the whole of mankind (2 Cor 5:19; 1 John 2:2; 1 Tim 2:3,4).

“His only begotten Son” – on “only begotten” see the note at 1:18. Christ is absolutely unique, fully sharing the very nature of God (1:18; Matt 3:17; Phil 2:6). God the Father did not give one Son among many to die for the world. He gave the only Son He had. Here was a gift indescribable in its greatness and value (2 Cor 9:15).

God’s purpose in sending the Lord Jesus is here clearly revealed. Men were perishing in sin, and He wanted them to have eternal life. This life speaks of a quality of life and not just one that goes on forever. Eternal life is holy, spiritual life in fellowship with God, untouched by sin and death. The Lord Jesus here states again very plainly that there is only one way to obtain this life. It is by believing in Him (see also v 36; 1:12; 5:24; 6:47; 8:24). Faith in Christ makes all the difference between perishing forever in hell, or living eternally with God.

**3:17** See 12:47. God is the just Judge of the universe. The time will come when every person must stand before Him for judgment (Gen 18:25; Deut 32:36; 1 Sam

to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He who believes in him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation: Light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come to the light, so that his deeds will not be exposed. 21 But he who practices truth comes to the light so that it may be revealed that his deeds have been done through God."

22 After these things Jesus and his disciples came to the land of Judea, and there he spent time

2:10; Ps 7:8; 9:8; 82:8; 96:13; Acts 17:30,31; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11-13). But He sent Christ into the world for another purpose altogether – that is, to save men from just condemnation for their sins. Christ accomplished God's purpose by bearing their sins and condemnation Himself (1:29; 3:15; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24).

Forty (40!) times in John's Gospel Jesus indicated that God had sent Him.

**3:18** Rom 8:1. Believers are fully forgiven, their sins are taken away in the sacrificial death of Christ, and they are counted as innocent and righteous (Rom 3:24,25; 5:1; Eph 1:7; Col 2:13; 1 John 2:12). So there is no condemnation for them. The case of unbelievers is entirely different. They are rejecting God's one and only remedy for their sins. They are even adding to their sins by refusing God's greatest gift, and calling God a liar by their unbelief (1 John 5:10). If such people do not repent and believe the Gospel, there can be nothing but condemnation for them. Observe once again the importance given to faith in the teaching of the Bible.

**3:19,20** The world as a whole already stands guilty and condemned before God (compare Rom 1:18-20; 3:9,19). Unbelievers do not have to wait until God's great judgment day for God's general verdict on their behavior. It is given in these two verses. They show by their actions what kind of people they are and how worthy they are of condemnation and punishment. In the person of Christ light has come into the world (compare 1:4-9; 8:12). He brought wonderful revelations of truth about God and men and salvation. But men in general did not love Him or the truth He brought. They loved something else – darkness.

Darkness signifies concealment, deception, ignorance, untruth, evil. Those who love such darkness will not love light. Light exposes them for what they are – sinners worthy of hell who can be saved only by Christ. And light makes it impossible for them to indulge in all the evil they desire to do. So they hate the light – that is, they hate Christ and His truth (this is no exaggeration, but the solemn truth which

with them, and baptized. 23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And *people* came and were baptized. 24 For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

25 Then an argument began between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. 26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you beyond the Jordan, about whom you testified, the same man is baptizing, and everyone is coming to him."

27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it is given to him from heaven. 28 You yourselves can testify for me that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I was sent before him.

Jesus later repeated – 7:7; 15:18,23-25).

We should understand from this that the unbelief of men is not because they have valid reasons for unbelief, or because they are intellectually unable to believe, but because of the sin and darkness in them. The fault is not with their minds, but with their hearts and wills. Belief in Christ is a moral choice for goodness, holiness and truth, and most men are not willing to make this choice. They prefer sin to holiness, darkness to light, and self rather than Christ.

**3:21** But there are some who want the truth and try to practice the truth. They have responded to God's Word and God has been at work in their hearts. They do not fear the light but come to it. They are those who believe the gospel and receive Christ. We see examples of such in the disciples and others in the four Gospels. And there are many such people today throughout the world.

**3:22** See 4:1,2.

**3:23** The exact location of Salim is unknown. The reason given for John's baptizing there is another indication that John baptized by immersion (Matt 3:6).

**3:24** See Matt 14:1-12.

**3:25** Mark 7:1-4.

**3:26** "Rabbi" – 1:38. Did they think John would be jealous or angry? If so, they were greatly mistaken. God sent John to bear witness to Christ (1:6-8). In the verses which follow we see him doing so in a marvelous manner. Far from being jealous of Christ he rejoiced in His success. He saw in it the fulfillment of his own ministry. His purpose was never to attract people to himself but to point them to the Lord Jesus. In this he is an example to us all.

**3:27** John well knew that God has for each of His people a position and a ministry, and that one should not strive for another's place or envy another, but be satisfied with God's appointment. Compare Num 11:26-29; Ps 75:6,7; Jer 45:5; Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:12-20.

**3:28,29** John knew his place and rejoiced in it. In 1:19-27 he had stated his ministry exactly. Here he describes Christ as a bridegroom and Christ's people as the bride. He

29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and listens to him, greatly rejoices because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine is complete. 30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease. 31 He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth is earthly, and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 And he testifies to what he has seen and heard, and no man receives his testimony. 33 He who has received his testimony has certified that God is true. 34 For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit *to him* by measure.

saw himself only as the friend of the bridegroom. At a wedding the bridegroom and the bride are the important persons, not the friend. John was familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures that speak of the nation of Israel being the bride of Jehovah God (Isa 54:5; 62:4,5; Jer 2:2; 3:20; Ezek 16:8; Hos 2:19,20). In the New Testament Christ calls Himself the "bridegroom" (Mark 2:19), and His Church is compared to a bride (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:32; Rev 19:7).

**3:30** Here is an example of that love for Christ and that humility and denial of self which are so precious to God (Matt 3:11; 10:37-39; 18:4; 20:25-28).

**3:31** The one from "above" is the Lord Jesus - v 13; 8:23; 1 Cor 15:47. The one from the "earth" is John himself. This is one difference between the Lord Jesus and every human being.

**3:32** Verses 11-13.

**3:33** If we believe Christ's words we are saying that God is truthful. If we do not believe, it is the same as calling God a liar (1 John 5:10).

**3:34** Compare 7:16,17; 8:38; 12:49,50. "Spirit" here means the Holy Spirit - 1:32; Matt 3:16; Isa 11:1,2; 61:1. Notes on God's Spirit at 14:16,17.

**3:35** The mutual love of God the Father and God the Son, of one divine person for the other, is seen in all the Gospels, but is revealed more fully in John than in the others (Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; John 5:20; 10:17; 14:31; 15:9,10; 17:23, 24,26). The Father gave all power and authority to the Son. See 5:22-27; 17:2,6; Matt 28:18; Acts 2:36; Heb 1:2; Ps 2:6-12.

**3:36** This naturally follows from the preceding verses. God has ordained that Christ should give eternal life to those who believe in Him. He is the only one who can give it and this is the only way it can be obtained. See note on eternal life at v 16.

"Refuses to believe" - this translation brings out the meaning of the Greek, which could also be translated "does not obey," or "is rebellious against." It is a different word than the word translated "believes" earlier in the verse. The translation of the KJV here "believeth not" is also possible, but does not bring out the idea of disobedience or rebelliousness that is in the Greek word.

35 "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand. 36 Whoever believes in the Son has everlasting life, and whoever refuses to believe the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

**4** Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus himself *was not the one who* baptized, but his disciples), 3 he left Judea and went back again to Galilee. 4 And he had to go through Samaria. 5 Then he came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the

The translation "refuses to believe" suggests this attitude of disobedience, of wilful, stubborn unbelief. Believing in Christ involves submitting to Him, refusing to believe is continuing in rebellion and disobedience. See notes at Rom 1:5; Acts 22:10; etc.

"Wrath" - to reject Christ, to be disobedient to Him, is to choose sin. And the anger of God will always remain on all sin and all sinners (Matt 3:7; Rom 1:18; Eph 5:6; 1 Thess 1:10; Rev 6:16,17; 19:15. See notes at Num 25:3; Deut 4:25; Ps 90:7-11). His anger comes because of His holy, righteous nature which hates all evil. Every person will have either eternal life, or else God's anger remaining on him. There is no middle ground.

**4:1** "Pharisees" - Matt 3:7. Here John uses the word "Lord" for Jesus. In the New Testament Jesus is called Lord some hundreds of times, and many of these times the word means the one and only Lord of men, the great Lord of the universe (1 Cor 8:6; Rev 19:16). See the note at Luke 2:11.

**4:2** In the Gospels, Pharisees are nearly always seen as hostile to the Lord Jesus, and they eventually plotted to kill Him (7:32; 11:57; 18:3). Jesus knew their hearts (2:24,25), and He knew that the time for His death for sinners in Jerusalem had not yet come. He had no fear of them, but to avoid useless confrontations with them He left Judea.

**4:4** Samaria was the area between Judea and Galilee. It was inhabited by a people despised by most Jews (v 9. Note on Samaritans at 2 Kings 17:24; Matt 10:5). The route through Samaria was the shortest one between Judea and Galilee, but many Jews took the long route around the area to avoid contact with Samaritans. John says Jesus "had to go through Samaria." He had to go that way only if He were in a great hurry to reach Galilee, or if He had a work He must accomplish there. In the rest of the chapter we see He did have a work to do there, and a wonderful work it was! We see also He was not in a hurry (v 40). Another possible reason why He went through Samaria was to show that He did not share the Jewish prejudice against its people.

**4:5** Gen 33:19; 48:22; Josh 24:32.

plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Therefore, tired from *his* journey, Jesus sat on the well. It was about noon.

7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water, *and* Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink" 8 (for his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food).

9 Then the woman of Samaria said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, are asking a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his children, and his livestock?"

13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever

drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I give him will never thirst, but the water that I give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up to everlasting life."

15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I will not thirst, nor come here to draw."

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here."

17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have rightly said, 'I have no husband,' 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. In that you spoke the truth."

19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshipped on this mountain. And you say that the place where men ought to worship is Jerusalem."

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor at Jerusalem. 22 You

**4:6** Jesus' tiredness here indicates His true human nature. As God He could not be tired (Isa 40:28). As a man a long journey on foot wearied Him as it would any man. On His two natures see 1:14; Heb 2:14-17. The sixth hour was noon.

**4:7** Again the Lord's human nature is indicated. Thirst is an experience of men, not of God.

**4:9** At first, to this woman, Jesus was simply a thirsty Jew. But as the story unfolds we see her developing understanding of who He is - someone who makes great promises (vs 10-15), then a prophet (v 19), and finally the Messiah (vs 25,26,29). Increasing understanding of who Christ is - this is a common experience of all believers (though, of course, not necessarily following the steps that woman took).

**4:10** Christ's purpose was to win this woman for God's kingdom. See how He captured her interest.

"Living water" means the new life He brings. It includes the new birth (3:5), eternal life (3:16), and God's Spirit to live in the hearts of believers (7:37-39). Observe that it is a gift (Rev 22:17), and can be had by asking the Lord Jesus for it. In fact only He can give it. In the Old Testament also water is used as a symbol of spiritual life - Isa 55:1; Jer 2:13; 17:13.

**4:11,12** Apparently, the woman completely misunderstood Jesus' words. This happened often then and happens often now. She took His words literally. The term "living water" in common usage meant "water that flowed," as in a river or brook. It seems she did not realize that Jesus was speaking of spiritual matters.

**4:13,14** Jesus now tried to show her that He is speaking of spiritual things, not material water. There is no literal water which can take

away thirst permanently or spring up to eternal life.

"Never thirst" - this does not mean that believers do not desire a fuller experience of God or no more long for truth or righteousness (see Ps 40:1,2; 119:131; Matt 5:6). It means that having experienced the new birth and life through God's Spirit they need not thirst for those things again. They will have in their inner being a fountain which can satisfy their deepest longings. The life Jesus gives is like flowing water, vigorously springing up in the believer's heart. It is abundant life (10:10). How does one drink this water? Coming in faith to Christ, receiving Him as Lord and Savior in our hearts is what this drinking means. See 7:37,38. See also Jer 2:13 and 17:13 where the Lord says that He Himself is the spring of living water.

**4:15** Did the woman understand that Jesus was speaking of spiritual matters? If so, she did not reveal it. But perhaps a longing for spiritual life was rising in her heart.

**4:16** This remark does not seem to have anything do with the previous conversation. But we can be sure it does. Jesus now leads her to see He is no ordinary man, and He brings to her remembrance her sinful life, which she must be willing to forsake if she would receive "living water."

**4:19** Note on prophet at Gen 20:7. She knew that sometimes God revealed to His prophets facts about others (see also Luke 7:39).

**4:20** She did not want to speak about the several men in her life. So she changed the subject.

"You say" - she meant the Jews in general.

**4:21-24** Her change of subject gave Jesus the opportunity to reveal to her some profound truth about worship: God may be

do not know what you worship. We know what we worship. For salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the time is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such *persons* to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."

25 The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming, who is called Christ. When he comes, he will tell us all things."

26 Jesus said to her, "I who am speaking to you am *he*."

27 And then his disciples came and were surprised that he was talking with the woman, but no one said, "What are you seeking?" or, "Why are you talking with her?"

28 The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, 29 "Come,

see a man who told me everything I ever did. Is not this the Christ?" 30 Then they went out of the city and came to him.

31 In the meantime his disciples urged him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about."

33 Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him *something* to eat?"

34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work. 35 Do you not say, 'There are still four months *before* the harvest comes?' I say to you, Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest. 36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 And in this that saying is true, 'One sows, and

worshiped anywhere (v 21), the place now has no significance (though once it did to some extent. See Deut 12:5; 2 Chron 6:6,7). God will be worshiped as the Father (vs 21,23; note at Matt 5:16). The Samaritans (and by implication other peoples and nations) did not really know what they were worshiping (v 22). Compare Acts 17:23; Rom 1:21-23. They were not worshiping in accordance with the revelation God had given of Himself, as believing Jews were.

"Salvation is from the Jews" – the Jewish nation was the channel God chose to bring His revelation and His salvation to the world. The Lord Jesus was born a Jew. The worship God desires has no essential link with material objects, temples, so-called "holy" places, etc (vs 23,24; Acts 17:24,25).

True worship is in spirit. It must come from within the heart of those born again by God's spirit (3:5. No one else will know what the true worship of God is). God is Spirit and material things can never truly represent Him. Only in spirit can the One Eternal Spirit be really worshiped (this is one good reason He gave the command in Ex 20:4 and other places).

This worship must be in truth. It must be in accordance with the truth God has revealed about Himself and it must be sincere, and real, without hypocrisy. God seeks such worshippers. This is because God is love (1 John 4:8). He loves people and seeks their love. He desires their highest good and this can only come when they become true worshippers of the true God. God sees enough empty formal worship in the world and He desires something much better. Compare Ps 50:8-15; Isa 1:11-17.

**4:25** "Messiah", "Christ" – Matt 1:1. The Samaritans (as the Jews) looked for the coming of the Messiah. It seems the woman is beginning to wonder if Jesus might be that Messiah. At least she is greatly impressed with His words (v 29).

**4:26** Jesus plainly states that He is the expected Messiah. See also 1:49,50; 9:37;

10:24,25; Matt 26:63,64.

**4:27** In those days usually a Jewish rabbi would not carry on a conversation with a woman or risk being seen alone with one. The Lord Jesus did not look down on women. He treated all human beings alike in their need, and did not worry about what others might say about Him. The disciples did not question Him. They were learning that He had good reasons for what He did.

**4:29** Verse 25.

**4:30** Her testimony stirred up great interest in the town. This is still a method God uses to bring people to Christ.

**4:32,33** Jesus meant spiritual food, but they took His words literally. Literal-minded people will have difficulty with many things Jesus said (for example see 6:52-58).

**4:34** Jesus found His highest satisfaction in doing God's work according to God's will (compare 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; 9:4; 14:31; 15:10; 17:4). There is more joy in obedience to God, heartily doing His work, and leading others to faith in Christ, than in feasting on all the good things of the world.

**4:35** In Israel there was a period of about four months between the end of the sowing season and the beginning of harvest. Jesus is saying that they need not wait so long. At that time and in that place a "harvest" was there for the reaping. He was referring to the readiness of some of the Samaritans (and others) to believe in Him when they heard the truth. In our times too there is always a harvest ready somewhere, always people prepared by God to receive the Lord Jesus. God's servants should seek for them with zeal and confidence in God. The 2000 years from Christ's day to ours has been a time of continual spiritual harvest on earth.

**4:36-38** The Lord here gives some general truths about God's service. The reapers (those who lead many people to Christ) will have wages (v 36). We are not told what they are, but since they begin immediately ("even now") they speak of the satisfaction and joy and deep bonds of love and

another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap what you did not work for. Other men laboured, and you have entered into their labours."

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in him because of the word of the woman, who testified, "He told me everything that I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they begged him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his own word, 42 and said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of your word, for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

43 Now after two days he left there, and went to Galilee. 44 For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country. 45 Then when he arrived in Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast. For they also went to the feast.

46 So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee, where he made the water into wine. And there was

fellowship which result from winning souls for Christ (see Phil 4:1). But their wages will appear in eternity as well (see Dan 12:3; 1 Thess 2:19,20; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 22:12).

The "fruit" (people who come to faith in Christ by the efforts of the reapers) is not merely for this little time on earth but forever (v 36). If there is to be a harvest it is necessary that someone first sow the good seed of the Word of God. It may be the same person who reaps, but often it is someone else (vs 37,38; 1 Cor 3:5-9). The sower should not be jealous of the reaper but both rejoice together (v 36). In heaven they will both forever share Christ's joy in the harvest. In the light of all this let us be wise (Prov 11:30), and labor earnestly while we have opportunity (9:4).

**4:39** See the results of one woman's testimony! Let us be always ready to speak for Christ and see what God will do. All of God's servants are to be witnesses (compare Acts 1:8)

**4:42** While the Jews as a whole refused to believe that Christ was the Saviour (1:11), these Samaritans whom the Jews despised came into the knowledge of the truth. Note on "Saviour" at Luke 1:47. Jesus is the Saviour of all who trust in Him, no matter their race or country (1 Tim 2:3-6; Rom 1:16,17; Acts 4:12; Mark 16:15,16).

**4:44** Matt 13:57; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24.

**4:45** They welcomed him because of the miracles He did, but they did not honor Him as the Messiah, the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

**4:46** See 2:1-11.

**4:47,48** Evidently this official thought of Jesus as a prophet, but did not believe in Him as the Son of God or as the Saviour of the world. The words of Jesus to him were a rebuke. Compare Matt 12:38,39; 16:4; 1

a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him, and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

48 Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you see miraculous signs and wonders, you will not believe."

49 The nobleman said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

50 Jesus said to him, "Go your way. Your son is living." And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was going down, his servants met him and told *him*, saying, "Your son is living."

52 Then he asked them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him." 53 So the father knew *that it was* at the same time when Jesus said to him, "Your son is living." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

54 This *is* the second *miraculous* sign *that* Jesus did after he had come from Judea to Galilee.

Cor 1:22. True faith trusts Christ's character and words without needing signs and miracles to support it. Compare v 41.

**4:49** The official did not defend himself, but simply appealed to Christ's compassion. Even when faith was weak such appeals never failed with the Lord Jesus during His ministry on earth. Can we think they will fail now?

**4:50** The official learned from Christ's rebuke in v 48, and was willing to believe Him without any sign.

**4:51,52** The word of Jesus was just as powerful as His presence. Compare Ps 107:20. The official at first thought Jesus had to go where the sick child was, but Jesus had no more difficulty healing at a distance than near at hand. Now He can heal from heaven as easily as if He were on earth in the flesh. If He does not always do so, it may be a lack of faith on the part of those who ask Him, or there may be wise purposes in each case which He does not choose to reveal.

**4:53** "Believed" probably means he believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Observe the progress of this man's faith. When he came to Jesus he had some faith in His ability to heal, based on Jesus' miracles. His faith rose higher and he was able to believe the word of Jesus without a sign. Then his faith was confirmed and increased and influenced his whole family. Christ healed the physical fever in the boy, and the spiritual fever of a weak faith in the official.

**4:54** "Sign" - notes at 2:11; Matt 8:1. Jesus was the incarnation of Jehovah God who heals diseases and preserves life (Ps 103:1-4; Luke 2:11), the creator of firm and living faith in the hearts of His people (Heb 12:2).

**5** After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep *Gate* there is a pool, which in the Hebrew tongue is called Bethesda. *It* has five porticos. 3 In these lay a great multitude of infirm people, of blind, lame, and paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool, and stirred the water. Then, after the stirring of the water, whoever first stepped in was healed of whatever disease he had.

5 And a certain man was there who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying *there*, and knew that he had now been a long time *in that condition*, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"

7 The helpless man answered him, "Sir, when the water is stirred I have no one to put me in the pool. While I am moving, someone else steps down before me."

8 Jesus said to him, "Get up. Pick up your cot and walk."

9 And immediately the man was healed, picked up his cot and walked. And that same day was the Sabbath.

10 Therefore the Jews said to the one who was cured, "It is the Sabbath. It is not lawful for you to carry a cot."

11 He answered them, "The same man who healed me said to me, 'Pick up your cot and walk.'"

12 Then they asked him, "Who is *the* man who said to you, 'Pick up your cot and walk?'"

13 And the healed man did not know who it was, for a crowd was in *that* place and Jesus had slipped away secretly. 14 Afterwards Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are healed. Do not sin anymore, or a worse thing may come on you."

15 The man left and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. 16 And so the Jews persecuted Jesus and tried to kill him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath.

17 But Jesus responded to them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

**5:1** "Feast" – Leviticus chapter 23.

**5:2** "Bethesda" – probably means "house of mercy."

**5:4** "For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred the water. Then, after the stirring of the water, whoever first stepped in was healed of whatever disease he had" – some manuscripts and some translations omit these words. However, it seems that these words are necessary to explain v 7, and the author of these notes does not think it is wise for translators to omit them. It is possible that by sending an angel to stir the water God reminded the people of Israel that healing came from heaven and that He was still the "Lord who heals" (Ex 15:26:26). For other instances of the Lord's use of water in healing see 9:7; 2 Kings 5:13,14.

**5:5** Judging from v 7 the man had some form of paralysis or lameness.

**5:6** The Lord Jesus often took the initiative when He was about to perform a miracle, but not always. Here it seems His purpose in asking this question was to awaken hope in this man. After 38 years and many disappointments his hope must have been dim.

In spiritual matters also Christ would ask us all the same question – "Do you really want to be healed from your sins? Do you have the desire to be saved?" It is those who hunger and thirst for God's salvation who will receive it. He causes us to desire what He wants to give us. See Matt 11:12 and note.

**5:7** Here is the picture of the helplessness of many who are poor, sick, and friendless. It also shows the selfishness of human nature. Each person was concerned with getting into the pool before anyone else could get there. The Lord Jesus, the God of the

Bible, is a friend to the friendless, a helper to the helpless (Ps 10:14; 54:4; 72:12,13; 113:5-7; Isa 40:29; 41:17). Many of His miracles were acts of mercy toward the poor and needy.

**5:8,9** Observe that the power to heal was in the word of Jesus. See Matt 8:8. A helpless man could not pick up his cot and walk. But when Jesus commanded him to do so He enabled him to do so. In the very act of obedience healing came. And obedience was attempted because of faith in Jesus' word. Compare Mark 3:5; Luke 17:14.

**5:10** The Jews had many such rules. See Matt 12:2; 15:2.

**5:13** The Lord Jesus had no desire for publicity or for arguments with those unbelieving Jews (4:3).

**5:14** The Lord Jesus followed up the work He began. He does the same in the matter of salvation (see Phil 1:6). He cared about the man's spiritual condition and looked for him (compare Luke 19:10). In the words He spoke to him there is the suggestion that the man's disability was a result of his sin, and that there was danger he would continue in his sin. It was far more important for him (and for anyone) to be saved from his sins than to be healed of his infirmity.

**5:15** This man behaved unwisely. Did he not know that telling this to the Jews could bring trouble to the Lord Jesus?

**5:16** Jesus was not breaking the Sabbath, only their man-invented rules for the Sabbath. See notes at Matt 12:1-3. They did not care how many remained ill and helpless or continued in sin just as long as others kept their rules. Their character is seen in Matthew chapter 23.

**5:17** God the Father is never idle, even on the Sabbath. And Jesus the Son of God was



18 Therefore the Jews tried even more to kill him, because not only had he broken the Sabbath, but also said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

19 In response Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing by himself, but *only* what he sees the Father doing. For whatever he does, the Son also does the same things. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he does. And he will show him greater works than these, that you may be amazed.

21 "For just as the Father raises the dead and

gives life *to them*, just so the Son gives life to whom he will. 22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, 23 *so* that all *men* should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him.

24 "Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in him who sent me, has everlasting life and will not come into condemnation, but has passed from death to life.

25 "Truly, truly I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of

the Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:8), and would not be bound by man's rules. He was saying God was His Father in a special sense that was not true of anyone else. Compare 10:30-33. They accused Him of blasphemy because they didn't believe He actually was the Son of God, and they knew that for ordinary men to claim to be God is the worst sort of blasphemy and worthy of death (see Matt 26:65).

**5:19-47** In this long passage the Lord Jesus sets forth His claim to be the Son of God (vs 19,20), speaks of some of the things He can and will do (vs 21-30), gives some of the evidence for His claim, and reveals why these Jews did not believe Him (vs 38-47). We have here very profound, very important truth.

**5:19** "Truly, truly I say" – see 1:51. Here Jesus teaches us that He is so united with the Father in nature and will and purpose that it is impossible that He should act independently. We can say, He can do nothing by Himself because He will not. It is unthinkable that he should. But He does all God the Father does. This means Jesus the Son also has all power, all wisdom, and the ability to be present and working everywhere at the same time. If He did not have this ability, He could not do all the Father does. And this shows that Jesus fully shares God's nature, that He is the incarnation of God (see references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11). Whatever is done in the universe the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit unitedly do it. Notes on Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14.

**5:20** See 3:35; 17:24. The mutual love of the Father and Son is seen often in the New Testament. It existed before the world was made and continues forever. The eyes of the Son are ever on the Father as He runs the universe and rules the world, and the Father hides nothing from Him. By "greater things" he meant greater than the miracles He had already performed.

**5:21** This may refer to the raising of individuals from the dead such as Lazarus (11:43,44) and others (Mark 5:35-43; Luke 7:11-15). But it is equally true that He is the Giver of eternal, spiritual life, raising people from their death in sin (v 24).

**5:22** The judgment of all men will be in the hands of the Lord Jesus, but this does not

mean that the Father will not participate in it (Acts 17:31). In everything they work together.

**5:23** See the Father's purpose in giving judgment into the hands of the Lord Jesus. Men must honor Jesus just as they would honor God the Father. Neither the Father nor the Son could ever desire this if the Son did not fully share the essence, the nature of God. Men should never give to any created being the honor that belongs to God alone. Observe what Jesus says here – if men are not honoring the Son of God they are not honoring God at all. Of course, they may say they are honoring Him and may even think they are.

**5:24** This is one of the greatest promises ever made to men. And it is preceded by words of solemn assurance – "Truly, truly I say to you." See notes on eternal life at 3:16,36. Observe that eternal life is the present immediate possession of the believer. 3:36 says this life comes to those who believe in the "Son." Here it says that it comes to those who believe in the Father who sent Him. Again we see the unity of Father and Son – to believe the one is to believe the other.

"Will not be condemned" – God condemns men because of their sins. The sins of believers are all forgiven. Christ has borne their condemnation, so they will not be condemned. See 3:18; Rom 4:8; 8:1. This surely indicates permanent safety. But it does not mean believers shall not face judgment about the deeds they have done after becoming believers. See 2 Cor 5:10. However, that judgment is concerned only with the giving or withholding of rewards (1 Cor 3:10-15), and not with deciding whether any of them must go to hell.

"From death to life" – because of their sins all men are in a state of spiritual death (Gen 2:17; Eph 2:1-3). When people believe in Christ, God makes them spiritually alive (1:12,13; Eph 2:5). They immediately pass from death to life. Notice the past tense of the verb. In this one verse we see that receiving eternal life, justification and the new birth, are all through faith alone – through faith in the Father who sent the Son to be man's Redeemer and Saviour.

**5:25** The "dead" here probably means the spiritually dead as in v 24. They hear Christ's

the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For just as the Father has life in himself, even so he has given to the Son to have life in himself, 27 and also has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man.

28 "Do not be surprised at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear his voice, 29 and will come out. Those who have done good *will come out* for the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, for the resurrection of condemnation.

voice speaking to their inmost souls. They hearken to that voice, believe and obey that voice (compare 10:3,4,16,27). Only such will live spiritually. Jesus used this title "Son of God" of Himself three times in John - here, in 10:36 and in 11:4.

**5:26** "Life in Himself" means that God is self-existent. He calls Himself "I am" (note at Ex 3:14,15). He is the living one from all eternity who gives life to all created beings. Men are a different matter. Their life comes from a source outside themselves. Jesus is not a mere man, possessing only a human nature. He is God's Son who has life in Himself just as God the Father has. And Jesus is the source of life to others (v 21). This is another way of saying He shares the nature of God.

**5:27** "Son of man" - Matt 8:20. Because Jesus humbled Himself and became a man and lived among men and thoroughly knows all men He is the best qualified to be the judge of men. And God has exalted Him to be this judge (compare Acts 17:31).

**5:28,29** Here the Lord Jesus declares that God will raise all men from the dead. Notice the word "graves" in v 28. He is not here speaking of the giving of spiritual life as in v 24. Raised from the dead here means that the spirits of those who have died will be reunited with their dead bodies and those bodies will rise. See also Dan 12:2; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor 15:20-22; Rev 20:4-6,11-15.

Jesus says there will be two kinds of resurrection for two very different kinds of people. We might think He would say the two kinds of people are those who believe in Him and those who do not. This is certainly true, but because He put it in another way here we can learn an important truth. That is, doing good is a mark of the believer, doing evil is a mark of the unbeliever. Believers have been born again (1:13) and made entirely different from what they were before, and from unbelievers in general (2 Cor 5:18). The evidence that this is so is their doing good (Matt 7:17,18; 25:31-46; Rom 2:6-11; James 2:14-26).

Unbelievers may sometimes do what they consider good works. But their motives are wrong even in that, and they are constantly guilty of doing the evil of rejecting God's Son, disobeying God's Word, and living

30 "I can do nothing by myself. As I hear, I judge. And my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of the Father who has sent me.

31 "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. 32 There is another who testifies about me. And I know that the testimony which he gives about me is true.

33 "You sent to John, and he testified to the truth. 34 But I do not receive testimony from man. I say these things that you might be saved. 35 He

according to their fallen sinful nature. They shall rise from the dead only to face condemnation and punishment. Believers will rise to enjoy eternal life.

Jesus does not say that the resurrection of both the good and evil will take place at the exact same time, only that the resurrection of both will certainly take place sometime in the future. Rev 20:4,5 indicates that there will be an interval between the two resurrections. 1 Thess 4:13-17 and 1 Cor 15:51-53 speak only of the resurrection of believers, probably because only that sort of resurrection takes place at the time Paul refers to there.

**5:30** Observe in vs 19-30 that God the Father sent the Son, He shows the Son what He does (v 20), and He gives authority to the Son (vs 22,27). The three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in the Godhead share the same nature and are equally God, but there is an order in their activities. In authority the Father is greater than the Son (10:29; 14:28); the Son and the Father sent the Holy Spirit (14:26; 15:26; 16:7), possibly indicating that in the Godhead they are in a higher position than He. But in nature and essence and mind and love and purpose the Three are absolutely one God. If the question arises how can these things be? We can only answer that they are revealed to be so in the Bible, and so we believe them even though we cannot fully understand them.

**5:31** In Jewish law a man's own testimony was not accepted in court. Others had to bear witness about him. Two or three witnesses were required either to condemn him or clear him (see 8:17; Deut 19:15). Jesus is saying that if there is no evidence for His claims except His own word the Jews should not believe Him. He then speaks of other witnesses for Him. He points this out for their sake, not for His (v 34). He well knew who and what He was.

There are four witnesses - John the Baptist (v 33), the works Jesus did (v 36; 8:18), God the Father (v 37), and the writings of the Old Testament (vs 39,46).

**5:32** He probably meant God the Father (v 37), though some think He meant John the Baptist (v 33).

**5:33** See 1:19-34.

**5:35** "Light" - compare Matt 5:14-16. John did just that.

was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

36 "But I have a greater testimony than John's. For the deeds which the Father has given me to finish, the very deeds that I am doing, testify about me that the Father has sent me.

37 "And the Father himself, who has sent me, has testified about me. You have not heard his voice at any time, or seen his form. 38 And you do not have his word dwelling in you. For you do not believe the one whom he has sent.

39 "You search the Scriptures, for by them you think you have eternal life. And these are they which testify about me, 40 and you are not willing to come to me that you might have life.

41 "I do not receive honour from men. 42 But I

know you, that you do not have God's love in you.

43 "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

44 "How can you believe, *you* who receive honour from one another, and do not seek the honour that *comes* from the only God?

45 "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is *someone* who accuses you, *the same* Moses in whom you trust. 46 For if you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote of me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

**6** After these things Jesus went over the lake of Galilee (which is *the lake* of Tiberias),

**5:36** Men are known by what they do (Matt 7:15-20). The works Jesus did testified to who and what He was (see 2:11; 3:2; 10:25,37,38; Matt 8:1; 11:4-6).

**5:37** See 8:18; 1 John 5:9. The Father bore witness to the Son through the prophecies of the Old Testament (see note in the Topical Concordance in the back of this Bible under the heading "Jesus Christ, O.T. prophecies concerning"). Also before Jesus' birth the Father bore witness through an angel (Matt 1:20-23; Luke 1:26-35), at His baptism and transfiguration by direct voice (Matt 3:17; 17:5), and all through His life by working with Him in His mighty works (14:10; Acts 10:38).

**5:38** They had God's word (the Old Testament) and they diligently studied it (v 39), so it was in their minds. But it was not in their hearts. It did not live in them and make them alive (compare Ps 119:11).

**5:39** "Scriptures" (or "Scripture") is a word often found in the New Testament (53 times). It means "writings" and usually signifies the books of the Old Testament (but see 2 Pet 3:16). The Old Testament is full of prophecies, pictures and types of the Lord Jesus. See v 46; Luke 24:27,45,46.

**5:40** They thought they had eternal life but they did not, and they would not come in faith to the only one who could give them spiritual life (v 21; 3:36). So many people today are like them.

**5:41** Unlike so many religious leaders (v 44), the honor and glory that men might give meant nothing to Him. He never tried to please men that they might praise Him. His whole aim is seen in 8:29. And He is our example in this as in all things.

**5:42** Jesus knew what was in men - 2:24,25. And He knew that if they had loved God they would have loved Christ (8:42). Their hatred of Him revealed their hatred of God (15:24). Though, if asked, would they not have said they loved God? And actually they might have thought they did. Jer 17:9 is always true.

**5:43** "In my Father's name" - this means that Jesus came on the authority of God

the Father and fully represented Him. To come in one's own name means to come on one's own authority and to represent one's self (though such people may say they represent God or Christ). Many there are who do so. See Matt 24:24. The chief of all such will be the antichrist (2 Thess 2:3,4).

**5:44** The character of those described here makes it impossible for them to believe in Christ. They themselves are the center of their existence, and their hope is that men will praise them, that they will be honored by fellow human beings in the field of religion or education or whatever their special interest is. God really does not have the slightest place in their hearts. See the opposite of this in Gal 1:10.

**5:45** Jesus did not come to "accuse" or judge (3:17). Moses was their accuser. He meant that the God-inspired writings of Moses (the first five books of the Bible) condemned them. This was because they did not really believe what he wrote (though they may have thought they did) and did not practice the truth he recorded.

**5:46** Compare 1:17; 7:19; Luke 24:27,45,46. Here is a very clear statement that Moses wrote down what we have in the books of Moses and that he wrote of Christ (v 39). See Ex 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Num 33:2; Deut 31:9.

**5:47** This is a question neither they nor anyone else could ever answer. Let us learn from the above verses that there is great and wonderful evidence for the claims of Christ to be God's Son. Indeed there is no evidence like it for anyone else in the whole history of mankind. Let us all go where the evidence leads, and trust the Lord Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. If we do not the great loss will be ours.

**6:1-15** This is the only miracle the Lord Jesus did which is recorded in all four of the Gospels (not counting His resurrection from the dead). This indicates its great significance and importance. See notes at Matt 14:13-21. But John alone speaks of the nearness of the Passover (v 4), and calls this miracle a "sign" (v 14). Christ's words

2 And a great crowd followed him, because they saw the miraculous signs which he performed on the sick.

3 And Jesus went up to a mountain, and sat there with his disciples. 4 And the Passover, a Jewish feast, was near.

5 When Jesus raised *his* eyes and saw a great crowd coming to him, he said to Philip, "Where will we buy bread for them to eat?" 6 And this he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.

7 Philip answered him, "Two hundred silver coins' worth of bread would not be sufficient for each of them to have a little."

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 9 "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two small fishes. But what are they among so many?"

10 And Jesus said, "Have the men sit down." Now there was plenty of grass in the place, so the men, about five thousand in number, sat down.

11 And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed *them* along with the fish to the disciples, and the disciples to those who were sitting down, as much as they wanted.

12 When they were full, he said to his disciples, "Gather up the pieces that are left, *so* that nothing is wasted."

13 Therefore they gathered *them* and filled twelve baskets with the pieces from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

14 Then the people, seeing the *miraculous* sign Jesus did, said, "Truly this is the prophet who should come into the world."

15 So Jesus, knowing that they would come and take him by force to make him king, again went into a mountain by himself.

16 And when evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, 17 and entered a boat and were crossing the lake toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus had not come to them. 18 And the lake was stirred up because of a great wind that blew. 19 So when they had rowed about five or six kilometers, they saw Jesus walking on the lake, and drawing near the boat, and they were afraid.

20 But he said to them, "It is I. Don't be afraid."

21 Then they willingly received him into the boat. And immediately the ship was at the land where they were going.

22 The day following, when the people who stood on the other side of the lake saw that there had been no other boat there, except the one his disciples had entered, and that Jesus did not go with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples had gone away alone 23 (however other boats *now* came from Tiberias near to the place where they ate, after the Lord had given thanks), 24 so when the people saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they also got into the boats and came to Capernaum, looking for Jesus. 25 And when they had found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?"

26 Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw the *miraculous* signs, but because you ate the

later in the chapter show us the reason for this.

**6:2** Matt 9:35.

**6:4** "Passover" - Exodus chapter 12; Lev 23:4-8.

**6:6** For us also the Lord always has in mind what to do, but He will test our faith, love, and obedience. Compare Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10-12; 1 Pet 1:6,7.

**6:7** Mark 6:37. If Philip had an answer to the problem he didn't state it. Apparently he did not yet grasp the fact that nothing was impossible to the Lord Jesus.

"Two hundred silver coins' worth" - in Greek "200 denarii." One denarius was a laborer's daily wage.

**6:11** "Thanks" - see Matt 14:19.

**6:14** "Sign" - 2:11. What was this miracle a sign of? People thought it signified that the great prophet written of in Deut 18:15-18 was in their midst. This was true, for Jesus was that prophet, but the miracle signified the Lord Jesus as one come down from heaven (v 33), the bread of life (v 35), and the "Passover" for His people (vs 53-56).

**6:15** They had no understanding of His purpose and mission, no faith in Him as the Son of God. They were thinking only of

a worldly kingdom which would replace Roman rule in their land and bring peace and prosperity. Jesus would have none of that. He was not interested in establishing a political system, a worldly kingdom. His aim was far higher than that. He had come to die for the sins of the world, to bring forgiveness and spiritual life to fallen men.

**6:16-21** This miracle is found also in Matthew and Mark. Notes at Matt 14:22-33.

**6:21** This sign pointed to one who is not bound by the forces of nature but has absolute control over them. Compare Ps 107:23-30; Matt 8:23-27.

**6:22** The crowd did not understand how Jesus had been able to cross the lake (v 25).

**6:24** They did not search for Jesus because they knew who He was, or for spiritual reasons of any kind. See v 26.

**6:25** "Rabbi" - 1:38.

**6:26** The Lord Jesus knew their hearts (see 2:24,25) and was not happy about their motives for seeking Him. They had no spiritual understanding or concern, but were only anxious to get something for their physical needs. They are examples of so many today who try to be Christians for the wrong reasons.

loaves, and were filled. 27 Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for that food which lasts to everlasting life, which the Son of man will give to you, for on him God the Father has set his seal."

28 Then they said to him, "What shall we do, that we might perform the works of God?"

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

30 Therefore they said to him, "Then what *miraculous* sign will you show that we can see, and believe you? What deed will you perform? 31 Our fathers ate manna in the desert. As it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

32 Then Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, Moses did not give you that bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

34 Then they said to him, "Lord, always give us this bread."

35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst. 36 But I told you that you have seen me and do not believe.

37 "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will not at all send away."

**6:27** The Lord tells them what should be their most vital concern. It is not for the things of this brief life, but for eternity, not for the body but for the soul. See also Matt 6:31-33; 16:26; Isa 55:1,2.

"Everlasting life" - 3:16. Observe that the Son of man (note at Matt 8:20) gives this good "food", but that they should "labour" for it. This does not mean salvation is by works (Eph 2:8,9). It means that men should make every effort to seek from Christ what He gives and make every effort to see that they truly believe Christ and receive this gift (v 29). Compare Matt 11:12; Heb 4:11; 2 Pet 1:10.

**6:28** It seems they misunderstood Christ's word about "labour." Lacking spiritual understanding they thought salvation and eternal life must be earned by good works. But see 4:10; Rom 6:23; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:5.

**6:29** The Lord corrects their false view. God requires that men trust in Christ for salvation (1:12; 3:15,16,36; 5:24). And trusting in Christ is very reasonable and right, for God sent Him into the world. Forty times in John's Gospel alone the Lord Jesus said God sent Him. How many times does He have to say something before men will believe Him?

**6:30,31** Matt 16:1-4; 1 Cor 1:22. Jesus had already given signs which pointed to the truth about Himself, but these people had not believed Him. In v 31 they refer to the manna in the desert (Ex 16:11-18,35). It seems they were comparing what Jesus did with that. Jesus had fed the five thousand one meal. In Moses' time God fed a whole nation for 40 years. Jesus used ordinary bread. God in Moses' time sent manna from the sky. The Jews believed that when Messiah came He would again supply manna from heaven, but Jesus had not done that.

**6:32** It was God who caused the manna to fall. And Moses could not give them a bread from heaven that would produce eternal life. Only God could do that, and He has done so by sending His own Son. The manna was only a picture of the spiritual bread God gives, which is the true bread for spiritual life.

**6:33** Observe that the bread of God is a person, a person who came from heaven and gives spiritual life to mankind (v 35).

**6:34** Compare 4:15. They had no spiritual understanding of what He was saying and did not believe Him (v 36).

**6:35** Jesus makes it clear that He has not been speaking of some substance like manna which they can gather and eat. He has been speaking of Himself (vs 48,51). In this Gospel on a number of occasions Jesus used the words "I am" in connection with some truth or other about Himself or His ministry (6:35; 8:12; 10:7,9,11,14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1,5). Also He used the words by themselves (8:24,58. See notes there). Here when He compares Himself to bread He signifies that He is to men's minds, hearts, and spirits what literal food is to the body.

**6:36** Verse 64; 5:38; 8:45; 10:25.

**6:37** Another very great promise. It shows that we partake of the bread of life by coming to the Lord Jesus. This is the one and only way to obtain spiritual life (3:36; 5:40; 14:6; Rev 22:17). Coming to Him does not mean traveling anywhere physically but means trusting in Him, coming in faith, and not coming in unbelief with wrong motives as they had done (vs 24,26). It means a movement of our hearts toward Him, a turning to Him in spirit.

Those who come He will never send away. The words are very emphatic. No matter who or what or where a person is, if he or she comes to Christ, Christ will receive Him. No one should worry about the first part of this verse and think Christ may not receive him if God has not chosen him. His very coming to Christ is proof that God has chosen him. It is true that God has given some individuals to Christ out of the masses of mankind (10:29; 17:6).

Before a person comes to Christ no one can know whether he or she is one of these. But all God's chosen will come in faith to Christ, and by coming will prove that God the Father has given them to Christ. See notes at Rom 1:6; 8:29,30. The sinner wanting salvation should not be concerned with God's secret purposes, but simply come to Christ (Matt 11:28). Whoever wants to

38 "For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of the Father who has sent me, that of all whom he has given me I should lose none, but should raise them up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him, will have everlasting life. And I will raise him up at the last day."

41 Then the Jews grumbled about him because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

42 And they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? Then how is it that he says, 'I came down from heaven?'"

43 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. 44 No man can

come to me unless the Father who has sent me draws him. And I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Therefore, everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to me. 46 Not that any man has seen the Father, except he who is from God, he has seen the Father.

47 "Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in me has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

52 Therefore the Jews argued among

come to Him may do so, the way is open to all (Rev 22:17).

"Send away" – this is one meaning of the Greek word which also means "cast out", "drive away", "turn away", etc. We may be absolutely certain that Christ will never do any of these to the person who comes to Him.

**6:38** Note at 4:34. Five times in this chapter the Lord Jesus says He came down from heaven (vs 33, 38, 50, 51, 58). Let us believe Him. If we truly believe Him we will not stumble at anything He ever said. For other reasons why Jesus came to earth see note at Matt 5:17.

**6:39** "The last day" here means the time of the resurrection of believers at the end of this age (note at 5:28,29). Jesus teaches that believers are a gift to Him from His Father and that He will take care of this gift and lose no part of it. In vs 40,44 Christ states definitely without qualifications that He will raise up all believers. This means He will complete the work of salvation He has begun and not fail in a single case. Here is absolute security and safety for believers. It is based on the power and love of the Son on of God, and the will of the Father. Compare 10:28-30; Rom 5:9,10; 8:29,30; Phil 1:6; Heb 7:25.

**6:40** "Sees the Son" – besides meaning seeing with one's eyes, the Greek word may suggest mental perception. Now we cannot see Jesus with our physical eyes as He was then, but we can have spiritual enlightenment that enables us to view Him with the eyes of our spirits. Compare Heb 11:27; Matt 11:27. Note on eternal life at 3:16.

**6:41** Jesus gave them marvelous teaching, wonderful promises, such as had never been heard on earth before. And all they could do was grumble and object. Such is the sinful, unbelieving heart of man.

**6:42** See also Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3. They were ignorant of the nature of Christ's birth (Matt 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-35). And they did not know, and did not want to know, how Jesus came from heaven.

**6:43** Grumbling is not the way to arrive at

the truth. It only adds to men's sins.

**6:44** See v 37. Sinful man without God's help is not able to understand Christ's words or believe in Christ or come to Christ. But unbelievers are still responsible, guilty, and condemned (3:18-20). He says four times that He will raise all believers on the last day (vs 39, 40, 54). He speaks emphatically to indicate the certainty of this fact.

6:45 Isa 54:13; Jer 31:34. See notes on God as teacher at Ps 25:4,5. Everyone who learns from God will come to Christ, everyone. It is in vain for a person to claim God is his teacher if he does not trust in Christ as his Saviour and Lord.

**6:46** See 1:18. Observe again the distinction between these two persons in the Godhead – one has seen, the other has been seen.

**6:47** A statement Jesus repeated several times (v 40; 3:15,16; 5:24). Believe Him and rejoice.

**6:48** Verse 35.

**6:49-51** The unbelieving Jews thought Moses was superior to Jesus (vs 30-32). Here Christ shows the opposite is true. The manna Israel ate did not give them spiritual life, or even keep them living physically very long (v 49). But Christ as the "bread" from heaven gives spiritual life which goes on forever. And the manna was only for one people, but what Christ gives is for the whole world (v 51).

In v 50 He says that if a person eats this bread from heaven he will not die. See also 11:26. But do not believers in Christ die physically? Yes, but they will never die spiritually. They have already passed from death to life (5:24). Even their physical death is usually not called death in the New Testament, but a "sleep." See Acts 7:60; 1 Cor 15:6; 1 Thess 4:13. See note on death at Gen 2:17.

**6:51** The Lord Jesus meant that His body would be a sacrifice to take away the sins of the world (see 1:29; 3:15), and that through believing in Him men would obtain spiritual life.

**6:52** As usual these unbelievers did not

themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

53 Then Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, lives in me, and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father has sent me, and I live because of the

grasp what He was saying. They had no spiritual understanding and took His words literally. Compare 3:4; 4:15. Jesus often used figures of speech which must not be taken in a literal manner (v 35; 4:10; 8:12; 10:7; 15:1; etc). This is true in the verses which follow.

**6:53-58** In this section Jesus speaks of His flesh and blood four times and says that men must eat His flesh and drink His blood; that they are "real" food; that He is "bread" and that people must "eat" Him. Obviously He did not mean for people to take His words literally. See verse 63. He was standing before them and it was not possible for them to eat Him without being guilty of murder and cannibalism - neither of which Jesus ever dreamed of teaching. We are not to think we should literally eat His flesh or drink His blood, just as we are not to think He was literal bread. He was using figures of speech to teach spiritual truth. He did not mean He must be literally eaten any more than He meant He was a literal door (10:7), or a literal vine (15:1). The Old Testament absolutely forbids literally partaking of blood (Gen 9:4; Lev 17:10-14; 19:26).

What spiritual truth was Jesus teaching? The same as in v 51 with an additional reference to His blood. By "blood" He meant His blood which was to be shed on the cross, His life given as a sacrifice for men's sins (see Matt 26:27,28; Rom 3:25). What does it mean to eat His flesh and drink His blood? It means to believe that His sacrifice really was for us and takes away our sins (Rom 3:25; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:12-14; 1 John 1:7); it means to receive His Spirit into our hearts by faith. It is a spiritual eating and drinking, and it brings us spiritual life.

Some people have taught that this whole passage refers to the Lord's Supper or Communion (Matt 26:26-29; 1 Cor 11:23-32). There are serious objections to this. These verses may give the spiritual meaning of Communion, but the New Testament nowhere teaches that men must take part in that ordinance in order to obtain spiritual life. If it did, what would be the fate of the thief who believed on the cross (Luke 20:40-43), or of other believers throughout history who may not have partaken of the Lord's Supper, or children who have not? And Jesus states very definitely in v 53 that those who do not "eat" His flesh and "drink" His blood have "no life in them." And how

Father, even so he who eats me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven; not as your fathers ate manna, and are dead. He who eats of this bread will live forever."

59 He said these things in the synagogue, while he was teaching in Capernaum. 60 Then many of his disciples, hearing this, said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can understand it?"

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, he said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 *What*, then, if you see the

can we even dream that spiritual life comes by taking something into the mouth?

Very obviously Jesus is referring to spiritual realities. And we should understand that it is very possible to partake of the Lord's Supper and yet not spiritually by faith "eat" His flesh or "drink" His blood. And it is possible by faith to "eat" His flesh and "drink" His blood without partaking of the Lord's Supper.

**6:53** By using the word "unless" Jesus shows He is speaking of something absolutely essential for salvation. See also 3:3; Matt 18:3; Luke 13:3. These are all things without which no person will have spiritual life, be saved, enter God's Kingdom, or go to heaven. Concerning this we have the most solemn words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

**6:56** The believer is in Christ (Rom 6:11; 8:1; 1 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:1-4); and Christ is in the believer (2 Cor 13:5; Col 1:27; 3:11; Rev 3:20). Each lives in the other - 17:20-23. Their lives are forever bound up together.

**6:57** It is just as certain that believers are spiritually alive through Christ as it is that He is alive because of God the Father. The living Father, the living Son, and living believers are all linked together.

**6:60** This was said by some of Christ's own disciples, not by His Jewish enemies. This does not refer to His twelve closest disciples, but to those who sometimes followed Him to hear His teaching. Some of those who said this did not really believe in Him (v 64), and by leaving Him showed they did not believe (v 66. Compare 1 John 2:19).

What Jesus taught in vs 53-58 is wonderful to those who have spiritual understanding and believe Him. But it is indeed a "hard teaching" to unbelievers. They certainly do not like to be told that the only way of salvation is Christ's sacrifice for them and that they must "eat" Him or be lost forever. When they said it was a "hard teaching" they meant hard for them to accept. For the true believer nothing Jesus ever said is hard to accept, though some of it may be hard to understand. Christ's teaching here separated His true disciples from the false (except for Judas Iscariot who was not separated until later).

**6:61** Compare v 41.

**6:62** Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9. The

Son of man ascend where he was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh *is of* no use. The words that I speak to you are spirit and *they* are life. 64 But some of you do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who did not believe, and who would betray him.

65 And he said, "Therefore I told you that no one can come to me unless it is given to him by my Father."

66 From that *time* many of his disciples went away and did not walk anymore with him.

67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Will you also go away?"

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that you are

the Christ, the Son of the living God."

70 Jesus answered them, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a demon?"

71 He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. For it was he, *who* was one of the twelve, who would betray him.

**7** After these things Jesus went about in Galilee, for he did not want to go about in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him. 2 Now the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.

3 So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, so your disciples can also see the deeds you are doing. 4 For no man does things secretly while he seeks to be known publicly. If you are doing these things, reveal yourself to the

question seems to mean, if they were to see Christ's ascension into heaven would they then be more offended or would they believe Him? "Where he was before" means with God the Father in heaven (v 38; 1:1; 3:13).

**6:63** "Spirit" – God's Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit. Only He can give spiritual life (3:5-8; 2 Cor 3:6). Here Christ indicates that a literal eating of His flesh could do no possible good. Spiritual life does not enter a person through the mouth. It is given directly to man's spirit.

"The flesh does not help at all" is a very general statement, and may also mean no flesh of anyone and no physical efforts by anyone can produce spiritual life. Nothing connected with human nature can do it (1:13).

"The words that I speak" refer to the words above, but they apply also to all the words of Christ. How can words be "spirit" and "life"? In the sense that God's Spirit uses them to give spiritual life. The Spirit enables people to understand Christ's words, believe them, and act on them, and so obtain life. Through Christ's words He awakens people to their need, causes them to hope in Christ's promises, and opens their hearts to receive His life.

**6:64** See 2:24,25. Before Jesus chose Judas Iscariot as one of His disciples He knew that Judas would betray Him (vs 70,71). Then why choose him? To fulfill the Scriptures and the plan of God. See Matt 26:24.

**6:65** The Lord Jesus had performed a great miracle and spoken marvelous words, but many continued in their unbelief. Now the Lord repeats the reason for this (v 44). Here is the reverse side of v 37. All that the Father has not given Him will not come to Him.

**6:66** How quickly some men can move from the attitude of v 15 to this! They wanted a Jesus whom they could control, who would do what they planned, and give them what they thought best. They could not accept

His "hard teaching" (v 60), and Jesus had exposed their unbelief. So off they went to their own ways. We must follow Jesus for the right reason, or sooner or later we too will leave Him.

**6:67** Jesus knew the twelve disciples would not leave. He wanted them to say what was in their minds. Doubtless this was a time of testing for them.

**6:68** Peter was the spokesman for the group (Matt 16:15,16; 17:4; etc). Here he expressed what was in the minds of them all (except Judas). He gives the right reason for following Christ. They had believed Christ's words; they were convinced He was what He said He was; they could not leave Him. For the true believer there is never any place to go, anyone to go to, away from Christ.

**6:69** "The Christ, the Son of the living God" – the disciples had come to a considerable understanding of who Jesus is.

**6:70,71** Judas was not a literal demon, but he allowed Satan to influence his life so much that he behaved like one. See also 12:4-6; 13:2,26,27. The nature of Judas is described in Ps 109:2-19 (in Acts 1:20 Peter applies v 8 of this psalm to Judas).

**7:1** Verse 32; 5:16,18; 8:37,40; 10:31. The Lord Jesus was not afraid to die. Indeed He came for that very purpose (3:15; 10:17,18; 12:27; 18:11; Matt 20:28). But His time for that had not yet come (v 30).

**7:2** Notes at Lev 23:33-43. This feast took place annually in Jerusalem.

**7:3** See 2:12.

**7:3-5** They knew He could do miracles, but they did not yet believe He was the Son of God or the Messiah. So they vainly imagined they could give Him advice. The advice was that He should go to the center of Jewish life (Jerusalem in Judea) and openly try to assume the leadership of the Jews. At this time they completely misunderstood His purpose and work. Later on at least two of them, James and Jude (Judas – Matt 13:55) became His true followers (Acts 1:14; James 1:1; Jude 1).



world." 5 For not even his brothers believed in him.

6 Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but for you the time is always right. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me, because I testify about it, that its deeds are evil. 8 You go on up to the feast. I am not going just yet to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come."

9 After he said these words to them, he stayed in Galilee. 10 But after his brothers had gone, then he also went up to the feast, not openly, but secretly.

11 Then the Jews looked for him at the feast, and said, "Where is he?"

12 And there was much grumbling among the people concerning him, for some said, "He is a

good man"; others said, "No, on the contrary, he deceives the people." 13 However no one spoke openly about him for fear of the Jews.

14 Now about halfway through the feast Jesus went up to the temple and taught. 15 And the Jews were astonished, saying, "How does this man understand *the* writings, never having studied?"

16 Jesus answering them, said, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. 17 If anyone chooses to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God, or *whether* I speak on my own. 18 He who speaks on his own is seeking his own glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. 19 Did not Moses give you the Law, and *yet* none of you keep

**7:6** This means that it was all right for them to go to the feast any time they wished, but it was better for Him to wait a while (v 8).

**7:7** For the first time Jesus plainly stated that the world (unbelieving men in general) hates Him (see also 15:18,23,24), though He had implied it in 3:20. And He gives the reason for the hatred – men do not like to be told their actions are evil. They hate to be exposed for what they are. The world could not hate His brothers because at that time they still belonged to the world, and so could not stand against it.

The word "world" is used more than 70 times in John's Gospel, more than in any other book of the Bible. Christ revealed that the world is lost (3:16), in darkness (3:19), hates God (7:7; 15:18,23), is ruled by Satan (8:44; 12:31), is unable to receive God's Spirit (14:17), and is sinful and unbelieving (16:8-11). In two verses of his first letter John described the world (1 John 2:16; 5:19). See also notes at Rom 12:2; Jam 4:4; 1 John 2:16.

**7:10** Jesus always knew just when to do something and how it should be done.

**7:11** Christ's enemies expected Him to come and were puzzled at His absence.

**7:12** Here are two totally differing opinions about Jesus. If He was good He would not deceive people; if He deceived people He was not good. If He was good and therefore did not deceive people then His teachings are true. His enemies said He was a deceiver (Matt 27:63). But they could not offer any evidence whatever for that statement. There is massive evidence to show He was good and no deceiver (compare 5:31-40).

**7:13** Others (even Christ's disciples) sometimes showed this same fear (9:22; 12:42; 19:38; 20:19). Such fear is bondage. Compare Prov 29:25.

**7:14** He openly began to teach when He knew it was the right time to do so.

**7:15** Matt 7:28,29; Luke 2:47.

"The writings" or "letters" – Most likely they were referring to the Old Testament. They meant He had not studied under a rabbi in their schools. They considered Him

(the Son of God, the "Word", and Creator of the universe), an uneducated person! Compare Acts 4:13. See Col 2:3.

**7:16** Jesus did not invent His teaching and it did not come from other men. It came from God the Father who sent Him. See also 12:49; 17:8. Since Jesus was honest we should believe Him about this and accept His teaching as the very words of God. Forty times in this Gospel Jesus insisted that He had come into the world from God the Father (3:16,17; 4:34; 5:24,37; 6:39,44, 57; etc).

**7:17** Here Jesus gives a way whereby any person can find out whether He spoke the truth of God. Sincere commitment to do the will of God, the Creator of the universe, is the only way to obtain true spiritual knowledge. And *anyone, anywhere* who does so will come to know that Jesus taught the very truth of God. People sometimes express doubts about the possibility of knowing the truth because there are so many different religions, sects, and teachings in the world. But in this verse Jesus gives us an infallible way to find the truth. Compare Matt 6:22.

The problem with men is not what they call intellectual difficulties, but with their will, their purposes. It is because they do not wish to do God's will that they remain in spiritual ignorance (3:19,20). Do we really want to do God's will no matter what it is, or where it leads us? If our answer is "no" we should not be surprised if the truth continues to elude us. If our answer is "yes" we will learn the truth and the truth will set us free.

**7:18** Jesus is speaking about two different kinds of religious teachers. They who seek honor for themselves will not be concerned about the truth of their teaching. They will teach man-invented doctrines if that pleases people and causes people to honor them. But other teachers will seek the honor of the God of truth (Ps 31:5). Their whole concern is to teach God's truth whether people like it or not. The Lord Jesus knew that He was the second kind of teacher (8:49,50).

**7:19** These Jews prided themselves that they kept the law of Moses, but not one of them

the Law? Why do you seek to kill me?"

20 The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill you?"

21 Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one deed, and you are all amazed. 22 Therefore *consider this*: Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23 If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry at me because I have made a man completely well on the Sabbath? 24 Do not judge according to appearance, but judge *with* righteous judgment."

25 Then some of the *people* of Jerusalem said, "Is not this the one whom they are seeking to kill? 26 But, look, he is speaking openly, and they say nothing to him. Do the rulers really know that he is the Christ? 27 However we know where this man is from. But when Christ comes, no man will know where he is from."

28 Then Jesus cried out in the temple as he was teaching and said, "You both know me, and you know where I am from. And I have not come on my own. But he who sent me is true. Him you do not

know. 29 But I know him, for I am from him, and he sent me."

30 Then they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time was not yet come. 31 And many of the people believed in him, and said, "When Christ comes, will he do more *miraculous* signs than the ones this *man* has done?"

32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to seize him.

33 Then Jesus said to them, "I will be with you only a little while, and *then* I will go to him who sent me. 34 You will look for me, and will not find *me*, and you will not be able to come where I am."

35 Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does he intend to go, that we will not find him? Will he go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? 36 What *kind* of statement is this he has spoken, "You will look for me, and will not find *me*, and you will not be able to come where I am?"

37 In the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is

actually did. They showed their utter failure to do so by plotting to kill the Lord Jesus. This was breaking one of the chief commands of the law (Ex 20:13). Jesus is saying that the reason they did not receive the truth He taught was that they were not willing to do God's will even in the most basic matters.

**7:20** Here they were guilty of lying. They well knew they were trying to kill Him (v 32; 5:18). And they were guilty of the worst possible slander against the Son of God (see also 8:48; 10:20). See notes at Matt 12:24,31,32.

**7:21-23** The Lord here refers to the miracle recorded in 5:1-9. These Jews complained bitterly against Jesus because He had healed a man on the Sabbath (5:10,16). See also Matt 12:9-14). Yet they themselves practiced circumcision on the Sabbath if it fell on the eighth day after the birth of a boy (see Gen 17:9-14; Lev 12:3). They thought it all right to wound on the Sabbath but not to heal.

**7:24** They were quick to condemn because they were faulty in judgment.

**7:25-27** These ordinary people were uncertain about the Lord Jesus. It seems His teaching had made a good impression on them and they wondered whether the Jewish leaders had abandoned their plan to kill Him and were about to accept Him as the Messiah of Israel. But they themselves could not accept this because they knew Jesus had come down to Jerusalem from Galilee and they thought that no one would know where the Messiah would come from. But in this they were mistaken (see Micah 5:2; Matt 2:1-6).

**7:28,29** Jesus took this opportunity to tell them the truth about where He came from. They would have said Galilee or Nazareth. He insisted once more that He came from God. If they had known God they would have recognized this, but they did not.

**7:30** Jesus came from heaven to die, to give Himself as a sacrifice for man's sins. Not only so, the very time that He should do so was fixed, and that time had not yet come.

**7:31** "Signs" - 2:11. Some believed the evidence and so believed in the Lord Jesus.

**7:32** "Pharisees" - Matt 3:7.

**7:33** Verse 16.

**7:34** In other words, their day of opportunity would come to an end. Compare Prov 1:24-28; Hos 5:6,15; Amos 8:11,12. He meant He would be in heaven and they could not go there.

**7:35,36** As usual the unbelievers did not understand His words. They could think only of things related to this world.

"Dispersion...Greeks -not Gentiles, but" - Jews who had gone from their own land and settled among Greek-speaking people.

**7:37,38** Compare 4:10,13,14. This wonderful promise is to all, and it was spoken loudly and emphatically. Here by comparing v 37 with v 38 we see that "drinking" is believing in Christ (apply this to 6:53-56). The Scripture mentioned in v 38 does not mean a single verse, but a truth implied by several verses - Isa 44:3; 55:1,2; 58:11. In Jer 2:13 and 17:13 the Lord says that He Himself is "the spring of living water." We see the streams of living water flowing from within the apostles and servants of Christ in the book of Acts. We can read of these streams in the history of the Church. And

thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his innermost being streams of living water will flow." 39 (But he spoke this about the Spirit, whom those who believe in him would receive; for the Holy Spirit had not yet been *given*, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.)

40 Therefore, many of the people, when they heard this statement, said, "Surely this is the Prophet." 41 Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will Christ come from Galilee? 42 Has not the Scripture said that Christ will come from the seed of David, and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

43 So there was a division among the people because of him. 44 And some of them wanted to seize him, but no one laid hands on him. 45 Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why haven't you brought him?"

46 The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man."

47 Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? 48 Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in him? 49 But this people who do not know the Law are accursed."

50 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus at night, being one of them) said to them, 51 "Does our Law judge any man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

52 They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and see, for no prophet arises out of Galilee."

53 And every man went to his own house.

**8** Jesus went to the mount of Olives. 2 And early in the morning he returned to the temple. And all the people came to him, and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had made her stand in the center, 4 they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses in the Law commanded

we can experience them ourselves if we "drink" of Christ. See Luke 11:13; Acts 5:32; Eph 5:18.

**7:39** Notes on the Holy Spirit at 14:16,17; etc. He is the flow of spiritual life from believing hearts. The Holy Spirit was active in Old Testament days and in the days of Christ on earth (Gen 1:2; Ex 31:3; Num 11:25; 24:2; Jud 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 1 Sam 16:13; 2 Sam 23:2). But the Father and the Son sent Him in full measure after the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ (14:16,17,26; Acts 1:4,5; 2:1-4). One name we might give to this era since Christ is "The era of the Holy Spirit."

"Glorified" – this verb is found 23 times in this Gospel – far more than in any other New Testament book. It always refers to the Lord Jesus, or God the Father. Jesus did not send the Holy Spirit until after His death and resurrection. There could be no Pentecost without Calvary. The life-giving streams of God's Spirit could flow only because of the cross.

**7:40** Deut 18:15-18.

**7:41** "Christ" – Matt 1:1.

**7:42** They were correct (Micah 5:2), but they were ignorant of the fact that the Lord Jesus had been born there (Matt 2:1; Luke 2:4-7).

**7:43** The Lord Jesus is still the cause of division among people everywhere. Those who trust Him will be divided from those who do not. Compare Matt 10:34-36.

**7:45,46** Verse 32 records the sending of these guards. They were unable to obey the Pharisees' orders because they were overwhelmed by the power of Christ's teaching. Compare Matt 7:28,29.

**7:47** Verse 12.

**7:48** These hardened unbelievers actually thought that their unbelief was evidence that

Jesus was a deceiver! That Jesus could not be speaking the truth because they had not put their stamp of approval on Him!

**7:49** They thought that only people ignorant of the law of Moses could possibly believe in Jesus! Little did they know that the law and the whole Old Testament pointed to Jesus (5:39,46; 1:45; Luke 24:27,45,46), indeed that it was He who gave the law to Moses and caused the whole Old Testament to be inspired. They were the ignorant ones.

**7:50** They thought no Pharisee or Jewish leader had believed in Jesus, but they were wrong in this also. Here was one – see 19:39-42 (also 12:42). The other Pharisees did not know this because Nicodemus had not been a bold witness.

**7:51** The question was reasonable and in harmony with the law itself. Though he did not stand very boldly yet he did stand and was willing to stand alone. However, it only provoked the ignorant scorn of these arrogant unbelievers (v 52).

**7:53** They saw they could do nothing at the time against Jesus and so dispersed.

**8:1-11** The author of these notes believes these verses were a part of the original Greek manuscript, though some scholars dispute this.

**8:3** "Pharisees" – Matt 3:7. We are not told how the woman was caught. It is possible they deliberately trapped her in order to lay a trap for Jesus (v 6).

**8:4** They called Him "Teacher," but they would not accept anything He taught. Compare Luke 6:46.

**8:5** The law does say this, but it says also that the man must be killed (Deut 22:22-24; Lev 20:10). It seems significant that they did not bring the guilty man. Could he have been one of their own? It is likely they were sure that Jesus would try to save

us to stone such *women*, but what do you say?"

6 They said this, testing him, that they might have *some reason* to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *his* finger, *as though he did not hear them*.

7 So when they kept on asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him *be the first to* throw a stone at her." 8 And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

9 And those who heard *that*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one after the other, beginning with the oldest and *on* to the last.

And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the center. 10 When Jesus straightened up and saw no one except the woman, he said to her,

this woman from the law's judgment. If He did, they thought this would be setting Himself against the law of God.

**8:6** This is not the only time they tried to trap Him. See Matt 22:15. It is useless to speculate about what Jesus wrote or why. No man knows. There is enough in the Bible that is clear and spiritually profitable. Let us emphasize those things.

**8:7** This wonderful answer turned the situation completely around. Those on the attack against the woman and against Jesus were defeated, and had to leave the field of battle. They had dug a pit for Him but fell into it themselves. Compare Ps 7:14,15; 57:6; Prov 26:27.

**8:9** Though many of the Pharisees were self-righteous and thought themselves better than others (Luke 18:9-12), not one of them could claim to be sinless. They knew the Old Testament (Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9), and though they had stifled their consciences many times, that inner voice was not completely dead and silent.

**8:10** Those who had accused her had departed, and there was no one to bring evidence against her. So even according to the law it was proper to let her go free. See Deut 17:6,7; 19:15.

**8:11** See 3:17. If Jesus had come to condemn sinners, then all – this woman, the Pharisees, the people in general, and His own disciples would have been condemned, for all were sinners (Rom 3:9,19,23; Matt 7:11). But Jesus came to seek and save the lost, not to condemn and punish them (Luke 19:10). Was Jesus then saying that sinning does not matter? Absolutely not. He knew that sin is an awful thing and that He had come to suffer and die as a sacrifice to take sin away (1:29; 3:14; 6:53-58; 10:11). See what He says to this woman – Leave your life of sin. See also 5:14; Matt 4:17; Luke 13:2,3. Does this sound as if sin does not matter? If the Lord Jesus forgives our sin it is not that we might go on sinning, but that we might stop sinning. See Matt 1:21; Ps 130:4; Rom 6:14; 1 John 2:1.

"Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more."

12 Then Jesus spoke again to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

13 Then the Pharisees said to him, "You testify for yourself. Your testimony is not valid."

14 Jesus answered and said to them, "Though I testify for myself, my testimony is *still* valid, because I know where I have come from and where I am going. But you cannot tell where I have come from and where I am going. 15 You judge according to the flesh. I am judging no one. 16 And yet

**8:12** "I am" – v 24; 6:35.

"Light" – 1:4; 3:19,20; 12:35,36; Matt 4:16; Luke 1:79; 2 Cor 4:6; 1 John 1:5; 2:8. Jesus is the light God has given for the whole world. What the sun is to the physical earth that Jesus is to the world of men. His life, His deeds, and His words reveal the truth about God and men and salvation and what God does and what men should do. This light reveals the difference between the real and the unreal, the true and the false. It shows the way to heaven.

But this light will be effective only for those who follow Christ (the Greek word indicates continuous following). Following means trusting and obeying. If we shrink back from Him we will remain in darkness and ignorance about the most important things of life. The followers of Jesus are in the light now and will see many truths they could not see otherwise, and they know where they are going. Unbelievers are in the dark now (and so all they can do is deny the light and speculate about spiritual things), and, if they do not repent and turn to the light, will go into eternal darkness (Matt 8:12; 22:13; 2 Pet 2:17; Jude 13).

The phrase "light of life" may mean light which is life (or alive), or which gives life, or which comes from life, or which shines on life, or perhaps all of them. Here is a question of great importance: Do we really want the light that Christ gives, or are we content with our darkness?

**8:13** Were they trying to use Jesus' own words against Him (5:31)? Notice that they had nothing to say about light. They were content with their darkness. In hostility and unbelief they were demanding that Jesus give proof that He was the light. Actually, in the nature of things, light does not need to give proof of its existence. All it needs to do is shine. Shining is itself proof of light. Darkness may deny that light exists, but that denial is not evidence there is no light but only that there is darkness.

**8:14-18** In 5:31 Jesus said that if He gave witness concerning Himself apart from other witnesses, His witness alone would not be

if I do judge, my judgment is true, for I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent me *judge together*. 17 It is also written in your Law that the testimony of two men is valid. 18 I am one who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me gives testimony about me."

19 Then they said to him, "Where is your father?" Jesus answered, "You do not know me, or my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

20 Jesus spoke these words near the treasury, as he was teaching in the temple. And no one laid a hand on him, for his time had not yet come.

21 Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going my way, and you will look for me and will die in your sins. You cannot come where I am going."

22 Then the Jews said, "Will he kill himself? For he says, 'You cannot come where I am going.'"

23 And he said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of

this world. 24 Therefore I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am *he*, you will die in your sins."

25 Then they said to him, "Who are you?" And Jesus said to them, "Just who I have been telling you from the beginning. 26 I have many things to say, and to judge concerning you. But he who sent me is faithful, and I speak to the world those things which I have heard from him."

27 They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father.

28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things just as my Father has taught me. 29 And he who sent me is with me. The Father has not left me alone, for I always do those things that please him."

30 As he spoke these words, many believed in him.

enough. No court of law would accept such witness. Here He says His witness is true because of two things – He knows where He came from and where He is going, and God the Father is a witness on His behalf. See also 5:36,37.

**8:15,16** See 7:24; 3:17.

**8:17** Deut 19:15. The testimony of two men was accepted under the law. Should we not accept the testimony of God the Father and His Son?

**8:19** Compare 10:30 and 14:9. The Son of God and God the Father were so united in nature, essence, character, mind, and purpose that to know the one was to know the other. See also 1:18; Heb 1:3. See other references on Christ's deity at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11. These Pharisees did not know Christ. Though they saw and heard Him their prejudice and unbelief made it impossible for them to understand who He really is.

**8:20** See 7:30.

**8:21** See 7:33,34. Here Jesus adds the fearful words "You will die in your sin." This is fearful because to die in sin is to be lost forever. The Bible does not teach that there will be opportunities to be saved after death. And men are not born on earth again and again. See Heb 9:27. Individuals live but once on earth and die but once. See notes at 9:3; Job 11:12; Luke 16:19-31; Heb 9:27.

**8:22** See 7:35,36. Could they really imagine that Jesus would commit suicide? This question reveals how ignorant they were of Him and His Father (v 19).

**8:23** Here the Lord Jesus gives the difference between Himself and everyone else. We are of the earth; He is from heaven (3:13; 6:33,38,50,51). See also 1 Cor 15:45-47.

**8:24** Here Jesus plainly says that the only way to avoid dying in one's sins and being lost is to believe Him. Compare 3:36.

"I am" – the word "he" is not in Greek,

but is added to make a proper English sentence. The Greek has simply "I am." "I am" is the way God spoke in the Old Testament – Ex 3:14; Isa 43:10, and it seems clear that here Jesus is saying He is God, revealed as Jehovah in the Old Testament. It is even clearer in v 58. And He says that if men will not believe this they will die in their sins. For other references that show Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah see the note at Luke 2:11.

**8:25** The Lord Jesus had repeatedly said that God was His Father (2:16; 3:16,18; 5:19-23,26; 6:40). And they understood this to mean that He was claiming to be God – naturally enough, since a son shares the same nature as his father.

**8:26** He did not come to judge the world, that is, pass final judgment on it, condemn it to punishment (3:17). But He saw what the conduct of others was like and had the authority to speak the truth about them.

**8:27** Again we see the blindness of unbelief.

**8:28** "Son of man" – Matt 8:20.

"Lifted up" – He was referring to the cross (3:14), but the words can also mean "exalted", and may include the idea of His resurrection and ascension. Only after these events did many of the Jews and even some of the Jewish leaders come to know who He was and followed Him (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:7; 21:20). Many others no doubt knew they should follow Him but would not. Of course the unbelieving Jewish nation did not willingly and knowingly exalt Him, but exaltation was a result of what they did to Him.

"Taught me" – 7:16; 12:49,50. All that Jesus taught came directly from God the Father.

**8:29** The chief purpose of His whole life was to please God the Father, and He perfectly fulfilled it (note at 4:34).

**8:30** From the verses which follow we can see that their faith was very shallow. See

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed in him, "If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples indeed, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and were never in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will become free?'"

34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly I say to you, whoever sins is a slave of sin. 35 And the slave does not remain in the house forever, but the Son remains forever. 36 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. 37 I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you are seeking

to kill me, because my word has no place in you. 38 I speak what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."

39 They answered and said to him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the deeds of Abraham. 40 But now you are seeking to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I have heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41 You are doing the deeds of your father."

Then they said to him, "We were not born of fornication. We have one Father, God *Himself*."

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your

also 2:23-25; 12:42,43. They believed certain facts about Jesus but this belief did not reach their hearts and change their lives.

**8:31** Disciples are those who choose the Lord Jesus as their teacher, who learn from Him in order to obey, who follow where He leads. Here He says only those who continue to do this are true disciples. The proof of discipleship is in perseverance. Some appear to begin well, but soon leave Christ's teachings and go their own way. See John 6:66. Such were never true disciples, not "disciples indeed." Compare 1 John 2:19.

**8:32** Christ came to set men free (Luke 4:18). What is this freedom? Not political freedom, not freedom from physical slavery, but freedom from the bondage of sin (v 34). Along with that He gives freedom from guilt and punishment (Rom 6:18,22; Titus 2:14; Heb 9:15,26), from the condemnation of God's holy law (Rom 8:1,2; Gal 3:13; 5:1), from fear of death (Heb 2:14,15; Ps 49:15; 1 Cor 15:56,57), from the chains of the world and its empty way of living (Gal 1:4; 1 Pet 1:17,18), from the bonds of possessions (Phil 4:11-13; 1 Tim 6:6-8; Heb 13:5), from any tie that would prevent us from fully following Christ and serving God (Luke 14:26-33). It is spiritual freedom He gives. And it is a "glorious liberty" (Rom 8:21) which is possible only in the way of Christ.

How does Christ give this freedom? Through the knowledge of the truth. A true disciple comes to know Christ who is the Truth (1:17; 14:6), and the truth about Christ - who He is and why He came to earth and what He accomplished here. He will also learn the truth about himself and about salvation and the meaning of other great teachings Christ has given. This knowledge of the truth is the only way to liberation.

Men are held in bondage by the lies of Satan and other men (especially lies in the area of religion), by sin, by unbelief and by ignorance of the truth of Christ. Note at 15:21; etc. The truth that sets men free is Christ's truth alone.

**8:33** See Matt 3:9. This was pride of race. Because Abraham, the forefather of the Jewish nation, was great they vainly imagined this made them great. But vs 39,40 shows that spiritually they were not Abraham's

descendants. Family pride or racial pride will get us nowhere with God.

"Free" - as usual they misunderstood the Lord Jesus. They thought He was speaking of freedom from physical slavery.

**8:34** Jesus now speaks so plainly no one can fail to understand. How many there are who think that by casting off the restraints of God's Word and going their own way that they are obtaining freedom! But by trying to be free to do as they please, to enjoy their pleasures to their hearts' content, they are making their own chains and becoming enslaved to a very cruel master indeed - sin.

**8:35** This is true of any family, including God's family. Those who are still slaves of sin have no real part in God's family, as a son has.

**8:36** Slaves cannot liberate themselves. If they could they would not be slaves. Slaves need someone apart from themselves, someone who is not a slave, to set them free. This Christ did and continues to do (Matt 1:21; Acts 26:17,18; Rom 6:16-18,22; 8:2,21; Gal 5:1).

**8:37** By descendants He meant physical descendants. Jesus knew all about their plots to kill Him - 5:18.

**8:38** Christ was always in God's presence - v 28; 1:1; 5:19,20.

"Your father" - Satan (vs 41,44).

**8:39,40** They insisted that Abraham was their "father", and probably meant that this was true in a spiritual sense as well as physical. Jesus says their behavior shows this could not be true. The Bible (in Genesis chapters 12-24) reveals what Abraham was like, and these Jews were certainly not like him.

**8:41** It is not clear why these Jews said this. Perhaps they meant only that they were direct descendants of Abraham both physically and spiritually and were worshipers of the true God (in the Old Testament the worship of other gods is said to be like fornication and adultery). Notes at Jer 2:1; Ezek 16:31-34; 23:2,3; Hos 1:2. They knew that God was the Father of the nation of Israel (Isa 64:8; Mal 2:10). Here they claim the same for themselves as individuals. But saying it is so does not make it so.

**8:42** Many say and like to think they are

Father, you would love me, for I set out and came from God. I did not come on my own, but he sent me. 43 Why do you not understand my speech? Because you cannot hear my word. 44 You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to fulfill the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and did not remain in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar, and the father of *lies*. 45 And because I tell *you* the truth, you do not believe me.

46 "Which of you convicts me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? 47 He who belongs to God hears God's words. So you do not hear *them*, because you do not belong to God."

48 Then the Jews answered and said to him, "Do we not rightly say that you are a Samaritan

God's children. But do they love the Lord Jesus? If they do not they are not the children of God, whatever they may think. And what is it to love the Lord Jesus? See 14:15,23,24. It is impossible to love God and not love the Lord Jesus whom God sent into the world.

**8:43** Why were they unable to hear? Because spiritually speaking they were deaf, blind, and dead. They loved darkness (3:19), and God's judgment was on them (Matt 13:11-15).

**8:44** Verses 38,41. Physically they were the children of Abraham, but in spiritual matters the children of Satan (Matt 13:38. Notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-11; 2 Cor 11:14). Satan was at work in them (Eph 2:2). They obeyed Satan, in many ways were like him, and belonged to him. They revealed this by their behavior toward the Lord Jesus. Let us learn from this that men may have a wonderful ancestry, be very religious (as these men were), say they are the children of God, and yet be sons of Satan. Such is the deceitfulness of the human heart and its desperate wickedness (Jer 17:9). Jesus here reveals two things about Satan – he is a murderer and an utter liar.

"A murderer from the beginning" may refer to the way he tried to destroy Adam and Eve (Gen 2:17; 3:1-4), or to the murder of Abel, which Satan doubtless inspired Cain to commit (Gen 4:8). It is not exaggeration to say Satan is the murderer of the human race. Because of the sin he tempted Adam and Eve to commit death came to them and to all their descendants (Rom 5:12).

Satan is also a liar, and he leads the whole world astray with his lies (Rev 12:9). He lies about God, about Christ, about men, about salvation, about religion, about anything that he thinks will enable him to trap and ruin men. He works especially in the field of religion. The sad fact is that far more people believe Satan's lies than the truth Christ

and have a demon?"

49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honour my Father, and you dishonour me. 50 And I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks *it*, and judges. 51 Truly, truly I say to you, if a man keeps my word, he will never see death."

52 Then the Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham is dead, and the prophets *also*, and you say, If a man keeps my word, he will never taste death. 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham who is dead? And the prophets are dead. What are you making yourself *out to be*?"

54 Jesus answered, "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing. It is my Father who honours me, concerning whom you say that he is your God. 55 And you have not known him. But I know him,

taught. And many worship Satan either knowingly or unknowingly (Matt 4:8,9; Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37; 1 Cor 10:20; Rev 9:20).

"Father of lies" – all liars are taking Satan's side and are opposing the God of truth (Ps 31:5). And they will pay the penalty for this deadly sin – Rev 21:8.

**8:45** Notice the word "because." If Jesus had told them lies they would have believed Him! But they had already believed Satan's lies and hated the truth and would not, could not, believe it. See 5:44 also.

**8:46** Neither they nor anyone else was ever able to prove that Jesus sinned (Matt 27:23; Luke 23:4; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22-24). In the next verse He gives the reason why they did not believe Him.

**8:48** Defeated in argument they rage and use slander. This is a usual way with the ungodly. Four times they said Jesus was demon possessed (7:20; 8:48,52; 10:20). See also Matt 12:24. They called Him a Samaritan because they despised the Samaritans (4:9) and considered them heretics. They thought it was a big insult to call a person a Samaritan.

**8:49** Jesus, though He was a Jew, evidently did not consider being called a Samaritan an insult and didn't bother to deny it. He did not look down on any people.

**8:50** He was not concerned that men give Him the honors He deserved. His whole aim was to glorify God the Father (5:41; 7:18; 12:28; 17:4).

**8:51** Note at 6:49-51. He was not speaking of what men call physical death. He did not want to close the discussion without another great promise for anyone willing to receive it. It is similar to 5:24; 6:50; 11:25,26. To keep His word means to receive it, trust it, obey it.

**8:52,53** As usual they misunderstood Him. **8:54** Verse 50; 17:5; Acts 3:13; Phil 2:9-11.

**8:55** Verse 19; 15:21; 16:3. This was their whole problem. Because of this lack of

and if I should say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I know him and keep his word.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. And he saw *it*, and was glad."

57 Then the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"

58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

59 Then they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and left the temple, passing

knowledge they were arguing in the dark.

**8:56** He shows again how different they were from their great ancestor. Abraham rejoiced at Christ's day; they tried to kill Christ. Abraham looked forward with joy to the coming of the Messiah. It is possible that God gave him a special vision of that coming day. If so, it is not recorded in the Bible.

**8:57** Actually, Jesus was only about 33. They meant that Jesus had not even reached a full age. Abraham lived about 2000 years before this event.

**8:58** The words "truly, truly" mean that Jesus was about to make another very solemn and important statement.

"I am" - notes at v 24; Ex 3:14. The Lord Jesus is declaring the same truth that begins this Gospel (1:1), that He is God, Jehovah God. See also Luke 2:11; Phil 2:6,10,11.

**8:59** See 5:18. They thought Jesus was guilty of blasphemy and making false claims. See Matt 26:63-66. Actually He merely spoke the truth, but they in their darkness refused to believe it. Jesus left them, not because He was afraid, but because He knew His time had not yet come (7:30).

**9:1** In the four Gospels Jesus healed blindness more than any other malady (Matt 9:27-31; 12:22; 15:30; 21:14; Mark 8:22-26; 10:46-52; Luke 7:21). In the Old Testament we see that it is God who makes men blind or gives them sight (Ex 4:11; Ps 146:8). We see there also that healing of the blind would be associated with the coming of the Messiah (Isa 29:18; 35:5; 42:7). One of John's purposes in writing this Gospel was to show that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah), the Son of God (20:31). This chapter contributes to this purpose.

The miracle recorded here is also a "sign" (v 16; 2:11). The spiritual truths it signifies are these: men are born into the world spiritually blind. By nature they cannot "see" the truth about themselves or about God or about salvation. And it is the Lord Jesus who gives spiritual sight to people (v 39). This is the true enlightenment every person needs. See v 39; 8:12; Ps 36:9; Acts 26:15-18; 2 Cor 4:4,6; Eph 1:17,18; 5:14; 1 Pet 2:9.

**9:2** Among the Jews it was a common idea that a person's own sins were the cause of any sickness or disability that might come to him. This attitude appears also among

through among them, and so went out.

**9** And as *Jesus* was passing by, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, "Teacher, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

3 Jesus answered, "Not either *because* this man or his parents sinned, but that the work of God might be revealed in him. 4 While it is day, I

Job's friends (notes at Job 4:7-9; 8:3; 18:5-21). The disciples were trying to understand if this applied to a person born with some defect. Was the man's blindness a punishment that came because of his parents' sin? or did the man somehow sin himself before he was born? The Jewish rabbis of the time speculated about the possibility of an unborn baby sinning while still in its mother's womb.

Also there may have been speculation in those days about the idea of reincarnation - that every person experiences multiple births and that his sins (or righteous acts) in a previous life affect his condition in this present life. There is no reason to think the disciples believed either of these speculations (compare Job 11:12; Heb 9:27). But they were curious as to why this man was born blind. Observe that they were not suggesting some way to help him. They were not showing compassion. He was to them just an object for theological discussion.

**9:3** The Lord Jesus denied the speculations of the disciples. He is not denying that the parents or the son were sinners as all men are sinners (Rom 3:23). He is saying that the cause of the man's blindness was not connected with their sins.

The teachings of the Lord Jesus are contrary to the doctrine of reincarnation. If He had believed that doctrine, or thought it had any significance at all in explaining man's life on earth, this was the perfect opportunity to say so. Instead, He denied the very basis of the doctrine - that a person's own sins in any supposed previous life affect what he will be in this life. What the Lord taught in Luke 16:19-31 also is opposed to this doctrine. See also the note at John 3:3.

Jesus says that the man was born blind for a much higher purpose that the disciples imagined. A mighty work of God was about to take place in the man, and glory and honor would come to God through it. God may have the same purpose in any sickness, disability or defect that brings suffering to us. It may be that a similar work of God will be revealed in us. Or a different work which will also glorify Him - a work in the heart that will make us humbly, faithfully, joyously endure any kind of suffering for Him (16:33; Acts 5:41; Rom 5:3; 2 Cor 4:16-18; 12:9,10; Col 1:24; 1 Pet 4:13).

**9:4,5** See 8:12. While Christ was on earth His presence made the darkness like day



must do the works of him who sent me. The night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

6 When he had said this, he spit on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which, being translated, means Sent). So he went away, washed, and came seeing.

8 Therefore the neighbours and those who previously had seen that he was blind, said, "Is not this the one who sat and begged?"

9 Some said, "This is he"; others said, "He is like him". But he said, "I am *the man*."

10 Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"

11 He answered and said, "A man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' And I went and washed, and I got *my* sight."

12 Then they said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I don't know."

13 They brought the one who had previously been blind to the Pharisees. 14 And it was the Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

15 Then once more the Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and *can* see."

16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This

man is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such *miraculous* signs?" And there was a division among them.

17 They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about the one who opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?"

20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. 21 But we do not know by what means he now sees, and we do not know who opened his eyes. He is of age. Ask him. He will speak for himself."

22 His parents spoke these *words* because they feared the Jews. For the Jews had already agreed that if any man confessed that he was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age. Ask him."

24 Then once more they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give God the praise. We know that this man is a sinner."

25 He answered and said, "I do not know whether he is a sinner *or not*. One thing I know: I was blind, now I see."

(Matt 4:16; Luke 1:78,79). But He had only a short time to finish His work. The night was coming (Luke 22:53). It would remain until He comes the second time (compare Rom 13:12; 2 Pet 1:19).

**9:6,7** Sometimes Jesus healed at a distance (4:50), sometimes by a touch (Matt 8:3,15). Here He did something different and used a substance (see note at Mark 8:23). He will do what He will do, and we cannot predict how He will work or tell Him He must work in one way or another.

**9:13** "Pharisees" – Matt 3:7.

**9:16** "Sabbath" – Matt 12:9-14. These Pharisees did not let themselves marvel at the power and compassion of the Lord Jesus. They only wanted to find fault with Him. Their view was this: Jesus had broken one of their rules for the Sabbath so He must be a wicked man! A few of them could not agree with that view. They knew that the power of God had been displayed in this healing.

**9:17** He believed that Jesus was sent by God and represented God. Later he came to understand that Jesus was much more than a prophet (vs 35-38).

**9:18** The enemies of Jesus did not want to believe this miracle took place and so they tried to ignore all the great evidence for it. Very often what people believe has nothing to do with facts and evidence, but comes out of their desires and prejudices.

**9:20-23** They knew it was Jesus who had given sight to their son but they were not bold and honest like him. Fear of others keeps people from standing for the truth (12:42,43). Verse 22 reveals how those who reject the Lord Jesus may persecute believers when they have power to do so. They often use unjust pressure, fear, and threats to turn people from the truth (Acts 4:18,21; 5:17,18,40; 7:57,58; 8:3; etc). Don't we see this happening very often in this country?

"Synagogue" – Matt 4:23. Being put out of the synagogue meant to become a social and religious outcast.

"Christ" – Matt 1:1.

**9:24** These Pharisees were determined to discredit the Lord Jesus. Their words "Give glory to God" does not mean that they were concerned for God's glory. They were either charging this man to tell what they thought was the truth, or else saying "do not give any honor to Jesus." They told this poor man the horrible lie that Jesus was a sinner. However they had no evidence for this at all (8:46). But haters of the truth and malicious men act as if they think evidence is unnecessary.

**9:25** He had definite opinions about whether Jesus was a sinner (vs 30-33), but before speaking of that he wanted to establish one fact once and forever: he had been blind and Jesus had given him sight. This was a

26 Then they said to him again, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear *it* again? Do you also want to become his disciples?"

28 Then they insulted him, and said, "You are his disciple, but we are the disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God spoke to Moses. *As for this fellow*, we don't know where he is from."

30 The man answered and said to them, "Why here is a marvellous thing! You don't know where he is from, and *yet* he opened my eyes. 31 Now we know that God does not hear sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does his will, he hears him. 32 Since the world began it has not been heard that any man opened the eyes of one who was born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

34 They answered and said to him, "You were utterly born in sins, and do you teach us?" And they drove him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

36 He answered and said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in him?"

37 And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen him and it is he who is talking with you."

38 And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped him.

39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see might see, and that those who see might be made blind."

40 And *some* of the Pharisees who were with him heard these words and said to him, "Are we also blind?"

41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you

fact he could not doubt. The same is true when men receive spiritual sight from the Lord Jesus. They know it has happened. Millions of believers in Christ through the centuries and throughout the world can say "I was spiritually blind and the Lord Jesus gave me sight."

**9:26** They were baffled and frustrated but would not give up.

**9:27** His question is pure sarcasm.

**9:28** They display the usual method of proud men whose reasoning is opposed and defeated (7:48). But insults and abuse do not answer a single good argument or do away with a scrap of evidence. They meant they were followers of the law Moses wrote down, but actually they were not. See 5:45-47; Matt 23:1-3. They proudly proclaimed themselves as Moses' disciples and yet were plotting to kill the One about whom Moses wrote (1:45; 5:46; Luke 24:27,44). This is another illustration of Jer 17:9.

**9:29** They could have known where Christ was from, but refused to believe Him when He told them (6:41,42; 8:23-25).

**9:30** This answer of a poor illiterate man has more wisdom in it than that displayed by all these very religious and highly educated Pharisees put together. Often the sound sense of simple men of faith puts to shame the reasoning of so-called experts. The reason for this may be seen in Matt 11:25,26; Ps 8:2; 119:99; Isa 54:13; Jer 31:34; 1 Cor 2:12; 1 John 2:20,27.

**9:31** The Pharisees knew the teaching of the Old Testament on this. See Ps 66:18; Prov 15:29; Isa 1:15. But in this case they were not willing to go where this truth led.

**9:32** There is no case recorded in the whole Old Testament.

**9:33** They wanted to talk theology. So he gave them his well-reasoned theological conclusion.

**9:34** These men of much learning were not able to overturn this simple man's conclusion. So again they abuse him (v 28).

**9:35** Note at 5:14. He will seek and find all His own and will draw near those who have been cast out by men because of their faith.

**9:36** He was prepared to believe the truth when revealed, unlike most of the Pharisees then. So God prepares individuals everywhere to receive the Lord Jesus (6:37,44).

**9:37** See 4:26. The Lord delights to reveal the truth about Himself to the humble and childlike (Matt 11:25-27).

**9:38** The Lord Jesus often accepted the worship of men (Matt 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9,17). He knew that only God should be worshiped (Matt 4:10), so in accepting worship He was showing that He knew He was the incarnation of God.

**9:39** He did not come to sit as judge and condemn men to punishment. But His very coming as the light of the world resulted in judgment (3:17-21). It divided people into two groups - those who came to the light and those who did not, those who were given sight and those who were blinded. In this verse Jesus is obviously speaking of spiritual blindness and sight. When He says those who "see will become blind", He means those who have light, who think they see and even pride themselves on seeing, will be made completely blind (compare Matt 13:14-16). This was a judgment they brought on themselves by refusing the light of Christ. For other reasons why Jesus came to earth see note at Matt 5:17.

**9:40** They thought they were the only ones who could see. It never struck them that they could possibly be blind. Understand man's heart (Jer 17:9), sin's deceitfulness (Heb 3:13), and Satan's power (2 Cor 4:4).

**9:41** Men are responsible for what they do with the light God gives them. Compare 12:35,36; Matt 6:22,23; Luke 11:35. These Jews had the light of the Old Testament and the "light of the world" was in their midst. And they had the light God gives to all men everywhere - 1:9; Rom 1:18-20. If they had been totally blind and had never had a

would have no sin, but now you say, 'We see,' so your sin remains.

**10** "Truly, truly I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. **2** But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. **3** To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice. And he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** And when he brings

ray of light they would not have been responsible, nor guilty of rejecting light. But they were proud of their knowledge and not willing to admit their need. And they willfully rejected the light they had. So God could not overlook their guilt.

In spiritual matters it is better to have no knowledge and light at all than to have it and not put it to proper use (compare 2 Pet 2:21). Those who are called Christians who have much truth but do not practice it are more worthy of condemnation than those who never heard of Christ. The more light we have the greater our sin if we do not follow it.

**10:1** There is no change of scene from the last verses of chapter 9, and the Jews and the blind man are mentioned in vs 19-21, so we may assume that in vs 1-18 Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees. They considered themselves teachers and shepherds of the people of Israel (Matt 23:2,3; Rom 2:17-21). In this chapter Jesus teaches that He is the true shepherd of God's people and the Pharisees were like thieves and robbers and wolves – bent on using the sheep for their own gain or else destroying them. In other words, the Pharisees were false and selfish shepherds. In some Old Testament passages God Himself says He is the shepherd of His people and describes false shepherds in very severe language. See Ps 80:1; Isa 40:10,11; 56:9-12; Jer 23:1-4; 25:32-38; Ezekiel chapter 34; Zech 11:4-17.

Here in 10:1-18 Jesus was using an illustration to teach spiritual truth. The sheep, of course, are Christ's own people, those who believe and obey His voice (vs 15-29). Christ Himself is both the gate and the true shepherd of His people (vs 7,11). Thieves, robbers, and the wolf all represent people who want to prey on the sheep for their own benefit, either secretly or openly.

**10:2** The true shepherd of God's people will enter in the proper way. God will appoint him and bring him into the ministry of shepherding.

**10:3** Verse 27; 18:37. Believers in Christ can know when He speaks to them, and they can distinguish His teaching from that of any other teacher. And they desire to obey His voice. What is meant by leading them out? Out to streams of water and pasture land. See Ps 23:1,2.

**10:4** A good shepherd does not drive his sheep but leads them to the place they should go. Christ leads His people from

out his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. **5** And they will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

**6** Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

**7** Then Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly I say to you, I am the door for the sheep. **8** All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. **9** I am the door.

earth to heaven and He knows each step of the way they should go, and has gone before them through everything that can happen to them (compare 1 Pet 2:21-25; Heb 12:1-3).

**10:5** "Stranger" – here signifies a false teacher. Followers of the Lord Jesus have the ability to discern between the false and the true. They can know that any teaching contrary to the teachings of Jesus must be false and dangerous. They see in it the voice of a stranger trying to lead them astray (Rom 16:17,18; Heb 13:9). The more they know and understand Jesus' teachings the more they will be able to discern the voice of strangers. If anyone professing to be a sheep departs from Christ to follow false teaching it is an example of 1 John 2:19.

**10:6** Often in this Gospel we see the Jews failing to understand Jesus' words (6:41,42, 52; 7:35; 8:22,27). They were not His sheep (v 26) and so lacked spiritual understanding.

**10:7** "I am the door" – this figure of speech is based on the method of shepherds and their sheep in those days. A shepherd would bring back his sheep to the pen and inspect each one as it passed through the opening into the pen. When all were inside he would lie down across this opening. Nothing and no one could come or go without passing over his body. He was the "door" or gate. Jesus is the one "door" of salvation (this is what He is speaking of – v 9). No one can get into the "sheepfold" of God's people except through Him. See 14:6. Compare Matt 7:13,14.

**10:8** "All who came before me" – the Lord Jesus did not mean His prophets in Old Testament days. Men like Moses, Samuel, and David were very good undershepherds serving God the Chief Shepherd (Ps 78:70-72). God Himself raised up such leaders for His people. Here Jesus meant those who came without being sent by God who yet claimed to be true shepherds (some of whom may have claimed to be "gates" for people to come to God). Many came on their own for their own purposes and professed to be prophets, etc (see Jer 23:21). Such was the situation in Israel in Christ's day. In the matter of religion there were plenty of "thieves" and "robbers" about (as there are now also), but apart from Himself there was no shepherd worthy of the name (Matt 9:36).

**10:9** "He will be saved" – this is what Jesus is talking about in this illustration of sheep

If anyone enters through me, he will be saved and go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, to kill and to destroy. I have come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* in great abundance.

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. 12 But the hired man who is not the shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away. And the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hired man runs away, because he is a hired man and does not care for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd and know my *sheep*, and my *sheep* know me. 15 *Just*

as the Father knows me, even so I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 "And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must also bring them. And they will hear my voice, and there will be one fold *and* one shepherd. 17 This is why my Father love me: because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from my Father."

19 So there was a division again among the Jews because of these statements. 20 And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do

and shepherd – salvation in all its varied aspects (Rom 1:16). Pasture speaks of the nourishment which Christ gives to His people. Their coming and going suggests freedom and safety in all the matters of life. The sheep pen, the pasture, and all else is owned and ruled by the good Shepherd. The best comment on this verse is the whole of Psalm 23.

**10:10** "Thief" – false teachers and unsaved selfish shepherds "steal," "kill," and "destroy." They try to steal the glory that belongs only to God (7:18; Matt 23:5-12), and try to take God's word from men (Matt 15:6-9; Jer 36:23-25; Gal 1:6,7). In this way they try to destroy men (Matt 23:13-15). And such people have often been guilty of actual killing (Matt 23:34-37; etc). Quite different is the purpose and work of the Lord Jesus. He wants men to have eternal life, spiritual life. This is why He came from heaven to earth. Everywhere in this Gospel is this emphasis on life (1:4; 3:16,36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:35,47, 51; 11:25; 14:6). For other reasons why Jesus came to earth see note at Matt 5:17.

**10:11** In the Old Testament Jehovah God was the Shepherd (Ps 23:1; Isa 40:10,11). In this verse the Lord Jesus says He is the Shepherd. This is more evidence that He knew Himself to be the incarnation of Jehovah God. See also 8:24,58; 12:41; Luke 2:11. "Gives his life" means His death on the cross.

**10:12** "Hired" – these are people who minister to God's people only for money or personal benefits. They have no love for the sheep (v 13).

"Wolf" – false prophets. See Matt 7:15,16; Acts 20:29-36.

**10:13,14** Between Christ and the "sheep" there is mutual knowledge as real as that between the Father and the Son in the Trinity. Christ's people know Him because of the direct spiritual revelation He gives of Himself to them (see Matt 11:27). They do not receive a full knowledge of Him in a moment, however. It is an ever-increasing knowledge that comes as they trust and obey and follow Him (see also Eph 1:17; Phil 3:10; 2 Pet 3:18). But the teaching of Jesus here is simply the fact that all of His

"sheep" actually do know Him. This is far more than having knowledge about Him. It indicates an initial meeting with Him and continuing fellowship with Him (1 John 1:3). Of course, this is a spiritual meeting and fellowship.

**10:16** He is referring to individuals from other nations and peoples who would later come to believe in Him. Though they had not yet heard the gospel or believed it, He knew they would in the future. Compare 6:37. He says He will bring them into the company of His people. This He is doing through His servants throughout this whole age of grace.

"One shepherd" – the one flock in this era is the Church of the Lord Jesus. Not just Jews but people of all nations are in it, and He alone is the true Head of the church (see Eph 2:11-22).

**10:17** For the third time Jesus speaks of laying down His life (vs 11,15). It is the most important thing He did for His sheep, the greatest possible display of love (15:13; Rom 5:6-8; 1 John 4:10). God the Father loved the Son from all eternity (5:20; 17:24). But Christ's giving Himself to death for His people was a special reason why the Father loved Him. For this reason He highly exalted Him (Phil 2:8,9).

**10:18** Jesus speaks of His rising from the dead (Matt 16:21; 28:6). No one was able to take His life unless He permitted it (19:10,11; Matt 26:53). And no one could prevent Him from rising from the dead. Both these events were God's will for Him and Jesus had authority over His own death and resurrection.

**10:19** See 7:12,43; 9:16.

**10:20** 7:20; 8:48,52; Matt 4:24. They thought Him mad because they did not believe He was who He said He was. And it is perfectly true that no fully sane and honest person could say the things Jesus said about Himself unless they were true. He either spoke the truth or He was indeed crazy. Every person has to decide what he will believe. By calling Jesus demon possessed and mad they did not have to account for the evidence He presented (v 25; 5:31-47). This is the easy way of trying to get rid of the arguments of an opponent.

you listen to him?" 21 Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

22 Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. 23 And Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's portico.

24 Then the Jews surrounded him and said to him, "How long will you make us doubt? If you are

the Christ, tell us plainly."

25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you did not believe. The deeds that I do in my Father's name testify about me. 26 But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep, as I told you.

27 "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 And I give to them eternal life, and they will never perish, neither will anyone

**10:21** Some had better sense than the others. But even these were not willing to follow the Lord Jesus. Speaking a few words in His favor is not at all the faith and commitment He requires.

**10:22** This dedication festival looked back to 165 B.C. to the re-dedication of the temple after it had fallen into enemy hands.

**10:24** Note on "Christ" at Matt 1:1. They wanted Him to speak plainly, not so they could believe Him, but so they could accuse Him of making what they considered false claims.

**10:25** Jesus had not used the words "I am the Christ, the Messiah of Israel," but some of His words plainly meant this. No one but the Messiah could have honestly said such things as 5:16-47; 6:32-58; 8:12,23-29; 10:7-18. And His miracles were part of the evidence He presented - v 38; 5:36.

**10:26** See 8:44.

**10:27** These truths He had already given (vs 3,14,16). Christ's sheep are those people who have been born again (3:3-8). They have a new spiritual nature and so they can hear Christ's voice and follow Him. To follow Him means to trust and obey Him. Faith and obedience are the twin marks of His people, and without them men cannot be real Christians at all.

**10:28** "Eternal life" - this is the present possession of believers (3:36; 5:24). They do not earn eternal life by following Christ. They follow Him because they already have eternal life in them.

"Never perish" - Christ here makes a plain statement that all of His sheep are safe and secure forever, that their salvation is eternal. See also 6:39,40,54,56; 17:11,15; Rom 5:9,10; 8:30-39; Phil 1:6; Heb 7:25; 1 Pet 1:3-5. This doctrine is also sometimes called "the perseverance of the saints." Observe carefully the wording of vs 27,28. It does not read like this: "If my sheep listen to my voice and if they keep on following me, I will give them eternal life and they will never perish." There is no "if" in Christ's words. The safety of the sheep is not based on any condition other than that they be sheep. And it is the mark of sheep that they listen to the Shepherd's voice and follow Him. If they do not they are not sheep. And the real sheep are safe and secure simply because they are in the good Shepherd's care. Their eternal safety does not depend on what they do, but on what He does.

But is it not possible for believers to stop believing and permanently forsake Christ?

If they did they would perish, but Christ says they will never perish. This implies what is plainly taught elsewhere - that God who gave them faith at the start (Phil 1:29; Eph 2:8; Heb 12:2) will keep them believing to the end. See Luke 22:31,32; Rom 5:9,10; 8:37; Phil 1:6; 1 Pet 1:5. Compare Jer 32:40.

But do not sheep sometimes wander away? And if one does, will not that one be finally lost? Temporarily a true sheep may wander away, but the Lord Jesus revealed what He does in such a case: He goes out and brings the sheep back (see Matt 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7). Actually if even one true sheep can be lost, what security is there for any of us? If it is possible for one to wander away and be lost, then it is possible that any of us who believe in Christ may finally be lost.

We should not think that by nature we are better than others, and so assume that we will be safe even if other sheep perish (compare Matt 7:11; Rom 7:14-25; 1 Tim 1:15; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8-10). If our salvation depended in any way on us then those of us who know ourselves best would have most reason to fear the eventual loss of it, indeed, would have most reason for complete despair. In many ways we are all weak, foolish, sinful, and failing sheep. If the keeping of our salvation were to depend on us, how could any of us finally be saved?

This matter of the eternal salvation and security of the sheep comes down to one very important question: Is their security altogether dependent on the Shepherd, or in some measure on themselves as well? Is it not plain that Jesus is teaching here that it depends altogether on Himself? And is it not reasonable to think that Jesus chose to call believers "sheep" because literal sheep are among the most helpless of animals and incapable of guarding themselves against the attack of enemies? How grateful we should be that our salvation depends on our Good Shepherd and that we are safe forever in His hands.

But does not this teaching of security promote sin? Won't the sheep, thinking they are safe forever, start doing what they please? That way of thinking is not the attitude of true sheep. They are already doing what they please - they want to follow Christ, and they do so, and are sad only that they do not follow Him better than they do. If they do not want to follow Him, they are not sheep. The knowledge that they

snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who gave *them* to me, is greater than all. And no *one* is able to snatch *them* out of my Father's hand. 30 I and *my* Father are one."

31 Then again the Jews took up stones to stone him.

32 Jesus responded to them, "I have shown you many good deeds from my Father. For which of these deeds do you stone me?"

33 The Jews answered him, saying, "We do not stone you for a good deed, but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? 35 If he called those to whom the Word of God came, 'gods,' and

the Scripture cannot be broken, 36 do you say about him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? 37 If I do not do the deeds of my Father, do not believe me. 38 But if I do, though you do not believe me, believe the deeds, so that you may know and believe that the Father *is* in me, and I in him."

39 Therefore once more they tried to seize him, but he escaped out of their hand, 40 and went away again beyond Jordan to the place where John first baptized, and he remained there.

41 And many came to him and said, "John did no miracle, but everything John said about this man is true." 42 And many believed in him there.

are safe promotes holiness in the sheep – the holiness that is not based on the fear of being lost, but on love for the good Shepherd and confidence in His love and power.

"My hand" – to get Christ's sheep away from Him requires a stronger arm than His. No evil men, not Satan himself can steal Christ's sheep from Him. Christ is the good Shepherd. For any shepherd to keep his sheep two things are necessary – an earnest desire to do so, and the ability to do so. Christ has this desire and this ability in the fullest measure. The sheep are safe because of who and what He is. Christ's people are a special gift of love from His Father (6:37; 17:6). He will do all in His power to keep this gift – and His power is limitless. It is unthinkable that He would lose any of them.

**10:29** Two almighty hands enclose Christ's sheep. Here is double security. See Col 3:2 – the life of believers is hidden in the depths of God Himself. And who can remove it from there?

"Greater than all" – see 14:28.

**10:30** This does not say and does not mean that the Son and the Father are one and the same person. The word "one" is neuter gender in Greek and indicates the truth that the two are united in one essence, that they share the same nature – 1:1. Other references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11. On the Trinity see 5:30; Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:6.

Jesus' teaching here is not at all the same as the teaching of Advaita Vedanta. Advaita teaches that all men are one with God, that man's spirit and God's Spirit are one and the same. Jesus is not saying this and does not mean this. He is saying that He, the only Son of God, is one with the Father. He taught repeatedly that He was unique and not as other men – 3:15; 8:23,24; etc.

**10:31** See 5:18.

**10:32** His miracles were signs pointing to the truth He spoke in v 30. These hardened unbelievers denied all He said about Himself, denied all the evidence He presented, and insisted that He was a mere man. But they were right in two things – in

the law the penalty for blasphemy was death, and for a mere man to claim to be God is blasphemy, a fearful sin worthy of death (Lev 24:16; Num 15:30). It will be the very sin of the coming "man of sin" (2 Thess 2:3,4). In the Bible the true God presents Himself as the Creator of men and far above them in every way (Gen 2:7; Num 23:19; Ps 9:19,20; Isa 40:22-26). But these Jews were terribly wrong in thinking Jesus was a mere man.

**10:34** Ps 82:6. See notes on that psalm.

**10:35** "Whom" – he states who the "gods" of Ps 82:6 were. Here the Lord Jesus upholds the full inspiration and authority of the Old Testament ("Scripture"). See also Matt 4:4,7,10; 5:17,18; 15:3; 22:43; Mark 12:36; Luke 24:44. He referred to the Old Testament as the "Word of God."

**10:36** His answer to them is plain and compelling. God Himself called mere men "gods" and "sons of the Most High" in Ps 82:6. This was not blasphemy. Then how could it be blasphemy for the unique Son of God Himself to say that He was that Son? In psalm 82 God was honoring those leaders of Israel by giving them titles in accordance with their high position. But He honored Christ by setting Him apart as His very own and sending Him into the world (see also 3:13-17; 5:37; 6:57; 8:29).

**10:37,38** The Lord Jesus not only said He was God's Son and one with Him, He demonstrated it. His miracles backed up His words (2:11; 5:36; Matt 8:1; 11:4,5). He is saying if the Jews would believe the evidence of His miracles they would come to faith in Him. The phrase "the Father is in me and I in the Father," is the same in meaning as v 30 – the Father and the Son are perfectly united in the same nature. They are not two distinct Gods but two persons in the one Godhead.

**10:39** Nothing Jesus could say would convince these hardened, prejudiced and unreasonable men.

**10:40** See 1:28. This was east of the Jordan river.

**10:41** "John said" – 1:26,27,29-34.

**10:42** People away from the hardened core

**11** Now a certain *man* was sick. *He was* Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** It was *this* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

**3** Therefore his sisters sent *word* to him, saying, "Lord, look, he whom you love is sick."

**4** When Jesus heard *this*, he said, "This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God, that through it the Son of God might be glorified."

**5** Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **6** So when he heard that he was sick, he remained two days more in the same place where he was.

**7** Then after that he said to *his* disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

**8** *His* disciples said to him, "Teacher, lately the Jews tried to stone you, and will you go there again?"

**9** Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours

in a day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. **10** But if a man walks in the night, he stumbles, because there is no light around him."

**11** He said these things, and afterwards he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep. But I will go to awaken him from sleep."

**12** Then his disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better."

**13** However, Jesus spoke of his death. But they thought that he spoke of resting in sleep.

**14** Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. **15** And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

**16** Then Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

**17** When Jesus arrived, he found that *Lazarus*

of the Jewish religion at Jerusalem were more open to Christ's teaching and more prepared to believe.

**11:1** The name Lazarus is a form of Eleazar and means "God has helped." Bethany was a village on the Mount of Olives just east of Jerusalem.

**11:2** See 12:3. There are several women named Mary in the Gospels - 19:25; Matt 1:18; 27:56.

**11:3** This is what all believers should do in time of trouble. Evidently Jesus knew the members of this family well and had shown special affection for them. The sisters did not even need to give Lazarus's name.

**11:4** Observe that even one whom Jesus especially loved fell sick. The Lord did not prevent it or heal him, though He had healed multitudes of others. See also Job 2:4-8; 2 Cor 12:7-10; 1 Tim 5:23; 2 Cor 4:20.

"Glorified" - compare 9:3. Observe that when God's Son is glorified God is glorified. The death of Lazarus was another opportunity for the Lord Jesus to demonstrate His grace and power. The mighty miracle of raising him from the dead was another "sign" (2:11) that He was the Messiah the Son of God.

**11:6** Though the Lord Jesus loved them He did not rush to their home to help and comfort them. He had something better in mind and wanted it to occur at a better time. They who leave their case in His hands and await His time will always receive His best for them. Delays are not denials. For what He knows are good reasons He sometimes permits us to suffer (2 Cor 4:17; 12:7-10; Rev 2:10; note at Job 3:20). His waiting like this in the case of Lazarus may have been intended as a trial of faith for the sisters and His disciples. Compare 1 Pet 1:6,7.

**11:7** Judea was the province of which Jerusalem was the capital.

**11:8** "Rabbi" - 1:38.

**11:9,10** Compare 9:4; 12:35. Jesus is

saying that God appoints a time to finish a work, and those who walk in the light God gives have nothing to fear. He knew what He was doing, and they should move ahead with Him in the light.

**11:11** "Friend" - see 15:14,15. "Asleep" here means dead (v 14). The death of the body is spoken of in this way in both Old and New Testaments (6:50; Deut 31:16; Dan 12:2; Matt 27:52; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Cor 7:39; 11:30; 15:6-18; 1 Thess 4:13,14). The expression suggests life after death and resurrection from the dead - those asleep in the night awake in the morning (Dan 12:2). This does not imply that the dead are not conscious - see Luke 16:22-26; Rev 6:9,10. It is not the soul which sleeps but the body. "Wake him up" means raise him from the dead. Compare 5:21.

**11:12,13** As so often Jesus' words were taken too literally and therefore misunderstood.

**11:14** Compare 3:4; 4:11,15,32; 6:52; Matt 16:6. Here is another example of Christ's supernatural knowledge. The message that came to Him said only that Lazarus was sick. See also 1:48-50; 2:24,25.

**11:15** The Lord Jesus was going to perform a mighty miracle which would result in an increase of faith in the disciples. This was the cause of rejoicing, not the fact that Lazarus was dead.

**11:16** "Thomas" - Matt 10:3. Both Didymus and Thomas mean "twin." He was one of the original apostles (Matt 10:3). It seems he was sure that if Jesus returned to Judea He would be killed and they with Him. He was prone to look on the dark side of things and to doubt when he should have believed (14:5; 20:24-27), but he was willing to die with Christ or for Him.

**11:17** Lazarus must have died shortly after the sisters sent their message (v 3). The message must have taken a day to reach

had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about three kilometers away. 19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. 20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him, but Mary *still* sat in the house.

21 Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now whatever you ask of God, God will give *it* to you."

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, even though he dies, yet he will live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that

you are the Christ, the Son of God, who should come into the world."

28 And when she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you."

29 As soon as she heard *this*, she quickly got up and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha had met him. 31 Then the Jews who had been with her in the house comforting her, when they saw Mary getting up quickly and going out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

32 Then when Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she fell prostrate at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

33 So when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he groaned in spirit and was troubled, 34 and said, "Where

Him; He waited two days before starting His journey and it took another day for Him to reach Bethany.

**11:19** Evidently this family was well-known and highly regarded.

**11:20** Martha was the more active of the sisters, Mary the quiet one (Luke 10:38-42).

**11:21** She meant that Jesus would have healed Lazarus if He had been there. But can we think He would have? We can see (as Martha could not at the time) that He had something greater in mind. And we know that He does not always choose to heal people. The Lord has always been with His believers (Matt 28:20), indeed, He has been in them (17:23; 2 Cor 13:5; Col 1:27), yet through the centuries they have all died and many have suffered much sickness and pain.

**11:22** She knew the Lord could do marvelous things, but it is very doubtful that she thought Jesus would raise Lazarus to life then. See v 39. She believed Lazarus would rise on the day of resurrection (v 24), but that is a different matter. See note at 5:28,29. Perhaps the thought that Jesus might possibly raise Lazarus then was trying to find root in her mind and she was struggling to believe it. It seems that Jesus' words to her in vs 23,25,26 were to encourage her to believe it.

**11:25** See 5:21-29. The Lord Jesus has God's own life in Him and He is the life of believers (Col 3:3,4). It is in Him and in Him alone that men can obtain eternal life (3:16,36; 6:53,54; 14:6). He is also the resurrection. He is saying He had the power and authority to raise anyone at any time He chose, including Himself (5:21; 10:17,18). Believers in Christ will live forever in God's presence (14:3; 1 Thess 4:17). Death is not the end of life for them but only the beginning of a far better life

(2 Cor 5:6-8; Phil 1:21-23).

**11:26** See 5:24; 6:50,51. Believers die physically but live eternally. Spiritual death (Eph 2:1) can never touch them. Observe again the emphasis Jesus puts on believing in Him. See 3:15,16,18; 6:40; 8:24; 10:37,38.

**11:27** "Christ" - Matt 1:1.

"Son of God" - 1:34,49; 6:68; 20:31; Matt 3:17; 16:16. Here we see that Martha's faith was very true and firm.

**11:30** It seems that the Lord waited there so that He could see Mary alone to comfort her and encourage her faith. But the Jews followed her and gave little time for that.

**11:32** Verse 21. Both Martha and Mary spoke as if Christ's bodily presence was necessary for healing to take place. But see 4:47-53; Matt 8:5-13.

**11:33** Why was He so moved, so troubled? Perhaps because He entered fully into the sorrow of His friends who were suffering (compare Isa 63:9). Perhaps He sorrowed for Lazarus who must be brought back from a state of peace only to die again at some future time. Perhaps Jesus was thinking of death in general, how it entered the world because of sin and as an enemy crushed and enslaved the whole human race (Rom 5:12,21; Heb 2:14,15). Perhaps He was thinking of the price He would very shortly have to pay to defeat this enemy, death - His own dying in agony on the cross for the sins of the world. Perhaps He was thinking of so many who would die in sin and be lost forever in spite of His sacrifice. Perhaps it was at this moment that He made His earnest prayer for the raising of Lazarus (v 41), and His prayers were not cold and unfeeling (compare Heb 5:7. Compare too the prayers of Christ's Spirit for believers - Rom 8:27).

**11:34** Asking this question does not mean that Jesus did not know. See v 14, which is



have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see."

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

37 And some of the dead man, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

38 Then Jesus, again groaning in himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be a bad smell, for he has been *dead* four days."

40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God?"

41 Then they took away the stone *from the*

*place* where the dead was lying. And Jesus raised *his* eyes, and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 And I knew that you always hear me, but because of the people standing here I said *this*, that they may believe that you have sent me."

43 And when he had said this, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

44 And he who had died came out, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and with his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Free him, and let him go."

45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in him. 46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees assembled the council, and said, "What shall we

just one example of His supernatural knowledge. Compare God's question to Adam in Gen 3:9.

**11:35** This is the shortest verse in the Bible, but one of the longest in meaning. The Creator of the universe, the Savior of men is no cold, unfeeling, impersonal deity. He loves, He cares, He weeps for men in their misery (Luke 21:41-44; Jer 48:31,32; Ex 2:24,25).

**11:37** Verses 21,32. They were all correct. Jesus could have kept Lazarus from dying, but He had another purpose in mind (v 4) which they did not yet understand.

**11:38** Verse 33.

**11:39** He who raised Lazarus could have caused the stone to roll away of itself. But He gave them a small part in the work of raising the dead. And they could testify later that their hands had taken away the stone and that inside the tomb the dead body of Lazarus lay. Obviously Martha did not understand what Jesus was about to do, and could see no sense in removing the stone. All she knew was that Lazarus was undoubtedly dead and not merely in a coma. The body had started to decompose.

**11:40** Verse 4. In the conversation between Christ and Martha these exact words do not appear, but we cannot assume that everything He said is written down. He may, however, have been referring to the words of vs 25,26. Observe in this verse that faith comes first, then seeing. Men want to reverse this - 4:48.

**11:41** "Looked upward" - 17:1. Posture in prayer is not the important thing. It is the state of the heart that matters.

"I thank you" - Matt 14:19; Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

"You have heard me" - evidently He had prayed specifically that Lazarus might be raised from the dead.

**11:42** He knew God the Father always answered His prayers because He always prayed in the will of the Father (compare 1 John 5:14,15). He gave thanks publicly to

the Father for hearing His prayer because He wanted the Jews there to know an important truth - He was not raising Lazarus on His own initiative; the miracle was evidence that God had sent Him.

**11:43** He called in a loud voice not so Lazarus could hear but so all the people could hear. Here was no magic, no mantra, no muttered spells. Jesus simply gave a clear word of command to a dead man. And, as He said in 5:21-27, the dead lived again.

**11:44** Here is a mighty miracle done publicly in the presence of many people and in broad daylight. It reveals that the Lord Jesus has authority over life and death. In 5:21-27 He said He had this authority. Here He proved it. He has power in the physical realm - He raised a body dead four days and decomposing. He has power in the spiritual realm - He called back the spirit of the dead man where it rested and reunited it with his body.

"Free him" - another example of His giving others a part in the work. In this way they could come in close contact with Lazarus, see and remove the very grave clothes wound about him, touch the flesh that had been decomposing now made whole and new. They could know that what they saw was no fake miracle, no hallucination.

**11:45** They believed in Jesus because of the evidence. They could not escape the facts. He had shown forth the power of God and they knew it.

**11:46** Apparently these people refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah in spite of this miracle, and they wanted to see what the Pharisees would do. Even so mighty a miracle did not overcome the hostility, prejudice, and unbelief of those hardened in their sins (see Luke 16:31). This is seen clearly in the verses which follow.

**11:47** "Council" - the Jewish High Court called the Sanhedrin - Matt 5:22. They admitted the fact that Jesus was performing these signs and miracles. The evidence was so strong and clear that they could not deny it (com-

do? For this man is performing many miraculous signs. 48 If we let him alone like this, everyone will believe in him. Then the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

49 And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 and do not consider that it is expedient for us, that one man die for the people, and not that the whole nation perish."

51 And this he did not say on his own, but being the high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for that nation, 52 and not only for that nation, but also that he would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. 53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to put him to death.

54 Therefore Jesus no more went about openly among the Jews, but went from there to a region near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and

remained there with his disciples.

55 And the Jewish Passover was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. 56 Then they looked for Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? Will he not come to the feast?"

57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command that if anyone knew where he was, he should report *it* so that they could seize him.

**12** Then six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus, who had died and whom he raised from the dead, was *living*. 2 There they made a supper for him, and Martha was serving, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took a pound of fragrant oil of spikenard, very costly, and anointed

pare Acts 4:15-17). But they were not willing to go where the evidence led them. Indeed they could not, for it was not the truth they wanted but what they thought was personal benefit (see also 5:44). No amount of evidence will convince those who are determined not to believe in Christ.

**11:48** See what an excuse they made for their rejection of Christ! They were afraid that if the mass of people believed in Christ they would make Him their leader and rebel against the Roman Empire which was ruling their country then. Then, they thought, the Romans would come in great force and bring disaster on Jerusalem, the temple, and the whole nation. They were afraid of men but had no fear of God (Rom 3:18).

And this fear of the Romans was not justified. The Lord Jesus had already refused to be a political leader (6:15). His kingdom was not of this world (18:36). His purpose was to establish a spiritual kingdom in people's hearts, not to lead a political rebellion against Rome. But see the hypocrisy and wickedness of these people. They suggested that they were the ones to save the nation, and at the same time were hoping to kill God's Son. Eventually the very thing they feared came on Jerusalem, not because the nation accepted the Lord Jesus but because it rejected Him. See Matt 23:37-39; 24:1,2; Luke 19:41-44.

**11:49** Caiaphas meant that they did not understand what the situation required. In the next verse he plainly stated what he thought they needed to do.

**11:50** Here he boldly gives his solution – "one man die", and he meant that Jesus was a troublemaker who would stir up the Romans to take action against the Jewish nation, and so He had to die. He was no more interested in truth and justice than the Pharisees or Pontius Pilate (18:38).

**11:51,52** Here is a very remarkable thing. An unbeliever, an unsaved man, a rejecter

of Christ, uttered a prophecy of spiritual things – the formation of Christ's church. It is plain that he did not know that God was using him to utter a prophecy. He spoke out of the unbelief and wickedness of his heart, but his words meant far more than he could imagine. He spoke as the high priest of God's nation Israel, and God used him in that office to give counsel concerning His Son that had very great consequences. For other examples of bad men prophesying see notes at Numbers chapters 23,24 and 1 Sam 11:9-11. God can use any instrument He chooses to accomplish His purposes.

**11:53** Previously they had attempted to kill the Lord Jesus (5:18; 8:59), but then they were acting on the impulse of the moment. Now they began to plot the best way to do it.

**11:54** Jesus did not act in fear. He knew that His time to die had not yet come (7:30), and He had things to accomplish before it did come.

**11:56** This is an indication of the fame of Jesus at this time. He was the great object of conversation among those who had come from all over Israel to the feast.

**12:1** Notes on the Passover at Exodus chapter 12; Lev 23:4-8. Here we begin the record of the last week of Christ before His crucifixion. The time had come for Him to die for the sins of the world. God had chosen both the time (at this Passover), and the place (Jerusalem), and the Lord Jesus was fully prepared to do the Father's will.

**12:2,3** Compare Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-9. Some scholars are sure that John described a different event than that found in Matthew and Mark.

"The fragrance" – compare Phil 4:18; Lev 1:9; etc. Though now our gifts of love to Christ may not have the literal fragrance of perfume, they are a fragrant smell, a pleasing aroma to God.

the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

4 Then one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray him, said, 5 "Why wasn't this oil sold for three hundred silver coins, and given to the poor?"

6 He said this, not because he was concerned for the poor, but because he was a thief and had the money bag, and he used to take what was put in it.

7 Then Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She has kept this for the day of my burial. 8 For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me."

9 Now a great many Jews found out that he was there, and they came, not only because of Jesus, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 But the chief priests made a plot to put Lazarus also to death, 11 for because of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

12 The next day, many people who had come

to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took palm tree branches and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel, coming in the name of the Lord!"

14 And Jesus, when he had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written,

15 Do not fear, daughter of Zion.

See, your King is coming,  
sitting on a donkey's colt.

16 His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about him, and *that* they had done these things to him.

17 Therefore the crowds that were with him when he called Lazarus out of his tomb, raising him from the dead, were giving testimony *about it*. 18 For this reason the people also came to meet him, for they heard that he had performed this *miraculous* sign.

19 Therefore the Pharisees said among themselves, "Don't you see that you are accomplishing

**12:4** Matthew and Mark do not mention it was Judas who said this.

**12:5** "Three hundred silver coins" – in Greek "300 denarii." A denarius was the usual day's wage for a laborer (Matt 20:2). Observe that acts of unselfish love for Christ can be misunderstood and criticized by others. Judas could understand hoarding money or using it for selfish purposes, but could not understand how Mary could pour out so much wealth at Christ's feet out of mere love, hoping for nothing in return.

**12:6** What a contrast there is in these verses – Mary poured out the best she had because she loved Christ; Judas wanted only to get more money for himself because he loved that. There are still these two types of people in the world. As for Judas, he was not the sort who was once tempted, stole something but repented later and fought his weakness. No. Money which God's people gave for the work of God he willfully, habitually took for himself. He loved money more than honor, decency, truth, or Christ. Money was his motive in betraying Christ (Matt 26:14-16). His love of money was one of the traits which made him like a demon (John 6:70,71).

Judas is a terrible example of what can happen to those who give themselves to this lust (see 1 Tim 6:5,9-10). And he was but one of many people, both out of the Church and in it, who have ruined their lives, dishonored God, and lost their souls for financial gain. Alas, how many there are even in Christian work who cannot be trusted with money, who will only prove themselves, like Judas, to be thieves! But see how the other disciples regarded Judas – they trusted him and let him be the treasurer of their group.

Notice also in this verse the hypocrisy of Judas – he cared nothing for the poor but he pretended that he did. His idea was that money for the poor would come through his hands and he could take some of it for himself. At the smell of money the Son of God, His wonderful teaching and miracles, and His offer of eternal life, became as nothing to Judas – nothing but a way of making more money. He completely ignored the teachings of the Lord Jesus on this subject (Matt 6:19-21,24; Luke 6:20,24; 12:20,21,33). If we ignore them we may become like Judas. It is always better to be poor than to lie, cheat, or steal – Prov 19:22.

**12:7,8** Note at Matt 26:10-13.

**12:10,11** Here is another glimpse into the nature of these unbelievers (and unbelievers in general). They could not deny that Jesus had raised Lazarus. The evidence was too clear, too powerful. But rather than move in the direction the evidence pointed they preferred to destroy the evidence. Compare Jer 36:1-26.

**12:12-15** Matt 21:4-9; Mark 11:9,10; Luke 19:37,38. Each of the four Gospels records somewhat different words spoken by the crowd. Which is correct? All are correct. No Gospel has all the words spoken, but each has some of the words actually spoken. Compare 19:19. Note at Mark 4:1-20.

**12:14** Matt 21:1-3.

**12:16** "Glorified" – this refers to His death and resurrection from the dead. After that the disciples understood a great deal that they had not understood before. Compare Luke 24:45.

**12:18** "Sign" – 2:11.

**12:19** This incident seemed to confirm their worst fears (11:47,48).

nothing? Look, the world has gone after him.”

20 And among those who came up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. 21 So they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we want to see Jesus.”

22 Philip came and told Andrew, and Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, “The time has come for the Son of man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. 25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this

world will keep it to life eternal. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me, and where I am, there my servant will also be. If anyone serves me, *my* Father will honour him. 27 Now my is soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this reason I have come to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name.”

Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, “I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.”

29 Therefore the people who stood there and heard *it* said that it thundered. Others said, “An angel spoke to him.”

30 Jesus responded and said, “This voice did

**12:20** The Passover was a Jewish festival. Greeks (and those of other nations) would not have been allowed to take part in any way in Jewish festivals unless they became converts to Judaism. That there were such among the Greeks we know from verses like Acts 17:4.

**12:21** These were the first of a great many Greeks and people of every nation who would want the same thing in years to come. And if they believe in Christ they will have their request granted (Rev 7:9; 22:4).

**12:22** Philip thought such a request needed consultation with a fellow disciple. We are not told whether the request of these Greeks was granted or not. But Jesus used the occasion to speak of His death – an event He knew must take place before Greeks or anyone else could have a place in heaven or see God.

**12:23** Verse 16; see 17:1,5.

**12:24** “Truly, truly” – 1:51.

“If it dies. . . much fruit” – this is true of literal grain, true of God’s way with His people on earth, and true of the Lord Jesus Himself. And certainly He is speaking of His own death and the results that would come from it. If He had refused to die for men, there would never have been eternal life for anyone. The Lord Jesus would have remained alone – there would not have been “many brethren” made in His image (Rom 8:29; Heb 2:10-15). But this is a principle that applies also to any of God’s servants in the world – real fruitfulness and spiritual life to others comes out of death to self. Compare 2 Cor 4:8-12.

**12:25** The Lord gave this same truth in slightly different words on a number of occasions. Evidently it is one of His most important sayings, and we ignore it to our great peril. See Matt 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; 17:33. Here in John He makes it even more emphatic by using the word “hate.” Compare Luke 14:26. And by using the words “eternal life” He makes it abundantly clear that the real choice is between this present brief life and life with God in eternity. We must decide what we will value, what we will live for – this world or the next.

**12:26** See 10:27. No one is serving Christ who does his own thing in his own way. Those

who follow Christ will be where He is in this world, for He is their Shepherd who leads them where they should go. And if this means trials, dangers, sufferings and a martyr’s death, He will be with them and they with Him in all of that. His followers will be with Him in the next world too and throughout eternity. This is what He prayed for them (17:24) and this is what they will have.

Christ’s servants may meet with much injustice, persecution, humiliation and dishonor in this world. They may be despised and rejected of men as their Master was. Their honors are still to come. The eternal God Himself will exalt, praise, honor and reward Christ’s servants (5:44; Matt 25:21; Rom 2:6-10; 8:18; Heb 6:10; 1 Pet 5:1,4; Rev 22:12). Any loss they face here He will more than make up then. So we must choose what honors to pursue, whose praises we desire – those that come from men or those that come from God.

**12:27** “Hour” – the coming hour of His sufferings and death. The thought of being a sacrifice for the world’s sin, bearing man’s guilt and facing God’s anger against it, caused anguish to Christ. Compare Matt 26:37,38; Luke 22:42-44. But He would not pray to be delivered from it unless it was God’s will. And He knew it was not.

**12:28** As in His prayer later in Gethsemane His concern is for the glory of God the Father, not His own glory; the Father’s will not His own will. He was willing to endure the cross so that the Father might be glorified. All His followers must learn to pray like this. See Matt 6:9,10. This is the third time in the Gospels that God spoke from above (Matt 3:17; 17:5). God had glorified His name all through the events described in the Old Testament, all through the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus. Now He would glorify it through the death and resurrection of Christ.

**12:29** Ex 19:16-19; Ps 29:3.

“Angels” – Gen 16:7. It seems that some distinguished the words, others did not. But all knew something very unusual had happened.

**12:30** Christ did not need to be told what He already knew so well. But men need to be told it very emphatically.

not come because of me, but for your sakes. 31 Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be thrown out. 32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* to me.”

33 He said this to indicate what death he would die.

34 The people answered him, “We have heard from the Law that Christ will remain forever. How can you say, ‘The Son of man must be lifted up?’ Who is this Son of man?”

35 Then Jesus said to them, “The light will be with you only a for a little while. Walk while you have the light, so darkness does not overtake you. For he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may be children of the light.” Jesus spoke these things and went away and hid himself from them.

37 But though he had performed so many

*miraculous* signs in front of them, still they did not believe in him, 38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke might be fulfilled,

Lord, who has believed our report?  
And to whom has the arm of the Lord  
been revealed?”

39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again,

40 He has blinded their eyes  
and hardened their heart,  
so that they would not see with *their*  
eyes,  
or understand with *their* heart,  
and be converted, and be healed by me.

41 These things Isaiah said when he saw his glory and spoke of him.

42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they

**12:31** Christ was about to die in the place of guilty men, as the Lamb of God bearing the sins of the world (1:29). This means that it was the whole world of mankind that deserved to die. The cross was like a pronouncement of judgment about this. It is as though God were saying to the world, “Because of your sins you are guilty and worthy of death. By the death of my Son in your place I declare this verdict. And you will condemn yourself by crucifying my Son, thus proving my verdict is right” (3:18,19).

“Ruler of this world” – Satan. See 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 6:12. For most readers today “ruler” probably brings out the meaning of the Greek word better than “prince.” Satan is ruling in the darkness which men love (3:19), in the hearts of sinful men who do not know the one true God. Notes on Satan at 8:44; 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10. By “thrown out” the Lord Jesus did not mean thrown out of the world, for Satan is still very much in it (1 Pet 5:8), and he will not be thrown out of it until Christ comes again (Rev 20:1-3).

The meaning seems to be this: by the cross He would accomplish redemption for men, and this would mean Satan’s eventual overthrow. In every land men formerly ruled by Satan would turn to God, and eventually the whole world would submit to God’s rule and reflect God’s glory (Isaiah chapter 11; etc). The cross is the basis of all this. The cross which seemed at the time to be Satan’s victory meant his utter defeat.

**12:32** Compare 3:14; 8:28.

“Lifted up” – refers to the cross. By drawing all men to Himself He does not mean that all men will be saved (see 8:24; Matt 7:13,14; 25:46; Rev 21:8). He means that He will draw men from all nations, peoples, tribes to Himself and not just those of the Jewish nation (compare Rev 7:9).

**12:33** He knew from the beginning that He

would die on a cross.

**12:34** They were probably referring to verses such as Ps 89:36; 110:4; Isa 9:7; Dan 7:14. They knew Jesus often called Himself “the Son of man”, and wondered what He meant by the name, and whether the Son of man was the same as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. Note on “Son of man” at Matt 8:20.

**12:35** By “light” He meant Himself (v 46; 8:12; 9:5). The sad condition of very large numbers of people everywhere is revealed here – they do not know where they are going.

**12:36** This means to trust Christ and so become children of God who is “Light” (1 John 1:5). It is only by receiving Christ the light and believing in His name that anyone can become a child of God (1:12,13). The phrase “sons of light” also suggests those who have the quality of light, who have come to the light and love the light, who are light-bearers themselves. Compare Matt 5:14-16; Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5.

**12:37-40** All through this Gospel we see the unbelief of many of the Jews. No evidence Christ gave could convince them. Their unbelief was unreasonable and strange. But here is an explanation for it. They were fulfilling Old Testament prophecy – Isa 53:1 and 6:10. And their unbelief was a judgment of God on them for their sins. The nation had long chosen the way of unbelief; now God abandons them to it. See note at Matt 13:14,15.

**12:41** In Isa 6:1-3 Isaiah wrote that he saw the LORD (Jehovah in Hebrew) and that the whole earth was full of the LORD’s (Jehovah’s) glory. Here John says that Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah. See also 8:24,58; 10:11; Luke 2:11.

**12:42,43** Was the faith of these men real? Perhaps there was a seed of true faith which

did not confess *him*, so they would not be put out of the synagogue. 43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

44 Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in me, does not believe in me, but in him who sent me. 45 And he who sees me sees him who sent me. 46 I have come, a light, into the world, that whoever believes in me would not remain in darkness. 47 And if anyone hears my words, and does not believe, I do not judge him, for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 He who rejects me and does not receive my words, has one that judges him. The word that I have spoken, it will judge him in the last day. 49 For I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say, and what to speak. 50 And I know that his command is everlasting life. Therefore whatever I speak, I speak just as the Father has said to me."

**13** Now before the Passover Feast, Jesus, knowing that the time when he should go

later sprouted and grew and made them braver. But we can hardly help being doubtful of those who say they believe and yet who are ruled by fear and the desire for the praises of men. See Matt 10:33; Rom 10:10. **12:44,45** Could Jesus have expressed His oneness with God the Father more clearly? Compare 10:30; 14:9. To believe Jesus is to believe God, to see Him is to see God. **12:46** Verses 35,36; 8:12; 9:5. On why Christ came to earth see note at Matt 5:17. **12:47** See 3:17. **12:48** The "last day" is the day of judgment God has appointed. See references at Matt 10:15. One of the books that will be opened at that time (Rev 20:12), it seems, will contain the words of Christ. These words we have in the four Gospels. If we do not act on what they say we bring condemnation on ourselves. Compare 7:21-23. **12:49** Compare 5:19; 4:34. The teachings of the Lord Jesus are in the exact words, and doubtless in the forms of speech and expression that God appointed. Anyone who quarrels with them is quarreling with the one true God who gave them. **12:50** "Everlasting life" - a constant theme of this Gospel (1:4; 3:16,36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:47; 10:10). Christ was very careful to speak the very words God the Father gave Him. The issues involved were very important. These are the last words of Christ's public ministry, and they put the stamp of God's authority on all that He had ever said. He is the Word of God (1:1) and He spoke only God's words. **13:1** "Passover" - Exodus chapter 12; Lev 23:4-8. At last the time of Christ's departure had come. See 7:30. "Loved" - His whole life and ministry were a demonstration of His love. Now He was

from this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 And supper being ended, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and went to God, 4 got up from supper, took off his outer garments, took a towel, and wrapped *it* around himself.

5 After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe *them* with the towel which had been wrapped around him.

6 Then he came to Simon Peter, and Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you will not understand now, but afterwards you will understand."

8 Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me."

9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not only my

about to show His people the height and depth and length and width of it (Eph 3:18).

"His own" - means His followers, those whom God the Father had given Him (John 6:37; 17:6).

**13:2** "Devil" - Matt 4:1. "Judas" - 6:70,71; 12:6; Matt 26:14-16.

**13:3** "Into his hands" - compare 3:35; 10:18; 17:2; Matt 28:18.

**13:4,5** He knew He was God the Son, had come from God the Father, and was returning to Him. Yet He here performed the work of the lowliest servant. This shows His humility and desire to serve rather than be served. See Matt 11:29; 20:25-28; Phil 2:6-8. How different was He from many now who profess to be His servants and disciples!

**13:6-8** To Peter it did not seem fitting that one he knew to be the Christ the Son of the living God (Matt 16:16) should perform the task of a menial servant. Even though Jesus told him this act had a meaning which he would later understand Peter flatly refused to allow it. Peter's words on the surface may seem to indicate humility, but they reveal a certain arrogance as well. Did he think he knew better than the Lord Jesus what should be done? (See also Matt 16:22; Isa 40:13,14).

Who is any mere man to refuse to accept what the Son of God would do for him? There may be many of His ways with us we do not understand now, but we must humbly allow Him to minister to us as He wishes (Rom 11:33,34). Some day we will understand the meaning of all He does with us, in us, to us, for us. There is a spiritual meaning behind His words "no part with me." He is saying that it is necessary to cleanse His disciples from sin if they are to have fellowship with Him. See 1 John 1:7-9.

feet, but also *my* hands and *my* head!"

10 Jesus said to him, "He who has had a bath needs only to wash *his* feet. *He* is completely clean. And you are clean, but not all *of you*."

11 For he knew who would betray him, so he said, "You are not all clean."

12 So after he had washed their feet, taken his garments, and sat down again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord. And you say rightly so, for I am *that*. 14 If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you.

16 "Truly, truly I say to you, the servant is not greater than his lord, nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. 18 I do not speak about all of you. I know whom I have chosen. But that the Scripture might be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.'

**13:10** These believers in Christ had complete cleansing from sin when they first trusted in Christ. This is called the "washing of new birth" – Titus 3:5; John 3:5. Those who have this do not need to have it again and again. In fact, they cannot have it again and again. Birth is a once and for all thing, and the Bible nowhere speaks of new spiritual birth being received by an individual more than once.

But in their Christian walk in this sinful world their spiritual "feet" may get dirty – sin may cling to them and need washing away (see Luke 11:4; Ps 51:4; Rom 7:18,19; Jam 3:2). This Christ does as often as needed (compare Eph 5:25,26). By saying not everyone of them was "clean" Jesus meant that Judas had never experienced the washing of the new birth (Titus 3:5). He was still filthy in heart, mind and soul.

**13:11** See 2:24,25.

**13:12** He washed the feet of all including those of Judas the traitor – an illustration of how to deal with enemies. Compare Matt 5:43,44; Rom 12:17-21. The question the Lord asked has to do with the spiritual meaning of what He had done. He did not need to ask if they understood the physical act.

**13:13** "I am that" – Luke 2:11. Since He is both Teacher and Lord no one should try, like Peter, to instruct Him or tell Him what to do.

**13:14** The author of these notes does not believe that the Lord Jesus was appointing another ordinance to the Church such as baptism and communion. He was speaking of the humble service each believer should be willing to perform for any other in the ordinary matters of life, whether washing of feet or any other service. He may mean also that believers are to try to help other

19 Now I tell you before it happens, so that when it happens, you will believe that I am *he*.

20 "Truly, truly I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me."

21 When Jesus had said this, he was troubled in spirit and testified, saying, "Truly, truly I say to you, one of you will betray me."

22 Then the disciples looked at one another, in doubt about whom he spoke. 23 Now one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was leaning against Jesus' chest. 24 So Simon Peter gestured to him, that he should ask who it was he was talking about.

25 Then he, leaning back against Jesus' chest, said to him, "Lord, who is it?"

26 Jesus answered, "It is *the one* to whom I give a piece of bread, when I have dipped *it in the dish*." And when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon.

27 And after the piece of bread, Satan went into him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you are

believers find cleansing from any sin that may cling to them in their Christian walk. This they might do by speaking God's Word to them (15:3), and leading them to find cleansing through the Lord Jesus (1 John 1:9).

**13:15** In this, as in everything, Christ is our example – 1 Pet 2:21-23; 1 John 2:6.

**13:16** See Matt 10:24,25.

**13:17** There is a blessing of God which comes only by doing what Christ says – Luke 11:28. Mere hearing is not enough (Jam 1:22,23). Notes on blessing at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1; 119:1; Matt 5:3-12.

**13:18** See 6:70,71. See Ps 41:9.

**13:19** See 8:24,28,58. When Christ's disciples later understood that He knew the future and was not a mere victim of treachery but the complete master of the situation, their faith was confirmed, strengthened and enlarged.

**13:20** Matt 10:40; Mark 9:37; Luke 9:48; 10:16. Those whom Christ sends are His ambassadors, His representatives (2 Cor 5:20). To accept them is the same as accepting the Father and the Son who sends them. But when people present themselves as Christ's servants we must make very sure that God has sent them. Satan has his own servants and ambassadors whom he sends into the world and into the churches (2 Cor 11:13-15; Acts 20:29).

**13:21** See 11:33; 12:27. Knowing what was going to happen did not make Jesus cold and stoical.

**13:22** They were all (except Judas) utterly amazed. None of them, it seems, had suspected Judas for a moment.

**13:23** This person was probably the apostle John. See also 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20.

**13:27** Luke 22:3. Before this, Satan had put the idea of betrayal in the mind of

going to do, do quickly.”

28 Now no one at the table knew the reason why he said this to him. 29 For some *of them* thought, because Judas had the money bag, that Jesus had said to him, “Buy *the things* that we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.

30 He then, having received the piece of bread, immediately went out. And it was night.

31 Therefore, when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and will immediately glorify him. 33 Little children, I will be with you only

for a little while. You will look for me, and, as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ Now I say this to you.

34 A new commandment I give to you, That you love one another. As I have loved you, you *must* also love one another. 35 By this all *men* will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

36 Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Now you cannot follow me where I am going, but you will follow me later.”

37 Peter said to him, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for your sake.”

Judas (v 2), and Judas had long been following the ways of Satan (6:70; 12:6). Now Satan possessed him completely – a terrible fact which brought Judas to a terrible end (Matt 27:3-5). Jesus’ words to Judas show that His time had come and He was fully prepared to endure the act of betrayal; let Judas not waste time about it (7:30; 12:1).

**13:29** See 12:6. The dullness of the disciples is sometimes surprising.

**13:30** Judas knew what Jesus meant even though the others did not. It was then literally night outside, spiritually night in Judas, the beginning of the hour of darkness on earth (Luke 22:53). It would seem that Judas went out after the events of Matt 26:26-29. See Luke 22:20,21.

**13:31** “Son of man” – Matt 8:20. The time had come for the Lord Jesus to endure a terrible death on the cross. His betrayer has gone out to do his betraying, and the next day Jesus would die. How does He regard this? As glory. How can it be glory? It reveals those qualities of His which will bring Him the greatest honor – His undying love for God and for mankind, His humility, His purity, and His other excellent virtues. Jesus is nowhere more glorified than in His death on the cross (and, of course, in His resurrection afterwards), for it was there that His character was most clearly revealed. And God the Father was glorified in Him because the Father and the Son were completely united in nature and character and in all that happened.

**13:32** This refers to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Because Jesus willingly endured the death of the cross God raised Him up and highly exalted Him at His own right hand in heaven (Acts 2:32,33; 3:13-15; Phil 2:6-11).

**13:33** This is the only time Jesus called His disciples “little children.” It indicates His tender love for them. Compare 1 John 2:1,12,13,18,28; 3:7,18; 4:4; 5:21. See also Matt 18:2,3.

**13:34** On the night before He died one of the things uppermost in His mind was the need of all His disciples to love one another. And He did not merely request or advise them to do so – He issued a command.

This command He gave three times (15:12,17). See also Rom 13:8; Gal 5:13,14; Eph 5:2; Phil 2:2; Col 2:2; 1 Thess 3:12; 4:9; Heb 13:1; Jam 2:8; 1 Pet 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 1 John 3:11,18,23; 4:7.

“New” – the commandment to love one’s neighbor as oneself is one of the two greatest commandments in the whole law of God (see Matt 22:35-40). Why, then, does Jesus call His commandment “new”? He is commanding something higher and better than the law. He has created a new group of redeemed people later known as the Church. The love each member is to have for every other is something special, something beyond the love and kindness one should show to neighbors. It is a love based on Christ’s love to them. Christians are not merely to love fellow believers as they love themselves but as Christ loved them. And how did Christ love? To the uttermost, willingly giving His life for them. See 1 John 3:16. His was completely holy and pure love, unselfish love, unfailing love, divine love. See the note at 1 Cor 13:1. This is the kind of love believers in Christ are to receive from God and show to other believers.

**13:35** If Christians love one another, this will be evidence to people outside the Church (and to themselves – 1 John 3:14) that they are true Christians, real followers of Christ. People will not be convinced of this if Christians bite and devour one another (Gal 5:15), cheat and deceive each other (1 Cor 6:8), etc, as so often happens.

**13:36** The disciples were very dull in understanding spiritual matters before the event described in Luke 24:45. He had told them more than once of His approaching death (Matt 16:21; etc). Notice here that Peter passed completely over Christ’s command about love and questions Jesus about a thing He said before. Now many Christians would rather speculate about what Christ does than earnestly strive to do what they should do. Of course Christ was speaking of His ascension into heaven.

**13:37** It seems Peter still did not understand Christ’s meaning. And he did not understand his own nature. See Matt 26:31-35. We can learn from this that there may be much ignorance of one’s own heart in



38 Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for my sake? Truly, truly I say to you, the rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times.

**14** "Do not let your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.

2 "In my Father's house are many dwellings. If *this were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

even the most prominent disciples of Christ. How many of us are aware that the seeds of every sin are planted deeply in our fallen nature? How many are self-confident and boastful when they should bow humbly in the dust? See Jer 17:9; 1 Cor 10:12; Prov 16:18.

**13:38** Though men themselves may not know what is in them, Christ knows - 2:24,25.

**14:1** There were several matters that could cause them to be troubled. Their master was going away. Peter was soon to deny that he knew Him. None of them knew what was going on, only that something strange and difficult was about to happen (this they could judge from the words of the Lord recorded in Matt 26:26-35). But He tells them not to be troubled, and gives in this chapter a number of reasons why they should not be (vs 1,2,3,13-14,16,27). The first is that He is trustworthy. This is the way whereby His people can always overcome the temptation to be troubled, worried and agitated about events - trust in God and trust in Christ. They could not be in control of circumstances, but He was, and in that they could find rest of heart. Compare Matt 6:25-27; Phil 4:6,7; 1 Pet 5:7.

**14:2** Here is another reason why they should not be troubled. They had a glorious, eternal future in heaven. With such a prospect they should not allow the things of time and the world to weigh too heavily in their thoughts. Peter had asked where He was going. Here Jesus gives a direct, clear answer. There was work in heaven which He would do for them.

**14:3** See 17:24; 1 Thess 4:17. Here is another reason why they should not allow themselves to be troubled. Though He was going away He was also coming back. See Matt 24:26,27; 25:31; 26:64; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16 - 5:4; Rev 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:12.

**14:4** They did not think they knew the way (v 5), but actually they did know it because they knew Jesus Himself who is the way. And they had already taken the way that leads to heaven - faith in Him (1:12,13; 3:16,36; 5:24; 6:47).

**14:5** This disciple is often called "doubting Thomas" because of 20:24,25. But he was also honest, open, without hypocrisy. He

4 And you know where I am going, and you know the way."

5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, and how can we know the way?"

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. And from now on you know him, and have seen him."

8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it will be sufficient for us."

would not pretend to know something or to believe something he did not know or believe.

**14:6** Here is one of the best known and most important sayings of the Lord Jesus.

"The way" - He is not one way among many, but the only way there is. It was not His disciples but He Himself who insisted He was the only way to God's presence. To be true to Him His disciples must teach the same thing that He taught (compare 3:36; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5). Many people do not like this teaching of Jesus, but not liking it will not change it. Far better it is to decide to like it, because Jesus is the Truth and does not lie. He Himself said that He is the only Son of God (3:16), the one they must receive to have spiritual life (6:53), the one men must believe or else be lost forever (8:24), the only "door" for God's people and the only Shepherd (10:7-11). Let us believe Him because of who He is and because of the evidence He has shown.

"Truth" - the Lord Jesus is the embodiment of God's truth, the incarnation of the God of truth (Ps 31:5). There is not the slightest hint of deception, guile, or darkness in Him. And it is He who said that He is the Truth who said that He is the Way.

"Life" - 11:25. This does not mean, of course, physical existence, and He is not at all saying that in some way He is the life of all men and all creatures. He is saying that He shares the life of the one true God (5:26), and He is the one who gives eternal life to men (5:21; 17:2), and this life is in Him alone (1 John 5:11,12). By receiving the Lord Jesus into our hearts and lives by faith, all that He is becomes ours and we are in the Way, believe the Truth, and have the Life. If we reject Him we will never be in the way to God, or believe the truth, or have eternal spiritual life, or arrive in peace in the presence of God in heaven. We may be certain of this because we have the word of the Son of God Himself.

**14:7** Jesus meant that if they had really understood who and what He is they would have known God the Father also. See 1:14,18; Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11. But up to that time their faith and spiritual understanding were weak.

**14:8** Perhaps Philip's desire was something like that of Moses in Ex 33:18 - a vision of

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been such a long time with you, and you have not yet known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father. Then how can you say, 'Show us the Father?' 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who lives in me is doing these things. 11 Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father is in me; or else

believe me because of the deeds themselves.

12 "Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in me, he also will do the deeds that I am doing; and he will do greater deeds than these, because I am going to my Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father will be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in my name, I will do *it*. 15 If you love me, keep my commandments.

16 "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you

God Himself.

**14:9** "Seen the Father" – compare 10:30; 12:44,45; 1:18; Heb 1:3. To see Jesus is to see what God the Father is like. They share the same nature. They are members of the same Godhead. Jesus is the only person on earth who has ever been able to say this truthfully.

**14:10** These words signify a complete and perfect union of Father and Son in the one Godhead. And this is something Philip should have believed because of truth Jesus had already taught. The words and works of Jesus were the words and works of God (7:16; 12:49).

**14:11** If Philip was not willing to take Christ's word for it, he should look at the evidence Christ gave and then believe. Christ once spoke to the Jewish leaders in the same way – 10:37,38.

**14:12** What things could possibly be greater than the things Christ had done? He could not be speaking of miracles because the miracles they later did were in no way greater than His. Only one work of theirs was in any way "greater" than those He had done. This was the work of preaching that resulted in the conversion of multitudes of both Jews and Gentiles, of going into all the world and proclaiming the gospel to all creation (Mark 16:15) and making disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19). When He was on earth He confined His ministry to a very small area, and saw comparatively few people come to a true faith in Himself. Having gone to the Father He sent the Holy Spirit to enable His disciples to do "greater" works and spread His gospel to the ends of the earth.

**14:13,14** Here is another reason why His disciples should not be troubled (v 1). This is a very wide promise with very clear restrictions. Effective prayer must be in Christ's name. No other name, no other mediator, is needed. Since He Himself will answer any prayer we make in His name, then it is plain we need no help from anyone else in heaven or on earth to get answers to our prayers. See also the note at 16:27.

"Name" here signifies all He is and stands for, His nature, His character, His will, His authority. His will (and all else we know of Him) is revealed in His teachings, so prayer should be made according to them. Many requests made to Him are not granted because they fall short in this. The Lord Jesus answers prayer with a grand purpose in mind – the glory of God the Father. We

should want answers to our prayers on the same high basis. Compare Matt 6:9,10. If our motives are right we may ask for big things in His will and get big answers. See also 15:7; 1 John 5:14,15. Compare Jer 33:3; Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8; Eph 6:18; Heb 4:16; Jam 5:16.

**14:15** This is three times repeated – vs 21,23. This verse is surely closely connected with the promise given above. If we ignore or disobey His commandments how can we pray in His name? And how can we say we love Him? Deeds, not words, are the proofs of love. Obedience is the evidence, not tears, fine feelings, or knowledge of love. The way to find out if we really love Christ is to go through His commandments and see whether we are actually obeying them – commands such as 13:13-17,34; Matt 5:16,23, 24,34, 39-42,44; 6:1-6,19,20,25; 7:1; 9:38; 16:24; 18:15,21,22; 19:4-6; 20:25-27; 24:42,44; 28:19. To "keep" them means to put them into practice. Let us examine our lives to see whether we really love Christ. Love must be at the heart of the believer's relationship with Him.

**14:16** Here is another reason His disciples should not be troubled (v 1) – Christ's prayers for them and the coming of the Holy Spirit to be in them. On Christ's prayers for His people see Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25.

"Comforter" – the Greek word has a broad meaning. It means "someone called alongside to help." It often indicated a helper in legal matters, someone to speak in another's defense, possibly a mediator or intercessor. In the New Testament the word seems to suggest a Friend who advises believers in all matters relating to righteousness and sin, a counselor, one who helps and comforts them and represents them before God. The Lord Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit, as is clear from vs 17,26. He calls Him "another" Comforter. Up until then He Himself had been their Comforter (in Greek this very word is used of Jesus in 1 John 2:1. There it is translated "Advocate." See also Isa 9:6, where the Messiah is called Counselor). Now He promises to send another like Himself, but who is a different person (this is indicated by the word in Greek translated "another"). See also 7:39; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,5,8; 2:1-4.

Observe that this Comforter, this divine Friend of believers will be with them "forever." He will never leave them or forsake them.

another Comforter, that he may stay with you forever. 17 *He is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him, and does not know him. But you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you without comfort. I will come to you. 19 After a little while, the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will know that I *am* in my Father, and you *are* in me, and I *am* in you.

21 "He who has my commandments and keeps

them is the one who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will reveal myself to him."

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?"

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If a man loves me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not keep my teachings. And the word that you are

**14:17** God is the God of truth – Ps 31:5; Titus 1:2. The Lord Jesus is Himself the Truth (1:17; 14:6). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (15:26; 16:13). Truth is at the core of His being. He loves truth, speaks only the truth and leads believers into all truth (16:13). By "world" Jesus means the world in its sin and darkness, the world that refuses to receive Him as Lord and Saviour. The world may use expressions like "the divine spirit," "the spirit of life," "the spirit over all," etc, but the world does not know the Holy Spirit of the one true God and cannot receive Him.

The disciples of Jesus did know the Spirit. They were born of the Spirit (1:12,13), and knew the Spirit's working in the ministry of Jesus and in their own service (Matt 10:1,19,20; 12:28). He had been with them. The time was near when He would be in them – would live in their physical bodies (1 Cor 6:19). This is not true of all men, but only of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. See Rom 8:16; Gal 3:2; Eph 4:18; Jude 19.

The spirit which every individual has from birth is not God's Spirit. It is a spirit God created, and each individual has a different spirit separate from all others. God's Spirit is eternal, uncreated, and comes to live only in those who receive the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Saviour – Gal 3:1-5,14. The world has a spirit, but it is not the Spirit of God. See Eph 2:2.

Observe in this verse how Jesus uses the personal pronoun ("He" and "Him") when speaking of God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a mere influence emanating from God. He is a divine person just like the Father and the Son, and is one with them in nature and attributes. Just as we should not refer to Jesus as "it", so we should not refer to God's Spirit as "it."

**14:18** Jesus came to them after He rose from the dead (chapters 20,21). In a sense He came at Pentecost when the Spirit of God came to them (in Rom 8:9 He is called the "Spirit of Christ"). But here He may be referring to His second coming (v 3).

**14:19** His disciples saw Him after His resurrection (20:20,29; 1 Cor 15:5-8). This is strong evidence indeed that Jesus is who He said He is and that all His teachings are true. Note at Matt 28:6.

"You also will live" – compare Rom 5:9,10; Col 3:3,4. The hope of life for His

disciples was bound up with His resurrection – 5:21,26; 6:47,54; 11:25,26.

**14:20** "That day" – the period of time just after His resurrection. Then they would understand what unity He was bringing them into – v 10; 17:21-23. Christ in believers and they in Him is a constant theme of the letters of the apostle Paul (Rom 6:3-8; 8:9-11; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 2:20; Eph 1:1).

**14:21** Verse 15. The Lord Jesus is emphasizing the relationship between His believers and Himself and God the Father. It is a relationship of love expressed on their part by obedience, and on His part by some clear revelation of Himself. Only those who experience it will know what it is. God has a special love for His obedient loving children. He loves them infinitely, completely, totally, eternally. All His thoughts toward us are thoughts of love. All His actions toward us are done in perfect love. This is a family relationship of love, a delight in loving. God so loved the world that He sent His Son, and He has great compassion and pity on those lost in sin, but He cannot give full expression of His love to those who remain in rebellion against Him as He does toward His believing obedient people.

**14:22** Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13. He and the other disciples hoped that Jesus, as the Messiah of Israel, would gloriously manifest Himself to the nation and to the world, take the reins of power in His hands and reign. See Luke 24:25,26.

**14:23** Again He puts the emphasis on obedience – vs 15,21. The importance the Lord placed on this truth is indicated by the fact that He uttered it three times in so brief a time. The promise He gives here is one of the greatest in the whole Bible. It reveals the desire of God to live with His people, to fully express His love toward them in action. See note and references at Exodus 25:8. And He promises He will do this now with those who love the Lord Jesus. Observe how the Lord says both He and His Father will come to live with each one who loves Him. Being in many places at the same time is possible only to God, and if Jesus were not God He could not do this. Jesus is one with the Father in nature, but He again clearly distinguishes Himself from the Father as a person. See other references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

**14:24** By this we know the true condition of those who only read the Bible or listen to

hearing is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. 25 These things I have spoken to you, being *still* present with you. 26 But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and will cause you to remember everything I have said to you.

27 "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled, do not let it be afraid. 28 You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and will come *again* to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I said, 'I go to the

Father.' For my Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it takes place, you might believe. 30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me. 31 But that the world may know that I love the Father, I do just as the Father commanded me. Arise, let us leave here.

**15** "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. 2 Every branch in me that bears no fruit he takes away, and he prunes every

Bible messages and profess to be Christian, yet who do not do what the Bible says.

**14:26** This was a special promise to His original disciples. See also 16:13. The Holy Spirit would enable them to teach what Jesus taught (and to write it down – though this is not specifically stated). To get the truth to the world Jesus did not depend on the ability of His disciples to remember what He had said. His Spirit would teach them all they needed to know and bring to their remembrance "everything" Jesus said. It is true also that the Spirit of God teaches all believers (1 Cor 2:10-13; 1 John 2:27). On God as teacher see note at Ps 25:4,5; etc.

Notice carefully the name given to God's Spirit here. He is the "Holy" Spirit, absolutely pure, separate from sin, one with the God of holiness. Note on "holy" at 17:17-19; Lev 20:7. Notice too that the Spirit is not the same person as the Father or the Son. The Father "sends" Him (v 16), in Christ's name. Note on the Trinity at Matt 3:16; etc.

**14:27** Here is another reason why His disciples should not be troubled (v 1). Jesus is the Prince of peace (Isa 9:6). He came to make peace between God and men (2 Cor 5:19,20; Col 1:20,22). But here He speaks of the peace of mind and heart He gives believers (16:33; Phil 4:6,7; Col 3:15; 2 Thess 3:16). What so many people long for and cannot find Jesus freely gives to His disciples and removes all reason for fear.

**14:28** They loved Him, but if their love had been what it should have been they would not have been thinking of themselves. Their thoughts would have been of Him and the finishing of the work He came to do, and the blessed state that awaited Him in the Father's presence. See how Jesus here distinguishes Himself from God the Father. The Father is not greater than the Son in nature or attributes, for Father and Son share these (v 9; 8:24,58; 1:1; 10:30). But the Father is greater in position and authority. See 5:19-27; 12:49. The Father does the showing, giving, sending and the commanding. The Son does the seeing, the receiving, the coming in subjection to the Father and the obeying.

**14:29** See 13:19.

**14:30** "Ruler" – Satan – note at 12:31. The Lord Jesus was sinless, had never yielded

to any suggestion or temptation of Satan. There was nothing in Jesus that Satan could claim as his own; there was no way he could influence the way He lived His life.

**14:31** It would soon seem as if Satan had some hold on Christ. The hour of darkness (Luke 22:53) had arrived. Jesus would be accused of blasphemy and be executed as if He were a criminal. But the explanation for all that is not in any seeming hold of Satan on Him, but in Jesus' obedience to the Father's will (10:17,18). Jesus had told His disciples that obedience was the proof of love (vs 15,21,23). Here He gives that proof in His own life. He was not as many teachers who teach one thing and practice another.

**15:1** In the Old Testament the nation Israel is compared to a vine. See Ps 80:8-17; Isa 5:1-7; Jer 2:21; Ezek 15:1-8; 19:10-14; Hos 10:1,2. But it turned out to be a corrupt, wild vine, not producing the fruit God wanted. It behaved as a false or unreal vine. By saying He is the true vine, Jesus teaches that He, and not the corrupt nation, is the source of true spiritual life and fruitfulness. The one who "planted" Him on earth and takes care of the "branches," is God the Father.

**15:2** The subject of this illustration is the fruitfulness of believers, not their salvation (vs 4,5,8). Jesus does not here define the kind of fruit God wants, but it is seen in other places in the Bible (Matt 3:8; Rom 6:22; Gal 5:22,23; Eph 5:9; Phil 1:11; Heb 6:7-10; Prov 11:30). Many professing Christian workers who point to what they call success in the ministry are proud, unholy, dishonest, unkind, and unspiritual. Jesus does not call their seeming success "fruit." The fruit God wants to see is believers becoming like Christ, and serving like Christ.

"Takes away" – Jesus was not teaching that true believers will lose their salvation if they fail at some time to bear fruit. Compare 5:24; 6:37-40,54,56; 10:27-29. We should never take language in a parable or allegory Jesus told and try to overthrow His plain statements in other places. Here He does not define what He means by "takes away," nor does He say when or how it takes place. He is merely emphasizing by very strong language the desire of God the Father for fruit. It is not too much to say

*branch* that bears fruit, that it might bear more fruit.

3 "Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I *will remain* in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so you also cannot, unless you remain in me. 5 I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who remains in me,

that God sees to it that every believer bears some fruit and works with him that he might bear more.

Perhaps Judas Iscariot is an example of a branch taken away. And he was no true believer (6:70,71; 13:10). Perhaps those believers mentioned in 1 Cor 11:30, and the man in 1 Cor 5:4,5 are examples of this "taking away."

This whole picture of vine and branches may refer to the visible church made up of all who profess to be Christians, both true and false. A reason for thinking so is this: in the Old Testament the "vine" Israel was the whole nation made up of believers and unbelievers, the good and the bad. And often in their history most of them were bad, and were eventually "taken away." See Isa 5:1-7; Jer 2:21,22; Hosea 10:1,2. Compare Romans 11:17-21. If anyone professes to be a Christian and does not bear fruit for God, but "bad" fruit, we have strong reason for suspecting his claims are not genuine. Compare Matt 7:16-20.

"He prunes" or "trims" – how does God do this? What is His "knife"? This pruning means chastisements, difficulties, afflictions, troubles of various sorts. He works in our hearts, minds, circumstances and experiences to trim away what is useless and make us more what we should be. See 2 Cor 12:7-12; Heb 12:4-11; Ps 66:10-12. See note on afflictions and troubles at Job 3:20.

**15:3** See 13:10; 17:17; Eph 5:26; 1 Pet 1:22; Ps 119:9,11. The Word of God properly applied to minds, hearts, wills and consciences will produce a cleansing.

**15:4** Compare vs 9,10. The word "remain" (or "abide") means to stay in one place. It is used ten times in vs 4-10. This is some indication of its importance in this context. The one place believers are to stay in is Christ. Stay in Him as plants in the ground of His love (Eph 3:17), as members of His body (1 Cor 12:12,13), as stones in His temple (Eph 2:20-22), as members of His household (Heb 3:6), and as branches in Him the Vine. He tells believers to stay in Him. Does this imply that they may not or that some will not? Not necessarily. It implies that God will enable them to do so – otherwise He would not command it. It implies also that He wants them to know their freedom. Remaining in Christ is something believers do consciously, willingly. They are not puppets or robots. God wants them to apply their minds and wills to the business of being Christians.

and I in him, he will bear much fruit. For without me you can do nothing. 6 If a man does not remain in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers. And men gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

7 "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you will ask what you want, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified in this, that you

The spiritual life is not automatic but dynamic. It is not a life of mutual compulsion between Christ and His people but one of mutual love. Believers are in Christ and remain in Him because they want to. He chose them and they choose to follow Him. They love Him. Their freedom does not cause them to leave Christ but to remain in Him. Compare 6:67,68. Christ's true disciples, in a sense, were free to go away from Him just as the others did, but they would not. And it was God's work in them that produced this determination not to go away. See Phil 1:6; 2:12,13. And what God did in them He does in all believers. 1 John 2:24 reveals the way we can be sure of remaining in Christ – we must let His truth remain in us and continue to believe what He revealed.

**15:5** "Much fruit" – this will result because the life and power of Christ will flow through them. Any attempt to serve Him without truly abiding in Him will come to nothing in God's eyes, though there may be much activity and seeming success. "Nothing" here means nothing truly spiritual, nothing of the kind of fruit God wants. There is much activity in the churches (not to speak of the religious world in general) which comes to nothing good because it is not done in Christ and does not have the flow of His life in it.

**15:6** He is speaking of what happens to literal branches cut from a vine. He does not say that some believers may not remain in Him and that if they do not they will be burned in the fires of hell. That will be the fate of unbelievers, like Judas Iscariot, but not of believers. See Matt 3:10,12; Rev 21:8. If any believer fears it might happen to him let him be sure to take hold of all the truth Christ taught and remain in Him. Then he will certainly not fall away.

**15:7** "What you want" – 14:13,14; compare Ps 37:4. Jesus is not giving a method by which believers can be a success in the world's eyes, get rich, or have all the pleasures and comforts to be found on earth. He is giving the way of spiritual success and effective prayer. If Christ's words rule the heart of a believer his desires will be under the control of the Holy Spirit, and he will want what Christ wants him to have. And believers ruled by Christ's words will pray as Christ taught (for example, Matt 6:9-13). Compare Col 3:16,17; 1 John 5:14,15.

**15:8** Fruit bearing is not for the honor of the one who bears the fruit, but for the glory of God. In other words, God is glorified by His work in believers. Compare Matt 5:16;

bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.

11 "These things I have said to you that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full. 12 This is my command, that you love one another, as I have loved you. 13 No man has love greater than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends, if you do whatever I command you. 15 From now on, I will

not call you servants, because the servant does not know what his lord is doing. But I have called you friends, for everything that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

16 "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 17 These things I command you, that you love one another. 18 If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before *it hated* you. 19 If you belonged to the world, the

1 Cor 1:31; 4:7; 10:31; Phil 1:11. The person who seeks honor from men because of what he thinks is fruit bearing is not yet bearing the kind of fruit God wants.

**15:9** See 5:20. Since Christ's love for His people is like the Father's love for Him, we may be sure it is deep, true, everlasting, and indescribably wonderful.

"Remain in my love" - Jude 21. This obviously implies conscious, determined effort, a willing obedience to His commands. It means for believers to behave in such a way that He can justly demonstrate His love to them in their daily lives.

**15:10** See 14:15,21,23. Those who love Christ will obey His commands, and those who obey His commands will remain in His love. Here is a circle of love very meaningful to those inside it, but incomprehensible to those without. Believers are to settle down in this new dwelling place of God's love and get better and better acquainted with the Master of the house by doing what He says. Observe that Christ Himself remained in the Father's love by obedience. And believers will remain in His love in the same way. No doubt some believers are more obedient than others. Perhaps none are always completely obedient (Jam 3:2), and none completely disobedient. The extent to which they are obedient will be the extent they will consciously experience and enjoy His love.

**15:11** Jesus was the "man of sorrows" (Isa 53:3). In the Gospels it is written that He wept (11:35; Luke 11:41), but never that He laughed. Did He have joy? Certainly - a deep inner joy that had nothing to do with outward circumstances (17:13; Luke 10:21). It was a joy that came from perfect obedience to God's will (compare 4:34). This joy He wants all of His people to experience. And obedience is the only way to experience it. What joy can there be if our consciences are always condemning us for disobedience?

**15:12** See 13:34. Repeated for emphasis.

**15:13** He is speaking of what He Himself was about to do. See 10:11,17,18. He died also for His enemies (Rom 5:6-10), but that is not the point here. He is speaking to His friends and saying that the greatest proof of His love to them is the laying down of His

life. See also 1 John 3:16.

**15:14** God incarnate looks for friends. Here He defines what true friendship with Himself means - obedience. In other words, this friendship is not among equals - one is the Lord from heaven, the others are mere men called to follow Him. Rebellion, disobedience and refusal to obey are not marks of friendship but of enmity against God. In the kind of friendship Jesus speaks of there must be oneness of mind, heart, and purpose.

**15:15** Christ's disciples are not like ignorant slaves who must obey, but knowledgeable friends who want to obey. See here that Christ again states that His teachings were a direct revelation from God the Father - 7:16,17; 12:49; 17:6-8.

**15:16** "I have chosen" - see Mark 1:16-20; 2:14; 3:13,14. Compare Eph 1:4. But the disciples showed their willingness to be chosen.

"Your fruit should remain" - this is what all true servants of God want. Compare Ps 90:17. Fruit produced under Christ's direction and in Christ will last forever.

"My name" - 14:13,14.

**15:17** Verse 12; 13:34. Repeated again for further emphasis.

**15:18,19** "World" - this is the unbelieving world which does not obey the true God. See 1 John 2:16; 5:19. That world is in darkness and wishes to remain there.

"Hates you" - Christ's disciples carry Christ's light which the world strongly objects to (see 3:19,20; Matt 5:14). They belong to God, not to the world. Sin at its heart is hatred of the one true and holy God, and all those connected with Him. So it is not surprising that the world will be unfriendly and antagonistic to Christ's disciples. It would be surprising if it were not so. Compare Ps 37:12; Prov 29:27; Amos 5:10; 1 John 3:12. A world that hates God and His Son will not love God's own people. If we say we are Christ's followers and the world loves us we should be alarmed, for this is evidence that we do not really belong to Christ but to the world. But if we are hated by the world because we belong to Christ we should count it an honor (1 Pet 4:14-16). And we should know that the very reason the world hates us is the reason God especially loves us.

world would love its own. But you do not belong to the world. I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

20 "Remember the word I spoke to you, 'The servant is not greater than his lord.' If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept my word, they will keep yours also. 21 But they will do all these things to you for my name's sake, because they do not know him who sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 He who hates me hates my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them deeds

which no other man did, they would not have sin. But now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But this happens that the word that is written in their Law might be fulfilled, 'They hated me without a cause.'

26 "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send to from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes out from the Father, he will testify about me. 27 And you also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.

**16** "I have said these things to you so that you will not stumble. 2 They will put you

**15:20** See 13:16. Christ's servants have no right to expect better treatment than Christ had to endure (1 Pet 4:1). The world will sometimes show its hatred by persecuting God's people. But some individuals in the world will receive Christ's teaching. We see both of these truths fully illustrated in the book of Acts.

**15:21** The world has gods and lords in abundance, but does not know the one true God (8:19,55; 16:3; Acts 17:22,23; 1 Cor 1:21; Eph 4:18). This ignorance is not the same as the ignorance spoken of by Advaita Vedanta. That teaches that man's spirit and God's Spirit are one and the same, and that ignorance of this keeps men in bondage, and knowledge of it liberates them. This whole idea is completely opposed to the teaching of the Bible. See also 10:30; etc.

**15:22** "They would not have sin" – whether Christ had come or not men would have been sinners (Rom 3:9-19,23; 5:12). And certainly the Jews who rejected Him were full of sin (8:24,40,44; Matt 23:3, 13-15, 25, 28, 32-36). The meaning seems to be this: such sins as the Jews were guilty of, God in mercy could have passed over (Rom 3:25), if they had not committed the sin of rejecting His Son. To reject Christ is to reject the only way of forgiveness. He is speaking here of the Jewish nation which was God's special people (Deut 7:6). God had appointed sacrifices by which He could pass over their sin and forgive them (Leviticus chapters 1-7). But the sin He could not pass over was the willful rejection of Himself (Lev 26:18,21,23, etc; Num 15:30,31; Deut 30:15-20). Christ's coming to them revealed their character as nothing else could have done. Their love of darkness and their hatred of God were made very clear (3:19,20). Their cloak of religion could not conceal their evil. They could not offer the excuse that they didn't know what they were doing. Let us learn that rejecting light is a very dangerous thing. Compare Prov 1:24-31; Luke 12:47,48.

**15:23** Again He speaks of the absolute oneness of God the Father and the only Son of God – 10:30; 13:20; 14:9,10. The person who loves and serves the one, loves and serves the other. The person who rejects and hates the one, rejects and hates the other.

**15:24** Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament did mighty miracles but none had done what Jesus did – giving sight to the blind, feeding great multitudes with a handful of food, raising a man who had been dead four days, etc. The Jews rejected Him in the face of great evidence that He was the Son of God from heaven (5:31-40). This was the one sin that made it impossible for God to forgive the rest of their sins. The hatred of God, that often lies unrevealed in the sinful heart of men (Rom 8:7), in their case was brought out into the open.

**15:25** Ps 35:19; 69:4. He did nothing to injure them. His mission was to save men and bring them into God's eternal blessing. Who ever has good reason to reject and hate the Lord Jesus Christ?

**15:26** "Comforter" – 14:16,17.

"I will send" – this is further evidence that Christ is God. Who but God could send the Spirit of God? Observe the Trinity in this verse. Compare 14:26. Notes at Matt 3:16; etc.

"Testify" – 16:14; Rom 8:16; 1 John 5:6. The Spirit testifies silently in the minds, hearts, and consciences of people. Also He works with and in human witnesses who speak aloud and He makes their testimony effective (see Matt 10:20; 1 Pet 1:12).

**15:27** "You also will testify" – this is one of the chief reasons why Christ chose His disciples and left them in the world. See the fulfillment in the book of Acts (Acts 1:8; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39,41; 13:31). They were not to be afraid of the hatred and persecution He spoke of here in vs 18-21. From the beginning they saw all that He did and heard all that He said. They were completely qualified witnesses. Compare Acts 1:21,22; 2 Pet 1:16-18. Here in this chapter we see the privilege and responsibility of Christ's disciples in three different relationships – they were to remain in Christ (v 4), love one another (v 12), and witness to the world (v 27).

**16:1** He told them what to expect so that they would not be surprised and stumble in their faith when trouble came. Compare v 33; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Pet 4:1. These warnings are for us as well.

**16:2** See 9:22; 12:42. "Synagogue" – Matt 4:32. Is it possible for religious people to

out of the synagogues. Yes, the time is coming when whoever kills you will think that he is doing God a service. 3 And they will do these things to you because they have not known the Father or me. 4 But I have told you these things so that when the time comes, you can remember that I told you about them. And I did not tell you these things at the beginning, because I was with you.

5 "But now I am going away to him who sent me, and none of you ask me, 'Where are you going?' 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless

consider murder of Christ's servants a service to God? Can it be that people's thoughts become so twisted? Yes. And the Jewish leaders did just what Jesus said they would do. See Matt 23:34; Acts 7:54-60; 8:3 with 26:9-11; 14:19. Have not other people also done the same thing many times since then? They have, and are still doing it.

**16:3** Here is the root cause of many crimes committed in the name of religion – ignorance of the one true God. See 8:19,41-44; 15:21. Many people think they know God though they do not, and some will defend their views of God even to the extent of killing those who tell them the truth and oppose their false views. In this way they think they are serving God! See Jer 17:9; Matt 15:19; Titus 1:16.

**16:4** While He was with them, men directed their anger and hatred against Him. After He returned to heaven that anger and hatred would come against His disciples.

**16:5** Peter had used the words "where are you going?" (13:36), but he was only expressing surprise that Jesus was going anywhere at all. His question was not a serious inquiry about where Jesus was going; he (like the others) was only upset at the thought of parting from Jesus (v 6).

**16:7** Could anything be better than to have the physical presence of Christ with us? His disciples would have said "No!" but He says "Yes!" The reason? If Christ had not died, risen again, and ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit (the Comforter – 14:26) would not have come to live in them and to anoint them with power for the work they had to do. Compare 7:39. Christ's Spirit in them was better than His physical presence with them. Why He could not grant them the Spirit in that way before He went away He does not say. Enough for us to know that this was God's plan and appointment. It seems likely that He wanted it to be clear to all that the giving of the Spirit was based on His death, resurrection and exaltation.

**16:8** Jesus gives this as a further reason why it was better for Him to go away. The Spirit would come and do a work of convincing men throughout the world, and not merely in the little corner of the world where Jesus in the body had His ministry. He would

I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. For if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you. But if I go away, I will send him to you.

8 "And when he has come, he will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; 9 of sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to my Father and you see me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However when he,

teach them the truth about sin and righteousness and judgment, and rebuke them for their false views of these matters. And He would convince the world that the views of the Jews about Jesus were totally false and that Christ and His work were very different from what they thought. A result of the Spirit's convicting work is seen in Acts 2:37.

**16:9** The Holy Spirit would convince men everywhere that those who in unbelief rejected and crucified Christ had committed a huge sin. Further, He convinces individuals that for anyone anywhere to willfully refuse to believe Him has its roots in sin and is of the essence of sin. In the Bible unbelief is everywhere shown to be worthy of condemnation and punishment (3:18,36; 8:24; Mark 16:14,16; 2 Thess 1:8; 2:12; Heb 3:12,18; 4:11; 11:31; Jude 5; Rev 21:8). But only the Holy Spirit can convince men of this.

**16:10** The meaning seems to be this: after Christ ascended into heaven the Holy Spirit would convince men that Christ was no deceiver, no blasphemer (as the Jews charged), but an absolutely righteous person. Compare Acts 3:14,15. Further, He would convince men of their own need of righteousness, and that through the cross God had provided a way to make men righteous (see Rom 3:21-26).

**16:11** "Ruler of this world" – Satan – note at 12:31. The cross of Christ was a judgment on sin, a condemnation of it wherever it is found. Sin is so terrible that it required the death of the Son of God to free men from it. Satan (the ruler of this world) is the embodiment of sin. He promotes it and rules men through it. With the judgment of sin on the cross Satan and all he stands for was openly condemned. This shows that God will judge all who remain in sin, who side with Satan against Him. On judgment see Matt 10:15; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:2,16; 14:10; 2 Pet 2:9; Rev 14:7; 20:11-15.

**16:12** Christ leads His people step by step into the deep truth of God. He does not tell them all the truth at once because they cannot take it all in. The disciples often revealed their inability to grasp all that Christ told them when He was on earth.

**16:13** See 14:17,26. The Holy Spirit taught the disciples all the truth of God and His



the Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own, but will speak only what he hears. And he will show you things to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take from what is mine and show *it* to you. 15 All things that the Father has are mine. Therefore I say that he will take from what is mine and make *it* known to you. 16 In a little while you will not see me, and then, in a little while you will see me, because I am going to the Father."

17 Then *some* of his disciples said among themselves, "What is this that he is saying to you, 'In a little while you will not see me, and then, in a little while you will see me,' and, 'Because I am going to the Father?'" 18 So they said, "What is this that he is saying, 'In a little while'? We don't know what he is saying."

19 Now Jesus, knowing that they wanted to ask him, said to them, "Are you asking among

yourselves about what I said, 'In a little while you will not see me, and then, in a little while you will see me'?" 20 Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice, and you will be pained, but your pain will be turned to joy. 21 A woman when she is giving birth has pain, because her time has come. But when she has brought forth the child, she no longer remembers the suffering, for joy that a man has been born into the world. 22 And so you now have pain. But I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no man will take your joy from you.

23 "And in that day you will ask me nothing. Truly, truly I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* to you. 24 Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. 25 I have said these things to you in figurative language. But the time is coming when I will no

kingdom that God wanted His people to know. The New Testament is the revelation of this truth. Now the Spirit uses the Word of God and teaches individual believers the truth that has been once and for all revealed. He lives in them and enlightens their minds (1 John 2:27; Eph 1:17,18). With a promise like this every believer should seek the enlightenment which God's Spirit gives, and depend on the Spirit to teach him. On God as teacher see notes at Ps 25:3,4; etc.

"Things to come" - the Holy Spirit knows the future and revealed to them those things in the future which God wanted His people to know. And they wrote them down for us in their letters and in the book of the Revelation.

**16:14** See 15:26. Any teaching which does not glorify the Lord Jesus is not of God. This is one way we can judge any religious teaching. The Spirit will make the things of Christ real to Christ's disciples. Compare 1 Cor 2:9-16.

**16:15** The Lord Jesus did not mean that the Spirit would not reveal anything about God the Father. To speak of the things which belong to Him is the same as speaking about the things which belong to the Father - they are the same things. See 17:10. Observe the Trinity in this verse. See Matt 3:16,17.

**16:16** There seem to be two possible meanings here. The Lord Jesus would die and be concealed from them in the tomb. On the third day He would rise and appear to them again. This was certainly true. But perhaps He was referring to His ascension into heaven after which His disciples would see Him no more until His second coming when they would see Him again. The words in v 10 seem evidence for this second view. It is probable that in the verses which follow Jesus meant both things. He had a message here for the disciples before His death on the cross, and a message for all believers now

awaiting His coming.

**16:17** Verse 10.

**16:18** What became clear after Christ's death and resurrection was obscure and perplexing before.

**16:20** The death of Christ was a deep grief to His friends, but a joy to His enemies.

**16:21,22** The days following the death of Christ were like the birth of a new age. The disciples would see it and see Him and be glad. They would have the joy He gave them and have it permanently (15:11; 20:20; Luke 24:52; Rom 14:17). There is a sense in which this applies to believers now as they wait for the return of Christ from heaven. His second coming too will be like the birth of a new age. See Matt 24:8; Rom 8:19-22. Compared to the joy that believers will know then their time here on earth, while the Lord is in heaven, is like sorrow. See Matt 9:15; Rom 8:18,23; 2 Cor 4:17; 6:10; 1 Pet 1:6; Ps 42:1-3.

**16:23** Jesus taught them many truths after His resurrection and enabled them to understand the Old Testament (Luke 24:44, 45; Acts 1:3). If there is a message here for believers now it is that when Christ comes again everything that has troubled and perplexed them will be made clear. Compare 1 Cor 13:12.

"In my name" - note at 14:14.

**16:24** See 14:13,14. Up until then the disciples had asked Christ directly or else prayed directly to God without using Christ's authority or without considering Him as a mediator. Now through Christ believers have the great joy that comes because God answers their prayers. It is one of the ways they experience His reality and know His grace and love.

**16:25** He meant that after His resurrection He would teach them about God the Father. This is a work that was a delight to Him then and still is, one great work He came to do (1:18; Matt 11:27).

longer speak to you in figurative language but will tell you clearly about the Father. 26 At that time you will ask in my name, and I do not tell you that I will ask the Father for you, 27 for the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. 28 I came from the Father and entered the world. Now I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

29 His disciples said to him, "See, now you are speaking clearly and not speaking in figurative language. 30 Now we are sure that you know all things and do not need any man to ask you *anything*. Because of this we believe that

you came from God."

31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? 32 Look, the time is coming, yes, has already come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave me all alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 "These things I have told you so that in me you might have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world."

**17** Jesus spoke these words, raised his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has

**16:26** The meaning seems to be this: it would not be necessary for Him to repeat their requests to God the Father. Praying directly to the Father in His name would be sufficient for them. Of course He was not denying that He would make intercession for them about other matters. See Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25.

**16:27** "The Father himself loves you because you have loved me" - this refers to the special "family" love that God has for His people (14:21). Through their faith in Christ believers become the children of God (1:12,13). Jesus is saying here that such may go directly to God and know that God will hear them. Compare Heb 10:19-22. Since believers do not need even Christ Himself to present their requests to God, it is absolutely certain that they need no one else. God is a loving Father to them and gladly gives them all they need when they come directly to Him (Matt 7:11; 2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19). No saint, no person of any kind living or dead is needed to persuade God the Father to be kind to His people or to hear their prayers. See also 14:13 and note.

**16:28-30** The Lord Jesus had said before this that the Father had sent Him, that He was going to the Father, and that He was not of this world (5:36; 6:38; 8:23; 14:28). For some reason His disciples did not fully understand what He had said, though they believed Jesus had come from God (v 27). Here the truth strikes their minds with more power.

**16:31,32** "Will leave me" - Jesus well knew that their faith was still feeble and that they were weak. That same night they fulfilled His words (Matt 26:31,56; Mark 14:50). But though they forsook Him He did not forsake them. As always He went on loving them and praying for them. Compare Matt 12:20; Luke 22:31,32. Afterwards He restored them and went on teaching them and helping them to grow. He was most clearly the good Shepherd (10:11) when they most clearly showed themselves to be bad sheep. His love and care for His people now will be no less.

**16:33** "These things" - all that He has been saying from 14:1 onwards.

"Peace" - 14:27. Observe where peace is found. He said "in me." Nowhere else is permanent peace obtainable.

"Tribulation" - He tells them plainly that the life of discipleship is not one of ease and pleasure and success in this world. Christ never promised any of His believers that they would escape tribulation or distress. He warned them of persecution and death for His sake. See 15:18-21; 16:1-4. His faithful servants must follow Him in this and preach the same truth as He did. Compare Acts 14:22; 1 Thess 3:3,4.

"Take courage" - they were to be encouraged, confident, and fearless because of two things: in the midst of trouble they could have peace, and they could know that the final victory belonged to Christ and to them in Christ. Trouble in the world would give way to eternal glory (2 Cor 4:17).

"The world" - He knew that the very next day He would be condemned to death and crucified. Yet He makes a statement like this. It is plainly the word of one who knew He had come from heaven and was going to heaven, and that His death for sinners was not defeat but the foundation for His victory over the world of darkness and evil. Compare Phil 2:8-11; Col 2:15.

**17:1** Here we see God the Son on earth as a man (1:14) praying to God the Father in heaven. But v 5 makes it clear that He is speaking as the eternal Son of God. He is a person distinct from the Father, as this whole prayer makes abundantly clear. See also Matt 3:16,17 and Phil 2:6. This prayer is one of the very great and profound chapters in the Bible, perhaps the most remarkable and blessed of all. Jesus prayed as the God-man, as the one Mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5), as the great High Priest of His people (Heb 4:14-16; 7:24,25). In this prayer He makes request only for Himself (vs 1, 5), and for believers in Him, not for others (vs 9, 20). He asks only one thing for Himself. For believers He asks for everything they need to insure their salvation and eternal blessedness.

First, He prays that God the Father will keep them (vs 11-16).

Second, He prays that the Father will sanctify them (vs 17-19).

Third, He prays that they might be perfectly united with Himself and with each other (vs 21-23).

come. Glorify your Son so that your Son may also glorify you, 2 as you have given him authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they might know you the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

Fourth, He prays that they might all be brought to heaven at last to see His glory (v 24).

Christ prays only in accordance with God's will, and so God the Father grants all these requests of His Son (see 11:24; 1 John 5:14,15). He prayed that believers might understand that the things He requested for them are theirs and so be filled with joy (v 13).

This is the only recorded prayer of any length we have of His in the New Testament. Here we see the matters which are closest to His heart. In this way He teaches us something of what we might pray for when we think of the people of God (though, of course, being mere human beings none of us can use all the language of this prayer). The things He desired for them we should desire.

"The hour has come" – 7:30; 12:23.

"Glorify" – the only thing He asks for Himself. In v 5 He reveals more of what He meant by it. He wished to enter again into the glory that was His before the universe was created, the honor and position and state He laid aside when He came to earth (see Phil 2:5-7; 2 Cor 8:9). He was asking God to raise Him after His death and exalt Him to God's right hand in the glory of heaven. Or we could interpret this in another way: To glorify means to exalt, honor, make one known as great. So Jesus requested the Father to make people on earth aware of His true nature – that He was God incarnate, the Saviour of the world. This was not a selfish grasping after glory and honor (see again Phil 2:5-7). There were very important reasons why Christ asked the Father to glorify Him.

First, the time for it had come. The next day He was to die. It was God's appointed plan that He should leave His glory in heaven and after suffering and dying for sinners should re-enter His glory (Luke 24:26).

Second, He wanted the Father to glorify Him that He might glorify the Father. He was not thinking of His own glory for His own sake. In fact, He would never have considered any glory for Himself whatever if it did not bring glory to the Father (7:18; 8:50). But it would bring no honor to the Father if the enemies of the Son triumphed and death held Him in the grave.

Third, He needed to be glorified to exercise the authority God had given Him and to accomplish His work – v 2.

This He could not do unless He was raised from death to God's right hand. So He wanted to be glorified not merely for the Father's sake, but for the sake of all

4 "I have glorified you on the earth. I have finished the work that you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was.

6 "I have revealed your name to the men whom

believers. These three things are closely tied together – God's glory, Christ's glory, and the good of God's people.

**17:2** "Authority" – or "power" – 3:35; Matt 28:18. See the purpose of His authority (to give eternal life to believers – 3:16; 5:21; 6:40). See what immense authority the Lord Jesus has in this world. He can so arrange circumstances in and among the nations of the world, and so work in the minds and hearts of people that the result will be that all the Father has given Him will infallibly receive eternal life.

**17:3** "Eternal life" – 3:16. This is the only time He defined it. It is to know the only true God.

This knowledge of God no one has by nature (see notes at 15:21; 16:3; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 4:17,18). In giving people the gift of eternal life the Lord Jesus enables them to know both God the Father and Himself (compare Matt 11:27. See John 8:19 where He links knowing God with knowing Himself). Eternal life is much more than merely living forever. It means a quality of life – a life in communion with God, knowing God, trusting Him, obeying Him, honoring Him, loving Him, serving Him forever (compare Rev 21:3; 22:3-5). This knowledge of God is direct, a knowledge of enlightenment and experience (2 Cor 4:6).

"Only true God" – Jesus is not excluding Himself and the Holy Spirit; He is excluding all false gods, all idols made by men (see Ps 115:3-8; Isa 44:6,8; 45:18). In fact, He includes Himself when He says that eternal life is knowing Him just the same as knowing God (see 8:19; 14:8,9). Eternal life is in Jesus (1 John 5:11) – indeed, it *is* Jesus (11:25; 14:6; 1 John 5:20). And we must know Him to have this life. Spiritual knowledge lies at the heart of true Christianity – Eph 4:17,18; 2 Pet 1:3; 3:18. This knowledge Jesus speaks of is nothing like the so-called knowledge that Advaita Vedanta speaks of. See note at 15:21; etc. Those who really know the one true God know themselves to be but men, creations of God, infinitely below God in every way.

**17:4** His purpose was always to glorify God the Father, and this purpose He fulfilled (4:34; 7:18; 8:29).

**17:5** Here is a clear declaration by Jesus Himself that He lived before the universe came into being, and a plain statement that He is a person distinct from the Father. See also 1:1-3; Micah 5:2. God answered this prayer of His Son. See Acts 2:32,33; 3:13-15; Phil 2:9-11.

**17:6** In vs 6-10 He says eight things about His people and adds three more in vs 14,18. All these things are good and all are true

you gave me out of the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me. And they have kept your word. 7 Now they have come to know that all things which you have given me are from you. 8 For I have given to them the words which you gave me, and they have received *them* and have known with certainty that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me.

9 "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. 10 And all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 And now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep through your own name those whom you have given me, so that they may be one, as we *are*.

of all believers. He does not speak of their sin and failure, the smallness of their faith, their only partial obedience. He does not accuse His people to His Father, He defends them (Rom 8:33,34; 1 John 2:1). He takes the highest possible view of them and presents them to His Father in the best possible light.

"I have revealed your name" - 1:18; Matt 11:27. "Name" indicates nature and attributes. See Ex 34:6,7. Jesus revealed what God is, not merely by words, but in His life and actions.

"Whom you gave me" - He is speaking of those who had believed in Him. God chose them out of the world. Believers are not better by nature than others. They are all from the fallen race of humanity. There was nothing holy or good about them that caused God to choose them (see Rom 3:9,19; Eph 2:1-3). But God called them to leave the world and to follow Christ to the world above (Gal 1:3). They are no longer "of the world" (v 14; Phil 3:20). At first they belonged to God the Father. In a sense all people belong to God for He created them (compare Ezek 18:4). But believers belong to God in a special sense - Acts 18:10; Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:2 (compare Ex 19:4-6; Deut 7:6). He chose them before the world came into existence. God gave all of them to the Lord Jesus. Believers are God's gift of love to His Son, a special treasure He gave Him to keep and delight in. Will He not then keep every one of them until all are safe in heaven? The Bible indicates that He will - see vs 11,12; 10:28; etc.

He says believers "obeyed" God's word. They listened to Christ's words which were the very words of God, and they obeyed them. They were not perfect and did not perfectly keep God's word. But the desire and tendency of their lives was to keep it, and Christ, overlooking their failures, says they did keep it. This is true of all believers. What about those who say they are believers yet who do not obey His word? They are not true believers (see 8:31,47; 10:26,27; Matt 7:21; 1 John 2:3,4).

**17:7,8** These two verses give us more facts about all believers - they know certain truth, receive it and believe it. They know that God has sent Jesus and was behind all that Jesus did and said. And they gladly accepted the words Christ gave them from the Father. They knew that Jesus Christ is the absolute authority for all they believed. Observe the plural - "words" - in v 8. See also 12:49,50. Compare Matt 4:4.

**17:9** Here is a seventh truth about believers - Christ makes them a very special matter of prayer. He did not (and, in the very nature of the case, He cannot) pray for the world of unbelievers as He prays for them.

**17:10** Here is an eighth truth about believers - Christ is glorified through them. His love and mercy are glorified in dying for them. His power and grace are glorified in saving and changing them. His patience is glorified in bearing with them. His name is glorified by their witness in the world, etc. They are weak and sinful but still Christ is glorified through them. This is one great purpose God had in choosing them - Eph 1:5,6,12. Through believers glory comes to both the Father and the Son. We should be conscious of this truth and gladly set out to promote their glory in everything (1 Cor 10:31).

**17:11** God gave His own "name" to Jesus (compare 5:26,27). God granted that the nature, power, and authority of God should dwell in His human body (Col 2:9). In this verse we have the first request Jesus made for believers. It is repeated in different words in v 15. He asks God to protect them, to keep them from evil, so that they be not lost as Judas Iscariot was (v 12).

One reason why God needs to keep believers is seen here - they are still "in the world". God chose them "out of" the world (v 6), and they are not "of" the world (v 14), but they are still "in" it, and the world still hates them (v 14). The world is full of temptations, deceiving spirits, and dangers (1 Pet 5:8). It is opposed to truth, faith, love of God and all else precious to believers. See 1 John 5:19. Spiritually speaking it is a dark and dirty place and it is easy to get defiled in it and lose one's way. And believers themselves are often weak and foolish, and struggle with their own sinful natures (Rom 7:18; Gal 5:17; 1 John 1:8) - there is something in them which would betray them to the world and the devil. How, then, can believers be safe?

There is perfect safety because God in answer to the prayers of His Son keeps them - see Luke 22:31; Rom 5:10; Heb 7:25. His almighty power is at work for them - 1 Pet 1:4,5; Prov 18:10. He has begun a good work in them, and will finish it - Phil 1:6. Jesus the Son works with the Father in keeping believers, and it is the absolute will of God that the Lord Jesus keep them (6:39). Will He fail to do God's will in this? Compare 4:34. Believers are sheep put in His

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name. I have kept those whom you gave me, and none of them is lost; but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

13 "And now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world, so that they might have my joy in them to the full. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them,

care. Will He not preserve them? See 10:28. He prays for them continually. Will His prayers not be heard? See 11:42. The answer to the prayers of Christ are not based on the good behavior of believers, or on their continuing in faith. The opposite of this is true – their good behavior and continuing in faith are dependent on His prayers.

**17:12** While on earth the Lord Jesus kept all His believers. He did not keep them from weakness, foolishness, temptations and trials, nor even from all sin (see 18:10,11; 19:25; Luke 22:24,31,32; 24:25; Matt 16:22,23; 26:69-75). But even when they were grievously failing, Jesus was keeping them. He kept them in a state of salvation in spite of their sin. He kept them believing in Him in spite of their weak faith and occasional unbelief. Now Jesus asks God the Father to keep them as He Himself had kept them. Did Jesus fail to keep Judas Iscariot "the son of perdition"? Was there an exception in His keeping of believers? No. Jesus is not saying that God had saved Judas and given Judas to Him and He had lost him.

To make clearer the meaning here perhaps we could translate this last sentence like this: "None of them has been lost. But the son of perdition *has been lost* so that the Scripture might be fulfilled." Not one of those God gave to Jesus was lost. But one who was among them and counted as one of them was lost. See vs 6-10 for a description of true believers, the kind of people God gave to Jesus. Judas does not fit that description. From the beginning Judas' character made him worthy of destruction. See 6:64,70 where it is clear that Judas was not a believer.

"Son of perdition" – the Greek word translated "perdition" means "destruction" or "utter ruin" or "lostness." "Son of" was the way the Jews spoke to indicate the character of a person, or the destiny of a person. A son of destruction is a man whose character is destructive, a man tied to destruction, and prepared for it (compare Rom 9:22,23). A "son" of destruction is surely not a "son" of God. Judas was not saved and then lost, was not a true believer who became an evil man and betrayer of Jesus. There is no proof that he was ever a true believer – all the evidence points to the opposite of this. And Jesus does not keep all who say they are believers or seem to be believers, but only those who really are believers.

"Fulfilled" – see 13:18; Ps 41:9; 109:4-13; Zech 11:12,13.

because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

15 "I am not praying that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil *one*. 16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17 Sanctify them through your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, even so I

**17:13** "Joy" – 15:11; Luke 10:21. This prayer of Jesus rightly understood brings great joy to the hearts of believers. We should have the same joy and confidence Paul revealed in 2 Tim 1:12; 4:18.

**17:14** See 15:18,19. Both the Lord Jesus and His believers belong to the kingdom of God, to the world above, to heaven, not to this world (Phil 3:20).

**17:15** Why does He want believers to be left in the world? See v 18; 15:27; 2 Cor 4:17; 1 Pet 1:7; 2:9.

"Keep" – v 11.

**17:17-19** Here is the second request the Lord Jesus makes for believers. The Greek word here translated "sanctify" has a very wide meaning. Basically it means "to set apart," usually for a good purpose or religious use. It means the same as the Hebrew word translated "sanctify" or "make holy" in the Old Testament (see note at Lev 20:7). It came to mean also "dedicate" or "consecrate", and then "to purify", "to make holy". In what sense did the Lord Jesus use the word here? He may have meant all these, but probably the principal meaning of this prayer for believers is that God should dedicate or consecrate them, set them apart for Himself and His work on earth. This meaning is clearly the one in v 19 (see also 10:36). Jesus did not need to be purified and made holy, but He consecrated Himself to do God's will on earth. And He prayed that God would consecrate believers in this same way. See the words of 15:3 – the disciples were already "clean" before Jesus prayed this prayer for them.

It is true that if believers are to be equipped to do the will of God they need to be purified in their thoughts and motives. So it may be that Jesus was asking for that too for them. But it seems the principal meaning here is this: Christ was praying that His Church as a whole, the body of believers of which He is the Head (Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18) be consecrated by God to be His holy people (1 Pet 2:9). Here in vs 17-19 we can learn seven things about this sanctification.

First, it is something God does in answer to the prayer of Christ. So He infallibly does it (11:42). The answer can be seen later in verses like Jude 1 and 1 Cor 1:2.

Second, it is something God does for all His children (v 20), not for just a select few. If God hears Christ's prayer for some believers He hears it for all of them. If He answers and sanctifies some, then He sanctifies all.

have also sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 "I am praying not only for these, but also for those who will believe in me through their words, 21 so that they all may be one; as you, Father, are

in me and I am in you, that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me.

22 "And the glory which you gave me I have given them, so that they may be one, just as we are one; 23 I in them and you in me, so that they

Third, the sanctification of believers is a result of Christ sanctifying Himself (v 19). Christ consecrated Himself to be the sacrifice to take away sin (1:29). Because of that believers are sanctified, set apart, consecrated to God. See Heb 10:10; 13:12. For an Old Testament illustration see Lev 8:10-15,30.

Fourth, the sanctification of believers is something like the sanctification of Christ (v 19). When did Jesus sanctify Himself? See 10:36-38; Heb 10:5-7. When are believers sanctified? When they are united to Christ by faith to become God's temple on earth (Eph 2:21; 1 Cor 3:16).

Fifth, the sanctification of believers has to do with the mission of the church to the world (v 18; 20:21). They are called out of the world (v 6) and are not of the world (v 14), but God sanctifies them to send them back into the world.

Sixth, sanctification is a work God does "by" or "in" (the Greek can mean either) the truth. Notice here what truth is. It is God's Word. And where is God's Word to be found? Only in the Bible. Truth is the means God uses to sanctify believers and it is the sphere in which they live. For references and notes on the inner purity and holiness Christ desires for us see Matt 5:8; Rom 6:11-14; 8:12,13; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 4:22-24; 5:1-7; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:14-16,22; 1 John 3:3.

Seventh, the sanctification which Christ requested for believers is absolutely essential. If it were not, Christ would not have prayed as He did. He prayed only for those things God wills for believers.

**17:20** The Lord Jesus prayed in advance for all believers in all generations. He desired the same things for us now as for His disciples then.

**17:21-23** Verse 11. Here is the third request He made for all true believers - oneness. In vs 20-23 we learn the following things about it.

First, it is a oneness that God gives in answer to Christ's prayer (11:42). It is not something men create or that church leaders can establish, and Christ has not asked them to do so.

Second, it is a oneness of a certain kind of people only - true believers, those described in vs 6-10. So it is not an organizational unity that men create and which includes multitudes of nominal Christians to be found in churches in every country.

Third, it is a oneness of all believers without exception, whatever generation they may live in, whatever church they may belong to, whatever their country or race (v 21 - "all").

Fourth, this oneness in some ways is like the oneness of God the Father and the Son (v 21). That is, it is a perfect union, a oneness of life.

Fifth, this oneness is actually *in* the Father and the Son. Obviously this is something far different from organizational unity, and far superior to it. As God was in Christ and Christ in God, so all believers are in them (v 21. See 1 Thess 1:1; Rom 6:5). This is the only kind of oneness Christ prayed for here.

Sixth, this oneness comes about only because Christ is in them (v 23). Believers are joined eternally with Him and with each other. If He is not in them there is nothing men can do to produce the oneness He prayed for. If He is in them there is nothing they need to do to bring it about.

Seventh, this oneness is perfect (v 23).

Eighth, this oneness is connected with the glory Christ has given them (v 22). He does not define this glory, but it may mean the glory of being God's children and His representatives on earth. Or it may mean the glory that is theirs because they are in Christ the glorified One (v 1,5. See also Eph 2:5,6; Col 3:3,4). The fact that Christ has chosen believers for glory in Him makes them one. For God's answer to this prayer see 1 Cor 12:12,13 (see also 1 Cor 6:15,17; Rom 12:5; Eph 1:22; 4:15,16; 5:29-32). The Holy Spirit came and baptized all believers into the spiritual body of Christ and made them one with Him and with each other. Each time an individual believes, Christ's prayer is answered again - the Holy Spirit still unites every believer to Christ and His spiritual body, the true Church of the living God. This oneness is a fact which men can recognize but cannot create, improve on, or destroy.

Ninth, this oneness produces certain results (vs 21,23). "That the world may believe. . . that the world may know" - many people think this has not been the result of the oneness God has created for believers and demand another kind of unity - a unity of all Christians in one Church organization with one earthly head. But there has been a progressive fulfillment of Christ's prayer and desire. When He uttered these words the world outside Israel had heard almost nothing about Him. In one generation His disciples spread the good news all over the Roman Empire and to other places in the world, and multitudes had believed. The process is still going on today wherever Christ's believers stand together to preach the truth. And the end is not yet. At His coming all that He wants the world to know will be fully revealed. It is certain that if the

may be made perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me, and have loved them just as you have loved me.

24 "Father, I desire that those whom you have given me, also be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory which you gave me. For you loved me before the foundation of the world.

25 "Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have come to know that you sent me. 26 And I have made our name known to them, and will make *it* known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

**18** When Jesus had spoken these words, he went away with his disciples over the Kidron valley. A garden was there, which he and his disciples entered. 2 And Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often went there with his disciples. 3 Judas then, taking a group *of soldiers*, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there

union of all believers in the spiritual body of Christ has not produced the result He wanted, no union of believers and unbelievers in one super church organization will accomplish it.

Tenth, believers should recognize this oneness they possess and manifest it. This truth is only implied here but taught elsewhere. See Eph 4:1-6.

**17:23** God loves believers as much as He loves Christ, the Son of God! Compare Rom 5:8; Eph 2:4; 1 John 3:1,16.

**17:24** Here is the fourth request Christ makes for believers. He asks God to make sure that all believers get safely into His presence, to have the vision of His glory. This prayer will certainly be answered as all of Christ's other prayers are answered. Christ's prayers were not mere expressions of hope which may or may not be realized. "Glory" is the final step in the process of their salvation, and because He prayed for it, and because they are united to Him who is glorified, God counts it as already accomplished. Compare Rom 8:29,30; Eph 2:6. See in this verse that God the Father loved Christ the Son before the creation of the world. Again we see a distinction between Father and Son, and the eternal love between them.

**17:25** Christ here utters two truths found everywhere in the Bible - God is absolutely righteous, and men in general do not know Him (1:10; 8:19,55; 15:21; 16:3).

**17:26** The fact of Christ's living in believers is linked with the revelation He gives them of God the Father. Without the one there will not be the other. On this revelation see v 6; Matt 11:27. Observe also that God's love for Christ is in believers (Rom 5:5; 2 Cor 5:14; 1 John 2:5; 4:12,16).

with lanterns, torches and weapons.

4 Therefore Jesus, knowing everything that would come upon him, went out and said to them, "For whom are you looking?"

5 They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am." And Judas, who betrayed him, also stood with them.

6 Then as soon as he said to them, "I am," they drew back and fell to the ground.

7 Then he asked them again, "Who are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am *he*. So if you are looking for me, let these go their way," 9 so that these words he spoke might be fulfilled: I have lost none of those whom you gave me.

10 Then Simon Peter drew the sword he had, struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

11 Then Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword in the scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup which my Father has given me?"

12 Then the group *of soldiers*, the commander,

**18:1** The Kidron is a valley between the city of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives to the east of the city. The "garden" was the garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:36). For other events which took place there see Matt 26:36-46.

**18:3** Matt 26:47. The event described in Matt 26:48,49 happened either at this time or after Jesus' words in v 8.

**18:4** "Happen to him" - 3:14; 6:64; 13:1,3,11,18; Matt 16:21.

**18:5,6** He made no attempt to escape, but boldly confronted His enemies. He knew that His time had come (7:30; 17:1). And He was voluntarily laying down His life (10:17,18).

"I am" - see 8:24,58. Jesus is the great and eternal "I am" revealed in the Old Testament. See Exodus 3:14. Soldiers would not have fallen to the ground unless the power of God was present and caused them to do so. Jesus here demonstrated that He could easily have overcome His enemies and escaped if that had been His desire. Compare Matt 26:53 where He speaks of 12 legions of angels.

**18:8** In the time of His great trial His thoughts were for His disciples (compare 13:1).

**18:9** See 6:39; 17:12. There the meaning is to preserve them spiritually, to keep them from being lost. Here the meaning is that He kept them from physical danger and trial. But there is no contradiction. In the process of keeping His people from being spiritually lost He keeps them from facing trials and temptations too great for them to bear (compare 1 Cor 10:13).

**18:10** Matt 26:51-54.

**18:11** Matt 26:39,42.

**18:12,13** Only John records the fact that

and the Jewish officers seized Jesus, bound him, 13 and led him away first to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. 14 Now Caiaphas was the one who counselled the Jews that it would be good for one man to die for the people.

15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple. That disciple was known to the high priest, and he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. 16 But Peter stood outside at the door. Then that other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the girl on duty at the door, and brought Peter inside.

17 Then the girl on duty at the door said to Peter, "Aren't you also *one* of this man's disciples?" He said, "I am not."

18 And the servants and officers stood there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves. And Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

19 The high priest then asked Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching.

20 Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where the Jews always come, and I have said nothing in secret. 21 Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard me what I said to them. Look, they know what I said."

22 And when he said this, one of the officers

who stood nearby slapped Jesus and said, "Do you answer the high priest like that?"

23 Jesus answered him, "If I spoke wrongly, testify about what is wrong, but if I spoke rightly, why do you strike me?"

24 Now Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Then they said to him, "Aren't you also *one* of his disciples?" He denied *it*, and said, "I am not."

26 One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of *the one* whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Didn't I see you in the garden with him?"

27 Peter then denied *it* again, and immediately the rooster crowed.

28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace *of the Roman governor*, and it was early morning. They themselves did not go into the palace, to keep from being defiled, so that they could eat the Passover.

29 Then Pilate went out to them, and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?"

30 They answered and said to him, "If he were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over to you."

31 Then Pilate said to them, "You take him and judge him according to your Law." Then the Jews said to him, "We are not allowed to put anyone to death."

32 So that the word of Jesus, which he spoke

they brought Jesus to Annas before taking Him on to Caiaphas (v 24). Annas had also been high priest (Luke 3:2; Acts 4:6).

**18:14** See 11:49-52.

**18:15** The Bible does not tell us who this other disciple was, but many Bible scholars believe he was John. See 20:2,3,4,8.

**18:17** See 13:38; Matt 26:69-75.

**18:19** He was trying to find something with which to accuse Jesus. The high priest was not conducting this enquiry according to Jewish law. According to that law witnesses for the defense of the accused should have been called first, then witnesses for the prosecution.

**18:20,21** Jesus meant that they should have proceeded according to the law and called witnesses. He had taught in public and many had heard Him. Even the things He said to His disciples privately were not secret things contrary to His public teaching.

**18:22** This too was illegal.

**18:23** The Lord Jesus is saying again that they (who claimed to uphold the law) should conduct the investigation according to the law.

**18:24** It is almost certain that Caiaphas was in another part of the same building. The building was the palace of the high priest (v 15).

**18:25-27** Matt 26:71-75.

**18:28** Matt 27:1,2.

"So they could eat the Passover" - Exodus chapter 12. See the hypocrisy of these Jews. They had plotted to kill the Son of God, and had acted contrary to their own law in an attempt to condemn Him. But here they were worried about ceremonially defiling themselves by entering the house of someone who was not a Jew (the Jews regarded Romans and all non-Jews and their houses "unclean." Compare Acts 10:28). This was more important in their eyes than the awful uncleanness that comes from sin in the heart (compare Matt 15:1,2,16-20; 23:25-28). There are many religious people today very much like them - zealous for ceremonies but careless about ethics and morals. See also Isa 1:11-17.

**18:29** "What accusation" - a reasonable question since they brought Jesus to Pilate for judgment.

**18:30** This was an unreasonable answer. See what these hypocrites called the Lord Jesus without the slightest evidence for it - "evildoer."

**18:31** The Romans, who ruled the country, permitted the Jews to judge certain kinds of cases, but not to crucify offenders. And these Jews wanted Jesus to die on a cross, condemned by the Romans.

**18:32** See 3:14; 8:28; 12:32,33.



to indicate what death he would die, might be fulfilled. 33 Then Pilate went back into the palace, called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

34 Jesus answered him, "Are you saying this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

35 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own people and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight, so that I would not be delivered up to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not from here."

37 So Pilate said to him, "Are you a king, then?" Jesus answered, "You *rightly* say that I am a king. For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world, that I might testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth pays attention to my voice."

38 Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went back out to the Jews and said to them, "I find no fault *at all* in him. 39 But you have a custom that I should release to you one *prisoner* at the Passover. So do you want me to

**18:33** The Jews accused Jesus of trying to set Himself up as a king and of rebelling against the Roman rule in Judea (see Luke 23:1,2). So this question.

**18:34** Jesus wanted Pilate to be more clear and specific in his question. Was Pilate asking whether Jesus was trying to be a worldly king with the purpose of overthrowing Roman rule, or some other kind of king?

**18:35** Pilate is saying he knows nothing except what the Jews have said to him. He does not want to accept their accusations without evidence and so questions Jesus.

**18:36** "My kingdom" – Jesus is saying that His kingdom is heavenly and spiritual and not political and military (note at Matt 4:17). As evidence He says that His followers did not prevent the Jews from arresting Him; and how could he be a political ruler of the Jews when it was the Jews who arrested Him?

"Now. . .not from here" – does not the word "now" suggest that things will be different at some time in the future? Compare Rev 19:11-16.

**18:37** As the king in God's spiritual kingdom Jesus sends forth the truth, not armies. He wants to conquer men's hearts and minds with spiritual power, not their lands with physical force. Everywhere in this Gospel there is this emphasis on truth (1:14,18; 3:21; 4:24; 8:32; 14:6,17; 16:13; 17:17). See what the Lord says here – everyone who wants the truth, loves the truth, and practices the truth, will listen to Christ and do what He says. Everyone. The opposite is, of course, true – they who do not want the truth will not listen to Him. Compare 8:47; 2 Thess 2:10.

**18:38** Pilate did not wait for an answer. And

release to you the King of the Jews?"

40 Then they all cried out again, saying, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber.

**19** So then Pilate took Jesus and *had him* whipped. 2 And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put *it* on his head. And they put on him a purple robe, 3 and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and they struck him with their hands.

4 Then Pilate went out again, and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no fault in him."

5 Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And *Pilate* said to them, "See the man!"

6 So when the chief priests and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify *him*! Crucify *him*!" Pilate said to them, "You take him and crucify *him*, for I find no fault in him."

7 The Jews answered him, "We have a Law, and by our Law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

8 Therefore, when Pilate heard that statement,

there is no reason to think that he wanted an answer, or cared about the truth. That is the real tragedy of Pilate (and of many today also). Pilate knew very well there was no evidence that Jesus had committed any crime (19:4,6; Matt 27:18,23; Luke 23:4,13,14).

**18:39,40** See Matt 27:15-21; Luke 23:19.

**19:1** We see how much Pilate cared for truth – he ordered punishment for a person he knew was completely innocent.

**19:2,3** Matt 27:27-30.

**19:5** Pilate's purpose was to show how absurd it was to accuse Jesus of leading a rebellion against Rome. And so he tries to display Him as weak and helpless, more deserving of pity than condemnation and crucifixion.

**19:6** Nothing would move the hearts of these hardened sinners to show compassion or to seek justice. When Pilate told them to crucify Jesus he must have been speaking with anger and sarcasm. Both he and they knew that they had no authority to crucify anyone (18:31).

**19:7** This too showed their utter disregard for truth. They were twisting the law they referred to here (Lev 24:16). It is true that if Jesus (or anyone else) was not really God's Son and yet said He was God's Son, or God, He was a blasphemer and worthy of death. But all the evidence pointed to the truth that He really is God's Son, and since that is true there was no law forbidding Him to say so. See also 5:18; 10:31-36; Matt 26:63-66.

**19:8** The Romans on the whole were a superstitious people and believed in a great many gods. They believed also that the gods sometimes came down as men, and that in

he was even more afraid, 9 and went back into the palace and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Then Pilate said to him, "You are not speaking to me? Don't you know that I have power to crucify you and power to release you?"

11 Jesus answered, "You could have no power *at all* against me unless it were given to you from above. Therefore he who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

12 And from then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king is denying Caesar."

13 Therefore, when Pilate heard that statement, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 And it was the *day* of The Preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "See your King!"

15 But they cried out, "Away with *him*! Away with *him*! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

16 So then he handed him over to them to be

crucified. And they took Jesus and led *him* away. 17 And he, bearing his cross, went out to a place called *The Place* of a Skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.

18 There they crucified him, and two others with him, one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

19 And Pilate wrote an inscription and had *it* put on the cross. And *this is what* was written:

JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 Then many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, *and* Latin.

21 Then the Jewish chief priests said to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, I am the King of the Jews.'"

22 Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his clothes and divided them into four parts, a part to each soldier, and also *his* tunic. Now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. 24 So they said among themselves, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it, *to determine* whose it shall be," so that the Scripture might be

such cases it was not easy to recognize them. It is likely that Pilate began to fear that the innocent, dignified, patient Jesus was some kind of "god."

**19:9** Jesus had already told Pilate where He was from and why He had come (18:36,37). He had no more to say about this to a person who did not want the truth.

**19:10** It seems that Pilate's pride was offended. The rulers of this world often like to think they are great and powerful and can do as they please.

**19:11** Jesus is not silent about Pilate's mistaken view of things. "From above" means from heaven, from God. God is the great king over all the earth and Pilate could do nothing if God did not permit it. Compare psalm 2; 47:1,2; Isa 40:21-23; Dan 4:34,35. Pilate sinned grievously in all this, but the one who handed Jesus over to Pilate (Caiaphas the high priest - 18:28) sinned even more. In committing sin there can be degrees of guilt. Compare Luke 12:47,48.

**19:12** It seems Pilate became convinced that Jesus was at the very least a man of God, and he worried about putting Him to death. Caesar was the emperor of the Roman Empire, the person who had appointed Pilate as governor of Judea. If Caesar thought Pilate was opposing him and promoting some kind of rebellion, it would be the end of Pilate, and Pilate well knew it.

**19:15** "No king but Caesar" - again the hypocrisy and sinfulness of these Jewish leaders is revealed. They hated the rule of Rome over their country. And they knew that according to their own Scriptures God was

king over Israel (Ex 19:3-6; Deut 33:5; 1 Sam 8:7; Ps 10:16; 149:2). To get the Lord Jesus crucified they were willing to say anything no matter how outrageous. But in saying those words they were unconsciously uttering a truth - they had completely rejected the rule of God in their lives, and God was not king in their hearts.

**19:16** Pilate knew Jesus was innocent and he was afraid he was making a grave mistake. It was his duty to judge justly. But his knowledge, fears, and duties were as nothing before another fear he had - the fear of offending Caesar and losing his position. Being gripped by that fear, truth and justice had no chance with him (compare Prov 29:25). Pilate did not have the fear of the Lord which would have kept him from condemning the innocent. Anyone who fears men more than God, or loves his position more than truth is in terrible spiritual peril and in danger of God's judgment.

**19:17-22** Matt 27:31-38. John says Jesus carried His own cross. He started out with it, but along the way the soldiers compelled someone else to carry it. Only John mentions that the "accusation" against Jesus was written in three languages, and that the Jews protested to Pilate about the wording of it. God used Pilate to write a truth Pilate did not understand. Jesus was indeed the Messiah of Israel, the King promised in the Old Testament (note at Matt 1:1).

**19:23,24** "Cast lots" - Ps 22:18. 19:25 This sister was probably the Salome mentioned in Mark 15:40, the mother of Zebedee's sons, mentioned in Matt 27:56. If so, she

fulfilled, which says,

They divided my clothing among them,  
and cast lots for my garment.

Therefore the soldiers did these things.

25 Now near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 Therefore when Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, see your son."

27 Then he said to the disciple, "See your mother." And from that time that disciple took her to his own *home*.

28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst."

29 Now a jar full of sour wine was standing there, and they soaked a sponge in the sour wine,

put it on a hyssop *stick*, and put *it* to his mouth.

30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

31 Then, because it was the Preparation *Day*, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was an important day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and *that* they might be taken away. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first *man* and of the other who had been crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, 34 but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

35 And he who saw *this* has given testimony, and his testimony is true, and he knows that he speaks the truth, so that you might believe.

was John's own mother.

"Magdalene" – 20:10-18; Luke 8:2; Matt 28:1. The word indicates that this Mary was from the town of Magdala.

**19:26,27** "The disciple whom he loved" – 13:23. Even in that hour when Jesus was suffering and dying for the sins of the world, He thought of the needs of someone else. When He said to this disciple "Here is your mother" He was not saying that Mary was the "mother" or patroness of all God's people (such an idea is utterly without basis in the Bible). It means simply that He knew Mary's need of a home and put her in the care of a trusted disciple. It would seem that by then Mary's husband Joseph was dead.

**19:28,29** See Ps 69:21. Many prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in the sufferings and death of Christ. Nothing happened by accident, everything had some purpose of God. Remember that Jesus was suffering in the place of sinners, bearing their punishment (references at v 30). His thirst on the cross was a part of that. Compare Luke 16:22-24. Jesus thirsted that believers might have the water of life (4:14; 7:37,38; Rev 22:17), and not thirst in eternity (Rev 7:16,17).

**19:30** What was finished? Surely He meant that the whole purpose which brought Him into the world was accomplished (4:34). This purpose He Himself expressed in different words at different times. See 3:14-17; 6:51; 10:10,11,15,17; 12:23,24,31-33; 17:4; 18:11 (Matt 26:39); Matt 20:28. John the Baptist put it like this: "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29). Other writers of the New Testament put it in other words. See Rom 3:25; 5:8; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:15,19; Gal 1:4; Eph 5:2; Phil 2:8; Col 1:20-22; 1 Tim 1:15; Heb 1:3; 2:14,17; 9:12,14,15; 10:10,14; 13:12; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 4:9,10; Rev 1:5,6.

"It is finished" means His sacrifice and sufferings for sin were finished. He had

taken away the sin of the world. He had redeemed His people with His blood. He had made salvation and liberation from sin possible for everyone. This work is finished. All that is left for sinners to do to gain salvation is to repent and truly believe the gospel (Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46,47). Since the work He came to do was finished, there was no need for Him to remain any longer suffering on the cross. So He voluntarily released His spirit. Compare 10:17,18; Luke 23:46.

**19:31** Verse 14; Deut 21:22,23. They did not want the land defiled by a dead body left overnight on the cross. They were not concerned that they themselves were horribly defiled by their murder of God's Son. Compare 18:28; Matt 23:24. Usually Romans left the bodies of crucified criminals on their crosses as a warning to others.

"That they might be taken away" – breaking the legs hastened the death of those crucified. It caused their bodies to sag, and their chests to constrict. This made breathing much more difficult and brought on death by suffocation. The Jews wanted to make sure Jesus was dead before evening.

**19:33** The Lord Jesus died earlier than anyone expected. See Mark 15:44,45.

**19:34** It seems the soldiers thought there might possibly have been a spark of life left in Jesus and wanted to make sure of His death. This spear thrust alone would have killed Him if He had not died earlier. Any flow of blood and water from a body, as described here, is unusual. This event can remind us of the water of life Jesus gives (4:34; 7:37,38), and that His shed blood alone makes it available to us. Also we should note that in the Old Testament blood was for atonement (Lev 17:11), water was for cleansing (Ex 29:4; 30:18-20). Compare also 1 John 5:6-8.

**19:35** It seems the writer of this Gospel is speaking of himself. As one who actually

36 For these things were done that this Scripture might be fulfilled:

Not one of his bones will be broken.

37 And again another Scripture says,

They will look on him whom they pierced.

38 And after this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus.

39 And Nicodemus came also (*the man* who at first came to Jesus by night), and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds *in weight*. 40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in strips of linen, with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is in burying.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had ever been placed. 42 So they placed Jesus there because of the Jewish Preparation *Day*, for the tomb was nearby.

**20** Early on the first *day* of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord away from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him."

3 Therefore Peter and that other disciple set out, going to the tomb. 4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and arrived at the tomb first. 5 And stooping down *and looking in*, he saw the strips of linen lying *there*, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter, following him, arrived and went into the tomb, and saw the strips of linen lying *there*. 7 And *he saw* the cloth that had been around his head, not lying with the strips of linen, but rolled together in a place by itself. 8 Then that other disciple, who had first reached the tomb, also went in, and he saw and believed.

9 For they still did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

11 But Mary stood outside at the tomb,

saw what happened he declares that Jesus was dead and that this unusual event occurred.

**19:36** See Ex 12:46; Num 9:12; Ps 34:20.  
**19:37** Zech 12:10.

**19:38-42** See Matt 27:57-60; Mark 15:42-46; Luke 23:50-54. Only John says that Joseph had kept his faith secret while Jesus lived.

"Nicodemus" - 3:1,2; 7:50,51. Christ's closest disciples were nowhere to be seen at this time (compare v 19), but these two who had tried to hide their faith now come out into the open. It is probable that the things they saw and heard at the crucifixion strengthened their faith in Jesus. The large amount of spices (v 39) would have been very expensive, and is an indication of the love and high regard Nicodemus had for the Lord Jesus.

**20:1** The authors of all four Gospels record the great fact of the resurrection of Christ. However, they do not use the same words or write all the same details or refer to all the same individuals who appear in one or another of the Gospels. For example, here John speaks of Mary Magdalene coming to the tomb, but Matthew says that another Mary came with her. Mark says Salome also came along, and Luke wrote of several women and names Joanna. Which of these accounts is correct? All of them. Saying that one of them came to the tomb is not the same as saying that the others did not. (See the note at Mark 4:1-20.)

**20:2** "We" - she is including the other women

who had come with her. They did not understand that the Lord Jesus would rise from the dead and supposed that His enemies had removed His body. Indeed, none of His disciples had understood His words or the Old Testament Scriptures about His resurrection.

**20:3** They knew that the disciples had not removed His body and they wanted to find out what had happened. We should be as eager as they to know the true facts about it. They are given to us in the New Testament.

**20:6-8** Joseph and Nicodemus had wrapped these strips of linen around the body of Jesus (19:40). If men had come to steal the body it is not at all likely they would have neatly removed these strips and folded the burial cloth that had been around His head. They would have been in a hurry and would either have taken the body wrapped up as it was, or would have torn the linen strips and the cloth off and let them fall anywhere. John immediately understood this and believed that Jesus had risen from the dead.

**20:9** See Ps 16:10; Isa 53:10-12; 1 Cor 15:4.

**20:11** This was Mary Magdalene (v 18). She followed the disciples back to the tomb and became the first to see the Lord Jesus after He rose from the dead. It is interesting that His first appearance was to her and not to His mother or to any of the apostles. He had compassion on a woman whose knowledge was little and whose faith was weak, but whose love was strong.

weeping. And as she wept, she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb, 12 and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13 And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have put him."

14 And when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" She, thinking he was the gardener, said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him off, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him away."

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned around and said to him, "Rabboni!" (which is to

say, Teacher).

17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, *to* my God and your God."

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had said these things to her.

19 Then on the evening of the same day, it being the first *day* of the week, while the doors were locked where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among *them* and said to them, "Peace *be with you*."

20 And when he had said this, he showed them *his* hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad, when they saw the Lord.

21 Then Jesus said to them again, "Peace *be*

**20:12** The other women who had come at first with Mary had seen only one angel. That one was outside the tomb seated on a stone (Matt 28:1-7). The two Mary saw were inside the tomb and had not been there when Peter and the other disciple went in. They probably had the appearance of men. Note on angels at Gen 16:7.

**20:13** The Jewish people placed much emphasis on the proper burial of the dead. Mary was grieved, thinking that grave robbers had been at work and had shown disrespect to the dead body of Jesus.

**20:14** See also 21:4; Matt 28:17; Luke 24:16,37. It seems that after His resurrection Jesus did not look exactly the same as He did before it, so Mary did not immediately recognize Him. And of course she was not expecting to see Him at all. It is also possible that her head was bent as she wept and she did not look at His face.

**20:15** Jesus well knew the answer to this. Compare 6:5,6; 11:34. Was there a gentle rebuke in this question? Compare Luke 24:5. (Sometimes in their ignorance of what God is doing Christ's disciples weep when they should rejoice.)

"Gardener" - the tomb was in a garden (19:41) and Mary might have expected a gardener to be about the place.

**20:16** She had not recognized Him but she knew His voice, and realized also that no strange man could call her by name. Perhaps the moment of recognition came when she turned again and looked more closely at Him.

**20:17** "Do not cling to me" - Mary probably fell on the ground and grasped His feet. Compare Matt 28:9. Jesus' reply seems to mean this: "You do not need to hold on to me. I am not going away immediately. You will have an opportunity to see me again." Or it may possibly mean - "Do not try to keep me here on earth. I must ascend to heaven to completely fulfill God's plan for the salvation of men."

"Brothers" - this almost certainly refers

to His disciples, not His brothers according to the flesh (2:12; 7:3,5,10). Compare Matt 12:47-50; Heb 2:10-12.

"I am ascending" - 14:28; Mark 16:14; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11.

"My Father. . . your God" - Jesus did not say "Our Father and our God." God is the Father of Jesus in a different way than He is the Father of believers. Jesus is the eternal Son of God (1:1,14,18); believers are frail human beings, made children of God only by God's grace shown in the new birth (1:12,13).

**20:18** Mary Magdalene became the first to bear witness to others of the resurrection of Jesus.

**20:19** "Fear" - a short time before they had seen Jesus crucified by their enemies, and they did not know what was going on concerning Him. Remember too that they were not yet filled with the Holy Spirit - an event which removes fear and gives great boldness.

"Jesus came" - Christ's body risen from the dead could go through locked doors. That body was the same body as before (vs 20,27), but greatly changed. Evidently He could appear and disappear as He pleased (Luke 24:31,36,37). See 1 Cor 15:42-44; Phil 3:21.

"Peace" - a word in accordance with His purpose for coming to earth (Luke 2:13,14; 14:27).

**20:20** Verse 27. He was proving to them that He was indeed their Lord Jesus and that His crucified body had risen from the dead. Compare Luke 24:36-43. Their rejoicing when they saw Him fulfilled His word to them in 16:20-22. All their joy and hopes had died when He died (Luke 24:21). Now they spring to life again at His resurrection. Compare 1 Pet 1:3.

**20:21** "I send you" - see 17:18; Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48. He would send His disciples forth with authority to represent Him as He represented God the Father. They would go with the same gospel

to you. As *my* Father has sent me, even so I send you."

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them* and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 The sins of everyone you forgive are forgiven them; *the sins* of anyone you do not forgive are held *unforgiven*."

24 But Thomas called Didymos, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the print of the nails in his hands, and put my finger into the nail prints, and put my hand into his side, I

will not believe."

26 And after eight days his disciples were again inside, and Thomas *was* with them. The doors were locked *but* Jesus came and stood among *them*, and said, "Peace *be* to you."

27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and reach your hand here and put *it* into my side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing."

28 And Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God."

29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed *are*

He preached. And like Him they would go with God's Spirit (v 22).

**20:22** This symbolic action signified that He was the source of life, power, and the Holy Spirit. He was sending them forth and He would spiritually qualify them for the work they had to do. It is interesting to compare this verse with Gen 2:7. It would seem that in some sense they now received the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that they had not had the Spirit with them before. Even in Old Testament times believers knew something of the presence and work of God's Spirit (Ex 31:3; Jud 3:10; 1 Sam 10:6; 16:13; 2 Sam 23:2; Ps 51:11; etc). But now the Lord Jesus was giving God's Spirit in a new way. It is likely that at this time they were given special wisdom and understanding in the Scriptures. Compare Luke 24:45. He may have been giving the Spirit as an indwelling presence (7:39; 14:17). And it is clear that He was giving them authority to minister as His representatives. Later He would grant them the Spirit in an even greater measure (Acts 1:4,5; 2:1-4).

**20:23** Compare Matt 16:19; 18:15-18. The Lord Jesus was speaking to the representatives and human founders of His church. This means that the Church on earth (made up of all true believers in Christ), having received God's Spirit, will be able to proclaim what sort of men are forgiven and what sort are not forgiven. The Greek here could be translated something like this: "Those whose sins you forgive have already been forgiven; those whose sins you let remain unforgiven have not been forgiven." The meaning is: It is God in heaven who forgives sin or not (note at Mark 2:7. See also Ps 103:3; 130:4). And it is God who determines what sort of people shall be forgiven and what sort will not be. And He has already determined this - Luke 24:46,47; Acts 10:43; 13:38,39; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9. God forgives those who repent and trust in Christ. Forgiveness is a gift of His grace. It is the work of the Church to proclaim this truth.

Compare 2 Sam 12:13 for something similar in the Old Testament. God said of prophets in the Old Testament that they would do things when the meaning plainly is that they would declare them (see Jer

25:15-26). And this is true in the case of the apostles. By preaching Christ's gospel they opened the door of forgiveness to all who would believe, they shut the door to all those who would not believe. They pointed individuals to God who forgives sins. In Matt 6:12; Luke 11:4 the Lord Jesus taught us whom we should ask for forgiveness of sins. The Church or any member of it can say to anyone on earth "If you repent and believe in the Lord Jesus all your sins are forgiven; if you do not repent and believe they are not forgiven." And they can say to all believers "If you confess your sins to God He will forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness." Christ did not appoint from among Christians any special group of people as priests who alone could pronounce such truth. All believers in Christ are priests (see 1 Pet 2:5,9).

**20:25** This is why he is sometimes called "Doubting Thomas." He should have been willing to believe the testimony of the other disciples. But the desire for certainty is not to be condemned.

**20:26** Verse 19.

**20:27** See how loving and compassionate the Lord is even to weak and doubting disciples. He was showing him (and all of them) a real body with the unmistakable marks of crucifixion still on it. And Jesus insisted that Thomas accept the evidence for His resurrection. "Do not be unbelieving but believing" is a word that comes to all of us today.

**20:28** God turns His people's failures to some good. Because of the doubts of Thomas, and Christ's revealing Himself to him, we have this great expression of faith. Thomas, as a Jew instructed in the Old Testament, and taught by Jesus Himself for three years, knew very well that there was only one God and that to have any other god was the worst of sins (Matt 4:10; Ex 20:1-4; Deut 6:4,5; Isa 43:11; 44:6; 45:5). When he called Jesus "Lord" and "God" he was expressing his conviction that Jesus was the incarnation of the one true God, the Jehovah of the Old Testament. See also 1:1,14,18; 5:17,18; 8:24,58; 10:30-33; other references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

**20:29** See how the Lord Jesus accepts his words. In other words, He agrees with Thomas that He is Lord and God. If Jesus

those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.”

30 And indeed Jesus performed many other *miraculous* signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31 But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, you might have life through his name.

**21** After these things Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples at the lake of Tiberias, and he revealed *himself* in this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other disciples of *Jesus* were together.

3 Simon Peter said to them, “I’m going fishing.” They said to him, “We will also go with you.” They went out and immediately got into a boat. And that night they caught nothing. 4 But when morning came, Jesus was standing on the shore, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus said to them, “Children, do you have any food?” They answered him, “No.”

did not know He is Lord and God it is inconceivable that He would have done this. Mere men, if they are good men, do not accept divine honors (compare Acts 14:13-15).

“Blessed” – this blessing comes on all of us today who believe as Thomas did – that Jesus rose from the dead and that He is Lord and true God and that He is that to us. Compare Rom 10:9,10. (On “blessed” and “blessing” see notes at Gen 12:3; Num 6:23-27; Ps 1:1-3; 119:1; Matt 5:3-10; etc.) The opposite is also true – God cannot pronounce His blessing on those who do not believe this. See 3:18,36; 8:24.

**20:30** “Many other” – 21:25. Some of these signs are recorded in the other Gospels. John made a special selection of Jesus’ miraculous signs for a special purpose.

“Signs” – 2:11.

**20:31** Here are three very important truths.

First, there is something wonderful to believe – that Jesus is the one anointed by God as the Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of the world, and that He is God’s Son sharing God’s very nature (notes at Matt 1:1; etc).

Second, there are very good reasons for believing this – the miraculous signs Jesus gave, including His resurrection from the dead.

Third, there is the result of believing this – life, true spiritual life, eternal life in His name (3:16,36; 5:24; 6:47). In this way John sums up several of the most important truths of this Gospel.

**21:1** “Tiberias” – another name for the Sea of Galilee. He had told His disciples to go to Galilee (Matt 28:7,10). After His resurrection Jesus spent forty days with His disciples in various places (Acts 1:3).

**21:2** The sons of Zebedee were James and John (Matt 10:2).

6 And he said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find *some*.” So they cast *it there*, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the large number of fish.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord.” Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he wrapped *his* outer garment *around him* (for he had removed it), and threw himself into the lake. 8 And the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about a hundred meters), dragging the net with fish.

9 As soon as they reached land, they saw a charcoal fire there, and fish laid on it, and bread.

10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.”

11 Simon Peter went up to the boat, and dragged the net full of large fish to land. They totaled a hundred and fifty-three, but though there were so many, the net was not broken.

12 Jesus said to them, “Come *and* eat.” And none of the disciples dared *to* ask him, “Who are

**21:3** The bodily presence of the Lord Jesus was not always with them in those days. The disciples were poor men who had always worked for a living (Matt 4:18-22; Acts 3:6). Peter’s purpose may have been to earn some money for their expenses while they waited for the Lord to appear. There is no indication in these verses that any of them intended to abandon the Lord’s work. And there is nothing wrong with those who preach the gospel while having another job to earn a living (Acts 18:3; 20:34,35; 2 Thess 3:7-10).

**21:4** See 20:15; Luke 24:17.

**21:5** “Children” – 13:33.

**21:6** For a similar miracle see Luke 5:4-10. The Lord Jesus knows the place of every fish in the sea and every star in the sky (Isa 40:26). There is a lesson here for “fishers of men” (Matt 4:19). If Christ does not direct and bless their efforts their labor is without result. He knows where all future believers are and how to reach them.

**21:7** Peter’s attitude at this miracle was quite different than it was at the other (Luke 5:8). He had learned many things since then, both about himself and about the Lord Jesus.

**21:9** The Lord from heaven was cooking breakfast for His disciples. Compare 13:3-5; Matt 20:28. See also Luke 12:35-37. His heart, His love, His desire to help them were not changed.

**21:11** The disciples would have been able to sell these fish and have money for expenses. And the Lord even kept the net from being torn. Many times since then, in all generations and in miraculous ways, the Lord has provided for His servants. Matt 6:31-33 and Phil 4:19 give truth for all time.

**21:12** Compare Rev 3:20. Here the disciples were surely filled with awe and wonder in the presence of the risen Son of God, and

you?" knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then came, took the bread and gave it to them, and also the fish.

14 This was now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after he had risen from the dead.

15 So when they had eaten, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord. You know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."

hardly knew what to say.

**21:13** Not only did He cook the food, He served them as well. His resurrection did not remove His desire to serve men (Heb 13:8).

**21:14** "Third time" – this means His appearances to a group of His original disciples. There were other appearances to the women and to others – 20:19,26.

**21:15-17** Peter had denied the Lord three times (18:17,25,27). How terribly he felt about it is indicated in Matt 26:75. Now three times the Lord questions him about his love. This must have brought to Peter's mind his denials and his self-confidence which led to them. And it was good for him to face himself and recognize his weakness and folly and sin. It was especially Peter whom Satan "sifted" (Luke 22:31). So now it was especially Peter whom the Lord dealt with. But in dealing with Peter He was teaching the other disciples (and us) very important truth. Though the Lord did reawaken Peter's grief, that was not His chief purpose – which was to restore and confirm his commission.

"These" – in the Greek here, as in the English, it is not possible to know whether Jesus meant "these men" or "these things." So this phrase could be interpreted in three different ways – "Do you love me more than these disciples love me?", or, "Do you love me more than you do these disciples?", or, "Do you love me more than fish and fishing?"

The first of these interpretations seems most likely. Peter had been very outspoken in his affection for Christ (13:37), and compared himself very favorably with the other disciples (Matt 26:33). Jesus' question seems to mean "Now, after your bitter experience, after learning something of your weakness, will you be inclined to say you love me more than these others do?" The second of the possible interpretations is not likely, but compare Matt 10:37,38. It is also possible to love human friends more than we love the Lord from heaven.

If we take the third interpretation given above, the meaning would be something like this: "Do you prefer the old life and its ways to me and my ways? Are you willing to reconfirm the decision you made when you became my disciple?" (v 19; Matt 4:18-20; 19:27).

Whatever meaning we take, one thing is perfectly clear. In the relationship of a

16 Again he said to him the second time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord. You know that I love you." He said to him, "Take care of my sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 18 Truly, truly I say to you, when you

disciple with the Lord Jesus one matter is of supreme importance – love for Him. Compare 1 Cor 13:1-3; 16:22. In proportion to the love we have for Him we will be able to serve Him acceptably.

There are a number of motives that cause people in Christian work to do what they do. The motive may be simply to have a job, a career; or simply to make money; or a sense of duty; or a desire to do some good in the world. But the only motive that can satisfy Christ is the one He speaks of here – love for Him. Motive is extremely important in Christian work. Without the proper one, on the day of judgment no doubt it will be seen that all religious activities have been nothing but "wood, hay and straw" (1 Cor 3:12,13), or even worse than these.

"Feed my lambs" – this means that Peter was to nourish new and inexperienced believers with the Word of God (see 1 Pet 2:2). Notice the order here – first love, then service. Love must be expressed in action. See 14:15,23. If we love Christ we will love His people (1 John 4:20). Service without love is terribly defective (1 Cor 13:1-3).

**21:16** "Take care of" – this means more than simply to feed. It means to be a loving shepherd to Christ's people, to look after their welfare in every way, especially in spiritual matters. In saying this was Jesus elevating Peter above the other disciples? Not at all. They too, and many others besides, were to be teachers, shepherds, and feeders of God's flock – see Eph 4:11-13; 1 Pet 5:1-4. And Christ alone is the Chief Shepherd.

**21:17** "Third time" – perhaps he was grieved because he remembered his three denials of the Lord, or because he felt the Lord was doubting that he loved Him.

"You know all things" – compare 2:24,25; Heb 4:13. To say this Peter must have been fully aware that Jesus was God incarnate. Who else knows all things? And Jesus accepted these words as He did the words of Thomas in 20:28.

"Sheep" – this probably means mature believers. Compare v 15. No believer ever gets so mature that spiritual food is no longer needed, or that he cannot still get such food from other servants of God.

**21:18,19** Here the Lord indicated that Peter would grow old and die. It is not easy to reconcile this with the teaching that Christ could have come back any moment during



were young, you fastened your belt around you and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you get old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten your belt and take *you* where you will not want to go."

19 He said this, indicating the kind of death by which he would glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he said to him, "Follow me."

20 Then Peter, turning around, saw coming behind them the disciple whom Jesus loved, who also had leaned against his chest at supper and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays you?"

21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "Lord, and what *will* this man *do*?"

22 Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you? You follow me."

23 Then this statement went around among the brethren, that that disciple would not die. But Jesus did not tell him that he would not die, but, "If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you?"

24 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things. And we know that his testimony is true. 25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did. If every one of them would be written down, I suppose even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

the lifetime of the apostles. After uttering this prophecy could the Lord have returned before Peter grew old and died?

"Glorify God" – earlier Peter denied Christ, but he would be steadfast in death and at last fulfill his own word (13:37). According to tradition Peter died by crucifixion. Christ's last word to Peter here was like His first words to him (Matt 4:18,19), and confirmed His original call to be a disciple.

**21:20** See 13:23. The disciple whom Jesus loved was one of the seven who went fishing (vs 2,3). We know he was not Peter, and it is unlikely he was any of the others, except John himself.

**21:21** The meaning seems to be – "What is his future? Will he also grow old and be led where he does not want to go? If I am to die by violence, will my brother John go the same way?"

**21:22** There is a rebuke here that is a warning to every servant of God. The Lord reminded Peter that his chief concern should be his own present responsibility toward the Lord, not the future of someone else. Jesus is not teaching here that we should not have a loving concern for fellow believers (compare 13:34; 1 Cor 12:25,26; Gal 6:2). But one may have an improper curiosity about Christ's plans for others. And it is all too possible to be taken up with what others

may do and neglect one's own duty simply to follow the Lord.

**21:23** "To you" – how careful we should be in trying to interpret the words of the Lord Jesus! Here is an illustration of how a simple statement of Jesus can be misunderstood and twisted in meaning by adding a thought to it which is not there at all. See how John places emphasis on the exact words Jesus spoke. Compare Prov 30:5,6.

**21:24** Here we learn the identity of the disciple whom Jesus loved (v 20). He was the author of this Gospel. There is evidence that this was the apostle John, and no evidence that it was any of the other disciples.

"We" – it is not clear why we have a change to the plural here. If another disciple added this sentence to what John wrote we do not know who it was.

**21:25** "Other things" – 20:30; Matt 8:16; 9:35; etc.

"Books" – precious as such books would be, God knew they were not necessary for us. We have what He wanted us to have. And what He has given is quite sufficient for the purpose God had in mind. We will do well to give thanks for what He has given, and to make it a chief part of our study throughout our lives, and to make every effort by His grace to put it into practice.