

# The Gospel of John

## Introduction

The other three gospels are called the Synoptics, meaning “similar” in content. John’s gospel is very different. The Synoptics are a mixture of narrative, history, and the discourses of Jesus. John is more theological in content. “Unlike the Synoptics, John contains no narrative parables [only seven miracles—five of which are not recorded in the Synoptics], no eschatological discourses, no accounts of Jesus exorcising demons or healing lepers, no list of the twelve apostles, and no formal institution of the Lord’s Supper. John also does not record Jesus’ birth, baptism, transfiguration, temptation, agony in Gethsemane, or ascension” (MacArthur). More than 90% of John is not given in the Synoptics. However, there are no contradictions between John and the Synoptics; rather, they explain each other. Both present Jesus as God and the Messiah, who came to die on the cross to save us from our sins, and who rose from the dead. While John cites many Jewish things and is very descriptive of the land of Israel, he has a wider appeal to a church made up of Gentile believers. Doctrinal issues, especially about the deity and humanity of Christ, had begun to appear among the believers (as described by the writings of the early church fathers). The author emphasizes the physical actuality of Jesus’ hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, and death as a defense against the Gnostic beliefs. Although the versions of Gnosticism varied, the basic idea was that salvation came through knowledge (the English word for “know” is from the Greek word “Gnostic”). They denied both the deity of Jesus and His human nature.

## Author

The epistles are letters, and those who wrote them identified themselves as the authors. None of the writers of the gospels identify themselves as such. “The Gospel According to John” is not in the original text. However, there are no manuscripts that contradict that John wrote this gospel. The author claims to be a witness, *we beheld His glory* (1:15). He gives many details not recorded in the Synoptics, details only a witness would know, such as the exact time certain events occurred (1:39; 4:6; 19:14), that the loaves the boy had at the feeding of the 5,000 were made of barley (6:9), that the branches that lined the road during the Triumphal Entry were palm branches (12:13), that the tunic of Jesus was seamless (19:23), and many other such things. The writer was obviously a disciple/ apostle, as he was intimately acquainted with what the Twelve were saying and thinking.

### Internal Evidence

John is mentioned about 20 times in the Synoptics, but not once in this gospel. “It is not easy to think of a reason why any early Christian, other than John himself, should have completely omitted all mention of such a prominent Apostle” (Morris, *John*). It seems like only a person of unquestioned authority could have written a gospel that is so different than the Synoptics, and yet be accepted as Scripture by the believers. The author calls himself *the disciple whom Jesus loved* (21:20, 24), who was seated next to Jesus at the Last Supper when Peter motioned to him (13:23-24). He must have been one of the Twelve because they were the only ones with Jesus at the Last Supper, and the others are named (Luke 22:14; John 21:2). James, John’s brother, was the first disciple to be killed (Acts 12:2, in 44 B.C.), and Peter was the one talking, so John is identified as *the disciple whom Jesus loved*, and the author of this gospel.

### External Evidence

“Irenaeus (c. A.D. 130–200) was the first person to explicitly name John as author. In his work *Against Heresies*, written in the last quarter of the second century, Irenaeus testified, “Afterwards [after the Synoptic Gospels were written], John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia” (3.1.1). What makes his witness especially

valuable is that Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.20), who was a disciple of the Apostle John (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.3.4)” (MacArthur).

### John’s History

James (the elder brother) and John were the sons of Zebedee and Salome, from Galilee. They were fishermen, and with their father *had hired servants* (Mark 1:20), and were *partners with Simon* [Peter] (Luke 5:2, 10). His mother Salome contributed financially to Jesus’ ministry (Matthew 27:55-56). She was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25), making John and Jesus cousins.

At first, John and Andrew were disciples of John the Baptist. When the Baptist pointed out that Jesus was the Messiah, they left him and followed Jesus (John 1:35-40). After staying with Jesus for a while, they went back to their fishing business in Galilee. When Jesus went to Galilee, He called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to be His disciples. *And they immediately left the boat...and followed Him* (Matthew 4:18-22). Along with his brother James and Peter, John was one of the three closest disciples of Jesus (Matthew 17:1; Mark 5:37; 13:3; 14:22). They witnessed Jesus at His Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1).

Jesus called John and his brother James *sons of Thunder* (Mark 3:17). We see an example of their “Thunder” when a Samaritan village refused to receive Jesus and the disciples. James and John said, “*Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?*” Jesus then rebuked them.

After the ascension of Jesus, John became a leader in the early church in Jerusalem (Acts 3:1; 8:14; Galatians 2:9). Later he went to Ephesus, and was exiled to the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9). All the other apostles died by the time of the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., but John lived to be in his 90s. He also authored 1, 2, 3 John and the book of Revelation. In that regard, he was a witness to both the first coming and, through visions, the Second Coming of Christ.

### Date

John assumes people know the Synoptics, and, in fact, much of his information **depends** on people knowing the Synoptics. As one of many examples, John wrote that *John* [the Baptist] *had not yet been thrown into prison* (John 3:24), which assumes that his readers knew the Baptist eventually would be. John does not record the imprisonment, but it is described in the Synoptics (Matthew 4:12; 14:3; Mark 6:17; Luke 3:20). Therefore, some time had to pass between the writing of the Synoptics in the 60s and their circulation, and the writings of John, who wrote probably between 85-95. John 21:18 and 23 also suggest that John was an old man by the time he wrote. [Of interest, “the earliest extant portion of any New Testament book is a tiny fragment (p52) containing a few verses from John 18 and dating from about A.D. 130 (or earlier)” (MacArthur)—That’s about a mere 40 years after the original was written.]

### Purpose

John is the only one of the gospels that contains exactly the author’s purpose in writing. John 20:31 says, *But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God* [apologetic purpose]; *and that believing you may have life in His name* [evangelistic purpose]. One of the key words of John is “believe,” which occurs 98 times, more than all the Synoptics put together.

## The Miraculous Signs of Jesus in John

1. Changing water into wine in Cana (2:1-11)
2. Healing an official's son in Capernaum (4:46-54)
3. Healing an invalid at the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem (5:1-18)
4. Feeding the 5,000 near the Sea of Galilee (6:5-14)
5. Walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee (6:16-21)
6. Healing a blind man in Jerusalem (9:1-7)
7. Raising dead Lazarus in Bethany (11:1-45)

After His crucifixion:

1. The most convincing sign of all—Jesus' own resurrection (20:1-29)
2. Miraculous catch of fish (21:6-11)

## The Seven "I AM" Statements of Jesus

1. *"I AM the Bread of Life"* (6:35).
2. *"I AM the Light of the world"* (8:12).
3. *"I AM the Gate for the sheep"* (10:7; cf. v. 9).
4. *"I AM the Good Shepherd"* (10:11, 14).
5. *"I AM the Resurrection and the Life"* (11:25).
6. *"I AM the Way and the Truth and the Life"* (14:6).
7. *"I AM the true Vine"* (15:1; cf. v. 5).

## Basic Outline of the Book

- Prologue (1:1-18)
- Book of Signs (1:19–12:50)
- Farewell Instructions (chapters 13–17)
- Passion and Resurrection (chapters 18–20)
- Epilogue (chapter 21)

# Chapter 1

**Verse 1**—*In the beginning*—this does not refer to the act of creation but to what already existed when the creation of our world and time came into being (Genesis 1:1).

—*was the Word*—at the point at which all else began to be, the Word was already there. He **was** eternal before time began. He was not a created being. John uses the verb *eimi* (“to be”), which denotes a state of being, i.e., without beginning, always in the present tense. The pre-incarnate Jesus described Himself to Moses, at the burning bush, as “*I AM... This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations*” (Exodus 3:14-15). No matter when you say it, Jesus is always in the present tense.

- *was* is the imperfect tense of the verb, which describes continuing action in the past, i.e., He continued to exist, “to be,” before the beginning (therefore, eternal).
- *Word*—Greek *logos*, “speaking, a message, or words.” This was a common word, familiar in Greek and in the Old Testament (Psalm 33:6). But here John uses it in a unique way, which he explains in the next verses.

—*and the Word was with God*—*With* indicates both equality and distinction of identity and also association. “The position of the noun God in the Greek text marks it as a predicate, stressing description rather than individualization. The *Word* was deity, one with God, rather than “a god” or another being of the same class. This is the real meaning of the phrase. Unity of nature rather than similarity or likeness is implied” (EBC). This confirms two distinct persons of the godhead (which we will learn later is actually a Trinity).

—*and the Word was God*—“it denotes *God in his nature*, as truly God as he with whom he “was,” yet without exhausting the being of God (observe that the Evangelist did *not* write *kai lo/gos h™n oj qeo/B* (“and God was the Word”)) (“Word Commentary”).

**Verse 2**—*He was in the beginning with God*—John sums up the statements he explained in verse 1.

**Verse 3**—*All things came into being through Him*—The revelation of God began with creation (Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1:19-20). In these verses, John is making a strong case that Jesus is eternal and the Creator. He is not part of that creation.

—Jesus was the agent of that creation (Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2). When John talks about *all things*, he uses the form of the verb *ginomai*, “came into being” (compare to verse 1, where *in the beginning*, Jesus was already there). Also, *all things came into being* refers to an event, not a construction. *God said*, “*Let there be light;*” and *there was light* (Genesis 1:3). It “came into being” in an instant, at His word.

—*and apart from Him nothing* [lit. “not even one thing”] *came into being that has come into being*—The same statement but in the negative—Apart from *the Word*, **nothing** would exist.

—Taking these three verses together, we understand that the creative activity of *the Word* is the activity of God through Him. To say “*the Word* created” is to say “God created.”

Application—It’s interesting that Colossians 1:16 says, *For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible*. Think of things like DNA—it existed from the beginning of creation, but was not “seen” until 1871. Think of invisible things like “breath” and “love.” *Apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being*.

**Verse 4**—*In Him was life*—“life” occurs 36 times in John, and it’s usually joined by the adjective “eternal,” referring to spiritual life. This is self-existence, which is clear evidence of Christ’s deity because only God is self-existent, having life in Himself. This is in contrast to verse 3, where *all things came into being*. Just as *the Word was God* and they cannot be separated, *in Him was life*, they cannot be separated.

Application—Genesis 1:1 says, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*. This is the most important truth in the Bible. Unbelievers want to get rid of creation, and therefore, get rid of a Creator. To be rid of God would leave mankind free to live anyway they want, with no judgment. However, John is clearly stating that everything is in the category of “coming into being” and there was a point when it did not exist. And before existence was the self-existent eternal source of life. God is never becoming anything, that is, He never changes, because He always is. Interesting verses in Job 34:14-15—*If He should gather to*

*Himself...His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust.* Acts 17:28 says, *In Him we live and move and exist.*

—*and the life was the Light*—Just as *the Word was God* (v. 1) and *in Him was life*, and they cannot be separated, *the life was the Light*, and they cannot be separated. In 8:12, Jesus says, “*I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.*”

—*the Light of men*—“Light” in John implies revelation that discloses the “life” that is in Christ and brings into judgment those who refuse it (3:19) [Ryrie].

**Verse 5**—*The Light shines in the darkness*—Darkness is used often in the Bible as a metaphor to indicate death, ignorance, sin, and separation from God (BKC). The very nature of light is to shine and make the darkness go away.

—*and the darkness did not comprehend it*, i.e., “overcome” or “overpower” it. Even a small LED nightlight in a dark room will drive the darkness away. Light overpowers darkness. Darkness does not overpower light. Actually, darkness is not an entity in itself. You cannot measure darkness. Darkness is simply an absence of light. It’s light that can be measured.

Application—Jesus, who is God, who is life, who is light, invaded the world of darkness, which is under the dominion of Satan and his world system. And Satan and his system cannot overpower Jesus. They cannot kill the life Jesus gives. They cannot overpower the light that Jesus gives. This is the truth. This is our hope. Jesus as the life and light will overpower the darkness of my sin nature!

**Verse 6**—*There came*—lit. “there appeared.” The Baptist was an earthly herald, like a man blowing a trumpet, announcing the arrival of a king.

—*a man sent from God, whose name was John* [the Baptist]—Jesus was God. The Baptist was like the Old Testament prophets. He was the human commissioned by God to introduce the Word to mankind. It’s important that the Baptist was *sent from God* (Luke 1). It wasn’t his own idea. He was the first prophet to appear in Israel in over 400 years. Malachi, the last prophetic writing of the Old Testament, predicted this. *I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me* (Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6; Luke 1:17).

—Jesus said of the Baptist, “*Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!*” (Matthew 11:11). The Baptist was chosen by God to perform the most important task up to that point in history—being the first to announce publicly that Jesus was *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!* (John 1:29).

**Verse 7**—*He came as a witness*—whereas the Synoptics talk about the Baptist’s origin and his character (Luke 1:5-24, 57-80), John assumes his readers are familiar with the Baptist. Here John talks about the Baptist’s function—what his role was. Seven times, in verses 6-35, the Baptist is called a *witness*. This is the same Greek word as *testify*. It’s both a noun and a verb. It means “to speak well of.” John’s gospel presents many testimonies of the claims of Jesus as the Son of God. The Baptist is the first of these testimonies.

—*to testify about the Light*—People are in darkness of sin. The Baptist, from a human level, attempted to awaken people to their need of God’s revelation of Light.

—*so that all might believe through Him*—The Baptist’s goal was for all people to come to trust in Jesus, to receive the life the Light would give them (v. 12).

**Verse 8**—*He was not the Light*—It’s a clear statement. The Baptist also said, “*I am not the Christ* [Messiah]” (John 1:19).

—*but he came to testify about the Light*—John states this twice, as he re-stated verse 1 in verse 2. He is extra careful to make sure these points are clearly understood.

**Verse 9**—*There was the true*—not “false.” All but 5 of the 28 uses of “true” in the New Testament are in John’s writings.

—*true Light*—Believers, like the Baptist, reflect that Light, like the moon reflects the sun, but Jesus is the full *radiance of His* [God’s] *glory* (Hebrews 1:3), like the sun, where the light originates.

—*which, coming into the world*, i.e., the incarnation of Christ (1:14)

—*enlightens every man*—Not that every person is automatically redeemed, because redemption comes only through faith in the Savior (1:12), but this *true Light* is available to every single person. It shines on each person, but they need to receive it as the truth (1:12). Romans 1:19-20 says, *Since the creation of the world His...divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*

Application—Whether a person is European, Oriental, American, etc. It’s the same Light shining on them. It doesn’t change with the country. For example, it’s to *as many as received Him* that *He gave the right to become children of God* (1:12). There’s not another way for those who have “never heard” or for those who experience some “miraculous event” or for those who were “good people.”

**Verse 10**—*He was in the world*—the incarnation (v. 14)

—*and the world was made through Him*—the Creator (v. 3)

—*and the world did not know Him*—People did not recognize or accept Jesus as the Creator/God because *Men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, lest his deeds should be exposed* (3:19-20). They are willfully blind to protect their sinful behavior.

**Verse 11**—*He came to His own*—people, i.e., the Jews. In the Old Testament, God repeatedly calls the Jews His own people.

—*and those who were His own did not receive Him*—This theme of the Jewish rejection of Jesus is repeated throughout John’s gospel, to the end that they crucified Jesus.

**Verse 12**—*But*—A word of contrast. Just as there is a clear contrast between darkness and light, so there is a clear contrast between rejection and reception of Jesus as the light/life.

—*as many as received* [lit. “take hold of” or “grasp”] *Him*—Not all the Jews rejected Jesus. Some did receive Him, like Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, like the disciples.

—*to them He gave the right*—This is a privilege, not something we deserve just because we are human. We are all God’s creation, but we are NOT all “children of God.”

—*to become children of God*—*To become* clearly indicates this is not a result of natural birth (we cannot become what we already are). This verb implies a change of nature. Just as in the first verses when *all things came into being* physically, here in verse 12, those who receive Jesus *become children of God* spiritually, i.e., *born again* (3:7).

—*even to those who believe in His name*—This is the initial definition of *believe*, i.e., to receive Jesus.

—*His name*—the totality of Christ’s being, all that He is and does. His 100% deity and His 100% humanity. *God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord* (Philippians 2:9-10).

Application—“God” is a word that is used generically today for any **perceived** deity. But “Jesus” is a specific, historical person. The name cannot be used of anyone else. John also wrote, *Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God* (1 John 4:2). What a person believes is seen in what they believe about Jesus. Do they believe what the Bible says about Jesus? Or do they say, “Jesus, plus...(works)” or “My Jesus would...” Remember John’s purpose in writing his gospel: *But these have been written [in the Bible] so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God [apologetic purpose]; and that believing you may have life in His name [evangelistic purpose]* (John 20:31).

**Verse 13**—*children [born ones] of God...who were born, not of blood*—natural physical process, ethnic or racial heritage

—*nor of the will of the flesh*—human decision, the natural human desire for children, a personal sexual desire

—*nor of the will of man*—natural birth, a human achievement, a man-made system

—*but of God*—a supernatural work of God (see John 3:3-8), to give the divine life and light to a darkened sinner. It's the compassionate work of God that makes salvation, through Jesus Christ, available to His creation.

**Verse 14—(1) *And the Word became flesh***—The clearest statement of the incarnation. Concerning the word *became*, “The verb in connection with a predicative noun expresses that a person or a thing...enters into a new condition, becomes something that it was not before” (WBC). God took on humanity, eternity entered time, the invisible became visible (*God is spirit*—John 4:24), the Creator entered His creation. Without giving up any of His deity, He became full humanity. 100% God and 100% human. It does not mean He took on a sinful human nature (the usual meaning of “flesh” in the New Testament—remember—author intended meaning, understood from the context.)

Application—In verse 1, *the Word was God*, referring to a permanent condition or state of being. In verse 3, nothing became something it was not before (*came into being*). The same Greek word is used here. The Word became something He was not before (*the Word became flesh*). Jesus appeared in the Old Testament, but He did not become human. He appeared as deity and was worshipped as such (e.g. Moses at the burning bush—Exodus 3).

—**(2) *and dwelt*** [lived temporarily, pitched a tent] *among us* [humans]—Jesus “tabernacled” among humans. In the O.T., God’s glory shown over the Holy of Holies in the temporary Tabernacle. Now God’s glory is shown in Jesus. The whole idea of the Tabernacle/tent was “temporary,” as the human state of Jesus was temporary. This is in contrast to verse 1, the eternal state of the deity of Jesus.

Application—In 2 Corinthians 5:16, Paul wrote, *even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer*. Today, Jesus is in heaven in His glorified state, as described by John in Revelation 1. The cross is empty, the grave is empty. The Mt. of Olives is waiting, *...while they were looking on, a cloud received Him out of their sight...This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven* (Acts 1:9-11; see Zechariah 14:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19:11-16; Matthew 24:29-30).

—**(3) *and we saw His glory***—John (and others—*we*) personally observed the glory of Jesus. (Most likely, he is referring to the Transfiguration, when *His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light*—Matthew 17:2-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36). Jesus, in this glorified state, is what John describes in Revelation 1:12-19. In His post-resurrection appearances and at His ascension, Jesus was in His eternal body (He could appear and disappear at will) but not in His Revelation 1 glorified state.

—*glory as of the only begotten from the Father*—better translated, *the one and only Son*,” literally, “one of a kind,” “unique.” He has no equal. There is no parallel elsewhere, nor has it ever been repeated. Believers become children of God when they receive Christ, but Jesus is a unique Son of God, one of a kind. This theme will be repeated many times in John’s gospel. *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten* [one of a kind, unique] *Son...* (John 3:16).

Application—Hebrews 11:17 speaks of Isaac being *only begotten*. Again, a poor translation. Isaac was a one-of-a-kind child (Abraham having had other children as well), but Isaac alone was the son of the Abrahamic Covenant.

—**(4) *full of grace***—The greatest expression, as much as possible, of God’s favor. Jesus is the greatest gift (kindness, benefit) God ever gave or will give to humanity. *God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son-ness* (Hebrews 1:1-2). You cannot learn more about God (through visions, miracles, “words of God”) than what Jesus revealed. He was as much as possible of God’s favor/gift to us. There is no more.

Application—God the Father said of Jesus, “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*” (Matthew 3:17). The Father was not just satisfied with Jesus, He was highly satisfied. Jesus was full of the favor/gift of God, and that full favor/gift dwelt among us humans.

—(5) *full of truth*—Jesus was the most perfect full way to communicate God’s truth to mankind’s understanding. Jesus said, “*I AM the truth...*” (John 14:6). What was partially revealed through the prophets and Scriptures of the Old Testament became fully realized in Jesus Christ. There is no standard of truth that Jesus perfectly keeps. He IS the truth. If He says it, it is the truth.

Application—Truth is part of the character of God. He is always truth. He can never not be truth. Grace, however, is a work of God. Sometimes He gives grace (favor), sometimes He withholds His grace (such as when Judah sinned and was sent into captivity). But in Jesus, there is full grace, He was 120% the favor of God. There is no favor/gift of God that is greater than the favor/gift God gave us in Jesus Christ.

**Verse 15**—*John [the Baptist] testified about Him*—Actually, the verb is in the present tense, so it should be translated “testifies.” John records what the Baptist **said** in the next phrase, but what the Baptist **said** still continues, even today, to give testimony as to who Jesus is. And John is writing some 60 years after the Baptist’s death. [Verses 6-8 are like a parenthesis about the Baptist, in speaking of Jesus being the Light. Here in verse 15, the Baptist is again like a parenthesis in speaking of Jesus as the fullness of grace.]

—*cried out*—a bold, public witness. Matthew 3:3 says the Baptist was fulfilling prophecy, *For this is the one referred by Isaiah the prophet, saying, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness...”*

—*saying, “This was He*—John will write of the specific event in 1:19-34, but here, the Baptist is mentioned in the context of one of those who witnessed *the Word*, as flesh, dwelling among us, beholding His glory.

Application—This is the message of salvation. “This is HE.” Jesus is God. Jesus is life. Jesus is light. Jesus is truth. Jesus is the full grace of God. Jesus is the glory of God. Jesus is the One and only unique Son of God. “This is HE.” Cry it out!!

—*of whom I said*—Verses 6-8 told us that the Baptist *was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light*. But now, we will read the Baptist’s testimony in his own words...

—*He who comes after me*—Not referring to existence, but to the timing of their ministries. Jesus began His public ministry after the Baptist had already begun his public ministry because the ministry of the Baptist was two-fold: (1) to prepare the hearts of the people and (2) to give testimony that Jesus was the Messiah.

—*has a higher rank than I*—Though time wise, the ministry of Jesus in the flesh was after the ministry of the Baptist, in importance, Jesus far surpassed the Baptist, like the sun (from where light originates) far surpasses the moon (which has no light in itself, but merely reflects the sun’s light).

—*for He existed before me*—Jesus actually existed before the Baptist because Jesus is the eternal One, *In the beginning was the Word...and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us*.

Application—Jesus is ALWAYS greater than the one who is witnessing about Jesus. That seems obvious, but how many people sitting in the pews give glory to pastors (or angels or priests or popes), a glory that should go to Jesus alone! (See Revelation 19:10; 22:9.)

**Verse 16**—*For of His fullness*—of grace and truth (v. 14).

—*we have all received*—*to those who believe in His name* (v. 12), including the Baptist, the Apostle John, and all of us who believe. We are ALL receivers—only God, in Jesus, is the Giver. *God so loved...He gave* (John 3:16).

—*and grace upon grace*—Because Jesus is *full of grace*, His grace never runs out. Someone likened it to waves of the ocean. A wave of grace keeps on coming in. Wave upon wave. Grace never runs out.

Application—But make sure you notice that God’s grace is only available to those who receive Jesus (v. 12). It’s selective, for the children of God. It’s not for everyone. There is no such thing as “common grace.” Sure, God gives mankind breath (Job 34:14-15). In Jesus *all things hold together* (Colossians 1:17). God does things to keep this world going and to keep mankind alive. But God’s favor/gift is not upon an evil world in the control of Satan. His grace is given only to those who receive Jesus.

**Verse 17**—*For the Law was given*—The Law was given by God (Exodus 31:18; Leviticus 26:46; Deuteronomy 4:44; 5:1). So, of course, the Law reflects God’s holy and righteous character. Paul wrote, ... *the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good* (Romans 7:12). But the Law was not an instrument of grace (favor). The Law saved no one (Acts 13:38-39; Romans 3:20-22; 8:3; 10:4; Galatians 2:16; 3:10-12; Hebrews 7:18-19; 10:1-4). *For the Law...can never by the same sacrifices year by year...make perfect those who draw near* (Hebrews 10:1). It convicted sinners of their inability to keep perfectly God’s righteous standards, so it revealed to sinners their need for the grace of forgiveness that would come in Jesus.

— *through Moses*—*Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, ...but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house* (Hebrews 3:5-6). Moses, as the servant, can administer the law of the house correctly. The Son, who is the ruler of the house, can act with ultimate authority that surpasses the authority of the servant. The Son can actually create the law of the house. Also, Moses was not deity. He was not the originator of the Law. He was just passing on information between God and the Jews. As great a man as Moses was, he was still a sinner, who died and was not able to enter the land of Israel as a consequence of his sin in disobeying God (Numbers 20:12).

—[the fullness of ]*grace and truth were realized* [came to be, came to exist] *through Jesus Christ*—As an illustration, let’s say you are cooking a delicious meal. The Old Testament is like entering the house and smelling the delicious aroma. Or even getting a bite of what is to come. But Jesus is like fully partaking of the entire meal. In the Old Testament, for example, the righteous had a sense that they would one day be with God and the evil people would not be with Him. But when Jesus came, He told us not only that heaven awaited the righteous, but that He was actually going to prepare a place just for us (John 14:6). Also He told us that the Lake of Fire was the destiny of the evil ones. This is a **truth** that began to exist when Jesus told it.

Application—**If** we were thinking of hierarchies, we now know— Light is greater than darkness, Jesus becoming flesh and dwelling among us was a greater communication from God than the prophets, visions, etc. of the Old Testament. Jesus (the Light) is greater than John the Baptist (the witness and messenger of the Light). Life is greater than no life. Being a child of God is greater than not being a child of God. Grace and truth are greater than the Law, and Jesus is greater than Moses.

—God’s grace was certainly given in the Old Testament, but grace was never offered, as it is in the New Testament. “*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest*” (Matthew 11:28).

**Verse 18**—*No one has seen God at any time*—God is Spirit, not visible in the physical world. In the Old Testament, when God appeared to people, He was the preincarnate [before He was made flesh] Christ. Jesus is described as *the image of the invisible God* (Colossians 1:15). The prophets, such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the Apostle John saw God on His throne, but these were in visions. All these, though, were aspects, or a particular revelation of something about God. They never fully revealed or explained all of who God was. —*the only begotten God*—“one of a kind” from verse 14, *the Word was God, the Word was with God* —*who is in the bosom of the Father*—a close, intimate relationship, near His heart. For example, you know some things about me because of my words (like the Old Testament is), but ask one of my daughters, and having lived close to my heart, they will explain a lot more of who I am (like Jesus can about the Father). —*He has explained Him*—We get the word “exegesis,” which means “interpretation” or “understanding the meaning of.” “The being and nature of God, which cannot be perceived directly by ordinary senses, has been adequately presented to us by the Incarnation. ...The life and words of Jesus are more than an announcement; they are an explanation of God’s attitude toward men and of His purpose for them” (EBC). Jesus said, “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father...Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me*” (John 14:7-9). Hebrews 1:1 says, *God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in Son-ness.*” Jesus is God. Jesus was with God. Jesus explains God, as a Son does. Paul wrote, *for in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form*” (Colossians 2:9).

## **The First Day—the Delegation from the Jews (1:19-28)**

**Verse 19**—*This is the testimony* [a word appearing more than 75 times in John’s writings] *of John* [the Baptist], *when the Jews sent to him priests* [theological authorities] *and Levites* [temple and ritualistic authorities] *from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”*—The Baptist had called them *You brood of vipers* (Matthew 3:7). The Baptist had a large following and popularity with the people (Matthew 3:5), yet he was outside the religious establishment and control, so they sent some “authorities” to investigate him. They were worried about their own authority over the people and their relationship with the Romans (John 11:48).

**Verse 20**—*And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ”*—John stresses the Baptist’s emphatic answer that he was not the Messiah, the Anointed One.

**Verse 21**—*They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?”*—Based on Malachi 3:1 and 4:5, the last prophetic book of the Old Testament, the Jews expected Elijah to bodily return before the Messiah came to establish His earthly kingdom. The Baptist dressed similar to Elijah (Mark 1:6 and 2 Kings 1:8). [Even today, many Jews leave an empty seat at their table for Elijah when they celebrate their Seder meal.]  
—*And he said, “I am not.”*—The angel told the Baptist’s father, that the Baptist would *go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah* (Luke 1:17), so it’s no surprise they wondered if he was Elijah.  
— *“Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No”*—We don’t know whom “the Prophet” is referring to. But Jesus said that the Baptist was more than a prophet (with the words of God) because he was preparing the way before Jesus (the Son of God)—Matthew 11:10.

**Verse 22**—*Then they said to him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?”*—I’m sure they were frustrated at the Baptist’s answers so far. He didn’t make any claims to be someone important. If he wasn’t anyone important, how does he describe himself? They needed to bring some kind of answer back to the Jewish authorities who had sent them to find out.

**Verse 23**—*He said, “I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE STRAIGHT [or smooth] THE WAY OF THE LORD,’ as Isaiah the prophet said”* (some 600 years previously)—First, can you even imagine being the one who was fulfilling a prophecy of Isaiah?!?! “Make straight” is the idea of being a road builder for the one greater than himself who would follow on the road. The Pharisees were wondering if the Baptist was claiming to be some important person, but instead, the Baptist claimed to be only a voice to announce the coming of the important person.

Application—The Baptist is described as *a voice*, but Jesus is described as *the Word*. The voice would have nothing to say if there was not *the Word*. In quoting this verse from Isaiah, the Baptist shifted the focus away from himself and to the coming Messiah.

**Verse 24**—*Now they had been sent from the Pharisees*—The religious lay teachers from Jerusalem. They were the legalists. They “interpreted” the Mosaic Law (the Torah) with their legalistic traditions (the Talmud).

**Verse 25**—*They asked him, and said to him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”*—They were questioning the Baptist’s authority. Remember, the Baptist was from a priestly family (Luke 1:5). He would have rightly been able to assert that authority (making him a Sadducee)—the competition to the Pharisees (lay teachers).

**Verse 26**—*John answered them saying, “I baptize in water*—He was not baptizing as one in authority. He was baptizing as one preparing the way for someone greater than himself.  
—*but among you stands One whom you do not know*—The Son of God has arrived. He was standing right there among the Jews. He’s here!! It’s not like the Second Coming, where every eye will see Him as the King of Kings (Matthew 24:27-31). At His first coming, Jesus was announced to the Jews by the Baptist.

—The Baptist was acting outside of the Pharisees legalistic system, to get the people used to that idea, because Jesus was coming and going to do the same thing—act outside the legalistic system (of the Pharisees, not the Mosaic Law).

**Verse 27**—*“It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie”*—This was considered the lowest of servants. The Baptist was a servant, not an authority.

Application—Jesus said that *...the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, ...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life...*” (Matthew 20:25-28). To follow Jesus is to serve others, not be an authority over them. In fact, Jesus is emphatic—authority over others is **NOT** to be the way among us. Elders in the church were not to be authorities (as they claim today), they were to serve the believers. God and His Word are to be the only authority in our lives!!

**Verse 28**—*These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan*—to distinguish it from Bethany on the east side of the Mt. of Olives, where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were from. “Beyond the Jordan” would be the east side of the Jordan River. Across the river from Jericho, but the exact location has never been discovered. He would baptize where *there was much water* (John 3:23). Most of the Jordan River is rapids, falling some 600 feet total and not favorable for baptism. Where it comes out of the Sea of Galilee and where it enters the Dead Sea are the best spots today. Of course, with runoff from rain, it gets deeper. —*where John was baptizing*—The Jews would baptize proselytes, i.e., those who converted to Judaism. But the Baptist was baptizing Jews! They considered themselves to be God’s chosen—they didn’t need to be baptized. But the Baptist said they were sinners who needed to repent of their sins and to choose to follow God. It was not sufficient to just be a Jew (Matthew 3:8-9). If God just wanted Jews, He could make Jews from the rocks! God wanted them to make the free-will decision turn from sin and choose to follow Him. Something the Old Testament Jews continued to refuse to do.

### **The Second Day—the Baptism of Jesus (1:29-34)**

**Verse 29**—*The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said*—The very first person to recognize Jesus. This would be the day after the Baptist was questioned by the Pharisees.

—*“Behold, the Lamb of God*—This is a title for Jesus used in John’s writings (verse 36; Revelation 5:6; 6:9; 7:10, 17; 14:4, 10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:9; 21:22-23; 22:1, 3). John already wrote that Jesus is God, the Light, the Life, and the Truth. In this chapter, he also refers to Jesus as Rabbi (vv. 38, 49), Messiah (v. 41), Son of God (vv. 34, 49), King of Israel (v. 49), Son of Man (v. 51), and *Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph* (v. 45).

Application—Jesus was sacrificed as the Lamb of God on Passover. He was not an atonement, a word which is not used of Jesus in the N.T. In the O.T., the day of Atonement was when a goat was sacrificed to “cover” sin for a year. Jesus is never described as a “goat.” His death did not “cover” sin, it once-for-all paid for sin. See the “What About... Why was Jesus Killed on Passover and Not on the Day of Atonement?”

—*who takes away the sin of the world!*—Although the Jews were looking for a Messiah/King, as the Lamb of God, He came to be sacrificed, not like the OT lambs, which were sacrificed over and over and never took away sins. Jesus with one sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 10:10-12) paid for all sin of all time.

—Also, notice Jesus will take away the sin of the world (Isaiah 53:12), not just the Jews! But that benefit is only for anyone and everyone who receives Jesus, who becomes a child of God (John 1:12).

**Verse 30**—*“This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me’*—Jesus was the Creator, the Baptist was a creation. Jesus always is, the Baptist had a beginning. John felt so unworthy, he was reluctant to baptize Jesus (Matthew 3:14).

**Verse 31**—*I did not recognize Him*—Although his mother and Elizabeth were relatives (Luke 1:36), and the Baptist and Jesus were somehow related, there is no record of them having any contact while growing up,

and the Baptist did not recognize that Jesus was the Son of God when He walked up to him. After the Baptist was arrested (seemingly surprising him), he sent some of his disciples to Jesus. *When the men [the Baptist's disciples] came to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, to ask, 'Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?'"* (Luke 7:20). It seems like he was expecting the Messiah as the King and was confused when that didn't happen. Notice that the Baptist's ministry continued even after Jesus came. There were still some disciples of the Baptist after the church had begun (Acts 18:25).

Application—The Baptist not only did not physically recognize Jesus until he received the sign from God, but Jesus did not fit his expectations: (1) That Jesus would be baptized by him. (2) And that Jesus was not there as a King to restore the kingdom to the Jews. Though he announced that Jesus was the Son of God and even the *Lamb of God*, he seemed to be surprised he was in prison, and the kingdom was not being restored. Many people today reject Jesus, who does not meet their expectations of who He is. For example, "My Jesus, loves, i.e., tolerates, sin" (of course, they often define it as "grace without repentance").

—*but so that He might be manifested to Israel*—Jesus came to the Jews first.

Application—Why did Jesus come to the Jews? To fulfill prophecy. Paul wrote, *what advantage has the Jew?...first of all, they were entrusted with the oracles of God* (Romans 3:1-3). As you read about the life of Christ, you will come across words like, *as spoken of by Isaiah the prophet... or Jeremiah or Zechariah or David*. Jesus, in His lifetime, fulfilled over 300 Old Testament prophecies, starting even before He was born—*"behold, a virgin shall conceive..."* Fulfilling prophecy is huge evidence of His deity. As Jesus said to the disciples, *"I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it comes to pass, you may believe"* (John 14:29).

—*I came baptizing in water*—The Jews baptized proselytes, but it was unheard of that the Jews themselves needed to repent and be baptized.

**Verse 32**—*John testified saying, "I have seen—Baptist's testimony— his own eyes saw the Son of God.* This is not recording the event, which is described in the other gospels (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22). Rather, this is the Baptist's testimony of that event.

—*the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him*—The Holy Spirit is not in the shape of a dove. Luke 3:22 says, *the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove*. (The Spirit appeared in the room with the 120 as *flames of fire*—Acts 2:3-4). The point here is that the invisible Spirit showed Himself in a visible, physical, *bodily form like a dove*, so John could see Him, as God had told him. Why like a dove? I have no idea.

**Verse 33**—*"I did not recognize (know) Him*—the Baptist did not know Jesus was the Son of God until he saw the sign that God sent him, which was revelation from God that Jesus was the Son of God.

—*but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me*—Jesus was revealed as the Son of God through a prearranged supernatural sign. The Baptist understood who Jesus truly was only through divine revelation. We're not told when the Baptist received that revelation, only that he DID receive it.

—*He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him*—In the Old Testament, the Spirit would come and go on people, such as King Saul (1 Samuel 11:6), but with Jesus, the Spirit remained on Him—an example of the age to come in which believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14).

—*this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit*—The Baptist did not give the Holy Spirit to anyone. He only announced that Jesus would do so. Being baptized in the Holy Spirit (Jesus) is of greater value than being baptized in the water (John the Baptist).

**Verse 34**— *"I myself have seen, and have testified*—This is the sixth time in this chapter that the Baptist gives testimony to who Jesus is (v. 7, 8, 15, 19, 32).

—*that this is the Son of God*—This section started with the Jews questioning the Baptist. And it ends with the focus completely on Jesus. He is the *one and only Son of God*. This is the One who *became flesh, and dwelt among us* (v. 14).

Application—“Jesus is the final word from God, for nobody else has such a close relationship to deity, nor is there any other who has been similarly commissioned (v. 18). The prophets spoke for God, but none of them could say that he came *from the bosom of the Father* (v. 18)” (EBC).

### **The Third Day—the First Disciples (1:35-51)**

**Verse 35**—*Again the next day*—after the baptism of Jesus

—*John was standing with two of his disciples*—Notice the first two disciples of Jesus first followed the Baptist and agreed with his message of repentance. They were prepared in their thinking to receive Jesus. They were with the Baptist when he said Jesus was coming, so when the Baptist said, “Here He is,” they turned and followed Jesus.

—*Two of his disciples*—most likely, John, who never names himself in his gospel, and Andrew (v. 40).

Application—A great testimony to the truth of the Baptist’s message and his humility to immediately turn his disciples over to Jesus. Don’t hold people too tightly. They are followers of Jesus, not of you! As the Baptist said, “*He must increase, I must decrease*” (John 3:30).

—Jesus actually built on what the Baptist started in the thinking of these two disciples. Paul said that some people plant, others water, and God causes the growth (1 Corinthians 3:5-11). Coming to believe in Jesus is usually a process of understanding, and that understanding can come from many places, proclaiming the truth of Jesus.

**Verse 36**—*and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”*—His first coming was as a Lamb to be slaughtered for the sins of the world. His Second Coming will be as King (Revelation 19). It is the Lamb who **is** the King (Revelation 5:6). The first time the Baptist saw Jesus, he *did not recognize Him* (v. 33). But now, the Baptist has had the revelation from God, saw the descending of the Holy Spirit on Jesus, so the Baptist immediately recognized Jesus and who He was.

**Verse 37**—*The two disciples*—John and Andrew

—*heard him speak*—The Baptist’s powerful testimony as to the identity of Jesus. They did not have the revelation that the Baptist had, so he had to give testimony as to that revelation.

—*and they followed Jesus*—i.e., this was their first exposure to Jesus and seems to mean that they went from physically standing with the Baptist (v. 35), to walking behind Jesus (v. 38). Later, Jesus called them to follow Him spiritually, and they became His permanent disciples (Matthew 4:18-22).

—Except for a brief mention in 3:23-36, the emphasis now turns away from the Baptist and focuses on the ministry of Jesus. Sometime during the 3 years of the ministry of Jesus, the Baptist was arrested and beheaded by Herod. Meanwhile, the Baptist continued his own ministry of preparing the hearts of the Jews to receive Jesus (John 3:22-24).

**Verse 38**—*And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, “What do you seek?”*—These are the first words of Jesus recorded in John. Jesus was asking about their motivation. Were they just curious or did they have a real desire to know Him? “It is the first question which must be addressed to anyone who comes to Jesus, the first thing about which he must be clear” (WBC–NT).

Application— People need to answer that question because they may be seeking something Jesus does not promise. The Jews were seeking a king to deliver them from the Romans—but Jesus died. Popular today within “Christianity” is the health and wealth gospel. But Jesus said, “In the world you have tribulation” (John 16:33), not health and wealth. Even as a believer, “**What do you seek?**” Is it to be pleasing to Him (Ephesians 5:10)? Is it to *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (2 Peter 3:18)? Is it to *long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow...* (1 Peter 2:2)? **What do you seek?**

—*They said to Him, “Rabbi (which translated means Teacher)”*—a term of respect

—*where are You staying?* John uses “staying” (to remain, to continue to exist, to abide) 66 times in his writings, of the 112 New Testament usages (40 in the gospel, 23 in 1 John, and 3 in 2 John). It seems like it is too early in their relationship to get some theological meaning from this—it seems to me like they simply want to spend time with Jesus and find out what He is like.

**Verse 39**—*He said to them, “Come, and you will see.”*—Jesus encouraged them to spend time with Him. —*So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour, i.e., Jewish time would be 4 p.m., starting at 6 a.m. (sunrise).*

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

**Verse 41**—*He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which translated means Christ)—*Andrew was the first proclaimer of Jesus as *the Messiah*, i.e., “the anointed One, which in Greek is *Christos*, “Christ.” His time staying with Jesus must have led him to this conclusion. The Baptist had not mentioned it.

—Andrew appears two more times (John 6:4-9; 12:20-22), both times bringing someone to Jesus.

Application— No man did the church a greater service than Andrew in bringing Peter (the key disciple who proclaimed the beginning of the new church age) to Jesus. Peter, John, and Paul are the three main apostles and writers of the New Testament, laying the foundation of the church, with Jesus as its Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). But Andrew is behind the scenes. We don’t know much about him or what else he did. But bringing people to Jesus, the Messiah, is the greatest good anyone can do.

**Verse 42**—*He brought him to Jesus—*One of the greatest joys is to bring a family member to Jesus.

Application— It doesn’t say he brought him to church, or some small group, etc.—too often people substitute an institution for the person of Jesus, so if the other person comes to church, for example, they think the job is done. Church doesn’t save anyone! Only Jesus saves! A person can love and attend church but never know Jesus (Matthew 7:21-23).

—*Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon [Hebrew “Simeon”] the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” [Aramaic name for “rock”] (which is translated Peter [Greek name for “rock”]).* Jesus actually names him Peter later in His ministry (Matthew 16:18).

## **The Fourth Day**

**Verse 43**—*The next day He purposed to go into Galilee—*Jesus walked up the Jordan River to Galilee —*and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, “Follow Me”*—Whereas John and Andrew left the Baptist to follow Jesus, here Jesus took the initiative in calling Philip.

**Verse 44**—*Now Philip—*It’s only in John’s gospel that we see a mention of anything he does (6:5-8; 12:21-22; 14:8-10). In the other gospels, he is just mentioned in the list of the disciples.

—*was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter—*where they were born, located on the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee (John 12:21). Though they were Galileans, Jesus met them down in Judah.

**Verse 45**—*Philip found Nathanael—*Like Andrew told his brother Peter, Philip told Nathanael, and by his witness brought him to Jesus. Nathanael is not even mentioned in the other gospels. Usually, he is thought to be Bartholomew (Bar-Tolmai, “son of Tolmai”), as this name immediately follows Philip’s in the lists of disciples. John’s only other mention of him is in 21:2, where it says, *Nathanael of Cana in Galilee*. Cana is a village just north of Nazareth, and where Jesus turned the water into wine at a wedding.

—*and said to him, “We [John, Andrew, Peter, Philip] have found Him—*Who found who? It was not Jesus who was lost!! Jesus said, “*No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him*” (John 6:44). Jesus found them and drew them to Himself.

—*of whom Moses in the Law [Deuteronomy 18:18-20] and also the Prophets [Isaiah 52:13–53:12; Daniel 7:13; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 9:9] wrote—*It seems that Nathanael was a student of the Jewish writings of the Old Testament. Jesus even said he was *an Israelite indeed* (v. 47), which also explains why Philip described Jesus this way to Nathanael. He was a student of the O.T. Scriptures, not the Pharisees’ Talmud.

—*Jesus of Nazareth—*Jesus was associated with Nazareth (Matthew 26:71; Luke 18:37; Acts 10:38; 26:9), where He grew up, instead of Bethlehem, where He was born (Matthew 2:1) or Capernaum, where He moved to from Nazareth (Matthew 4:13).

—*the son of Joseph*—a common way to designate someone—with the town they grew up in, and their legal father (though at this point they don't realize Joseph is not the biological father of Jesus).

**Verse 46**—*Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"*—Surely, the Messiah would come from a prominent city, like Jerusalem, not Nazareth, a Galilean city, far from the Temple in Jerusalem. The Pharisees later say, "*Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee*" (John 7:52). "The residence of Jesus in Nazareth is akin to His birth in a stable; it is part of the offense of the incarnation" (WBC-NT).

Application—Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament. Yet Philip knows that Jesus is the One both Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote about, and he describes Jesus with both these things being true. Nathanael, an OT student, immediately realizes that this doesn't seem possible. But it is. It's the first of many paradoxes (both things are true, but they SEEM to contradict each other). He will soon say, "You are the King of Israel," yet Jesus will be killed.

—*Philip said to him, "Come and see"*—Philip invited Nathanael to meet Jesus Himself, and decide by His person, not His hometown. So in spite of his prejudices, Nathanael went with Philip to see Jesus.

**Verse 47**—*Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed [genuinely, in truth, or actually] in whom there is no deceit!"*—Because of verse 51, it would seem that Nathanael was perhaps thinking about Jacob and the ladder to heaven. Jacob, of course, was full of deceit. Yet God appeared to him with revelation from heaven. Jesus said that deceit is not in Nathanael.

**Verse 48**—*Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?"*—Jesus accurately summed up Nathanael's character (and thoughts) without ever meeting him. This would also be supernatural knowledge of personal motivations and character, known only to Nathanael (and God!—Psalm 139:1-4).

—*Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you"*—Jesus saw Nathanael's physical location, but before this, He saw Nathanael's heart.

**Verse 49**—*Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are **the** Son of God; You are the King of Israel"*—Two titles used of the Messiah in Psalm 2:6-7. John now adds Nathanael's testimony to the Baptist's that Jesus is indeed the unique, one and only, *Son of God*, as is described in the first half of the chapter.

**Verse 50**—*Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these"*—In fact, the first of Jesus' 37 recorded miracles will happen in Nathanael's hometown of Cana.

**Verse 51**—*And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending **on** the Son of Man"*—It reminds us of the vision Jacob had of angels ascending and descending a ladder from heaven (Genesis 28:12-13). Jesus was in heaven at the top of the ladder is now on earth, speaking to Nathanael. Now, Nathanael will see even greater revelation from God through the Son of Man.

—Perhaps if Nathanael was meditating on Jacob and the ladder when Jesus saw him under the fig tree, it is part of the omniscience of Jesus into his mind that impressed Nathanael. Maybe.

—Jesus said Nathanael would see this, yet there is no record of him seeing this. I think he did see this at some time. John also writes, *Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book* (20:30).

Jesus said, "**Come to Me**, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and **learn from Me**, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29).



## Chapter 2

**Verse 1**—*On the third day*—probably after the call of Philip and Nathanael

—*there was a wedding*—Jewish weddings typically last about a week and are paid for by the groom (v. 9-10). A betrothal period could last several months, and the couple was considered legally married, broken only by a divorce (such as Joseph and Mary in Matthew 1:19). The wedding ceremony ended the betrothal and the marriage would be consummated during that first night of the wedding (Matthew 25:1-10).

—*in Cana of Galilee*—9 miles north of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up, the hometown of Nathanael (21:2).

—*and the mother of Jesus was there*—John and Jesus do not mention Mary's name.

**Verse 2**—*both Jesus and His disciples*—so far: John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael

—*were invited*—in contrast to Mary who *was there*, suggesting she was a relative (see Luke 2:44) and helping with the wedding, serving in some way, noticing the wine ran out and finding more, for example. Because Joseph is not mentioned, he is probably already dead.

—*to the wedding*—By attending the wedding, Jesus showed His support for marriage and the wedding itself.

Application—Jesus attending a wedding was very different from the ministry of the Baptist, who *came neither eating or drinking* (Matthew 11:18-19). Jesus had the more difficult job of mingling socially with the people and ministering to them in their daily activities. Serving people is a most difficult thing, and you will always be disappointed. But you should serve them because, first and foremost, you serve God. ...*the one who loves God, should love his brother also* (1 John 4:21).

**Verse 3**—*When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him*—Jesus had not done any miracles up to this point, so it doesn't seem probable that Mary came to Him expecting a miracle. More likely, as a relative helping with the preparations, their family's reputation was at stake, running out of wine, and if she was already a widow, it would have been natural for her to depend on her firstborn son, Jesus, for help.

—*"They have no wine"*—The supply was not sufficient. Embarrassing for the couple and the relatives.

Application—The Bible does not forbid drinking wine, in fact, in some cases, the Bible even commends it (Psalm 104:14-15; Proverbs 31:6; Jeremiah 31:12; 1 Timothy 5:23). But the Bible does strongly condemn drunkenness (Genesis 9:20-27; Deuteronomy 21:20-21; Proverbs 20:2; 23:29-35; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:10; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7; 2:3; 1 Peter 4:3). Jesus made more wine, even though they were *when the people have drunk freely...you have kept the good wine until now* (v. 10). Drunkenness was more likely at this point at the wedding, but it did not prohibit Jesus from making wine. It's still a person's free-will decision. Today, some Christians prohibit certain behaviors because it "may" lead to sin. Guess what?!?! Everything you do can lead to sin! For example, you can have pride that you don't drink at all.

**Verse 4**—*And Jesus said to her, "Woman"*—This was a term of respect (John 19:26; 20:15), but yet distancing Himself from her. No place is it recorded that Jesus referred to Mary as His mother. His parents and others considered Joseph and Mary to be His parents, but to Jesus, it was all about His heavenly Father, even when Jesus was 12 years old (Luke 2:41-49). Interestingly, from the cross He told John, "*Behold, your mother!*" (John 19:26-27). He stated a relationship for John which Jesus Himself did not have with Mary.

—*what does that have to do with us?* Lit., "What to Me and to you?" i.e., what do we have in common?

Mary gave birth to Jesus, but she is of the earth. Jesus is God. What do they have in common?!?! (But the RCs (and the pope) have elevated Mary to the godhead, as a co-redeemer with Jesus. Jeremiah said in 16:20, "*Can man make gods for himself? Yet they are not gods!*")

—*My hour has not yet come*—John used this or similar words five times in his gospel (2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). Later, the fact that Christ's time had come is mentioned three times (12:23; 13:1; 17:1). The life of Jesus was according to God's pre-planned timetable, not Mary's.

Application—Jesus said, "*My mother and My brothers are these who hear the Word of God and do it*" (Luke 8:21). Those who receive, i.e., believe in Jesus are the children of God, in relationship to Him (John 1:12). It's the spiritual relationship, not the physical relationship, that matters. Mary and Christ's physical brothers became Christ's spiritual sister and brothers, as do we.

*Verse 5*—*His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it”*—She trusts Him and His decision. Again, I doubt she was expecting a miracle but simply that He would solve the problem.

*Verse 6*—*Now there were six stone*—unlike earthenware pots, the Jews thought stone water pots would not become unclean, i.e., they would not absorb dirt, etc.

—*waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification* (see Mark 7:3-4), for cleanliness, not for drinking. They dipped water out of these to wash. This is cultural information for non-Jewish readers.

—*containing twenty or thirty gallons each*—Each guest would wash his/her hands before eating. These waterpots together would hold approximately 2,000 four-ounce glasses of wine. More, if it was also diluted with water. (Imagine 120-180 gallons of milk.)

*Verse 7*—*Jesus said to them, “Fill the water pots with water”*—These pots were for water for washing, these were not the wineskins, used for drinking wine.

—*So they filled them up to the brim*—They were probably partially filled, so the servants filled them to the top. This proved that nothing was added to the water.

*Verse 8*—*And He said to them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter”*—When they obeyed and the water got to the brim, it changed into wine. Or did it turn to wine when the headwaiter tasted it?

—*So they took it to him*—Wonder what they were expecting? To give him water to drink? Jesus didn’t tell them it was turned into wine and they, for sure, would not expect such a thing.

*Verse 9*—*When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine*—Typically, fermentation takes a long time. Grapes produce juice, not wine. Reminds me of how God created the plants, etc., in process, with age. Water, of course, is not even grape juice. Jesus completely changed the substance—not just to grape juice but to fermented grape juice, i.e., wine, **aged grape juice**. Also, notice that Jesus didn’t say a word. He desired it, and it happened. Just like that!

—*and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew)*—But did they tell him? We don’t know. They were probably the most surprised because they KNEW they had poured water into the pots! Notice that Mary did not know either.

—*the headwaiter called the bridegroom*, the one responsible for providing the wine in the first place

*Verse 10*—*and said to him, “Every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.”* I wonder what the bridegroom thought? “Where did it come from?!?” Instead of being humiliated from running out of wine, he received much praise for having the best wine!!

Application—Not being a wine connoisseur, I don’t know the difference in quality of wine. But I know there is one!

*Verse 11*—*This beginning of His signs*—a “sign” has a meaning. It wasn’t simply water into wine, but it was a sign that God Himself, the Creator, was in their midst. John calls the miracles “signs” to emphasize the significance of the miracles, their meaning, rather than the miracles themselves.

—*Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested [showed, demonstrated] His glory*—as God, the Creator. As John said, *All things came into being by Him* (1:3).

—*and His disciples believed in Him*—*As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name* (1:12).

Application—Jesus left with the same people He arrived with—His disciples. The servants experienced the miracle of the water turning into wine, but there is no record that they believed in Jesus. Even true miraculous things do not create faith. Like all experiences, they need to be interpreted. The disciples had already been listening to what Jesus was claiming, so His miracle in Cana gave them evidence, a sign, that He was indeed the Son of God. This first miracle was observed by very few people (the servants and His disciples) but its meaning was only understood by the disciples, as John knew it and wrote about it.

**Verse 12**—*After this He went down to Capernaum*—Cana is in the hills west of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum is right down on the north shore of the Sea. Though they went northeast in direction, they went down in elevation. The Sea of Galilee is the bowl of a volcano, 600 feet below sea level. Capernaum became the home base for Jesus during His ministry years (Matthew 4:13; Mark 1:21; 2:1). It was where Peter and John lived and had their fishing business.

—*He and His mother and His brothers*—According to Matthew 13:55, Jesus had four brothers: *James and Joseph and Simon and Judas and His sisters*. His brothers evidently did not believe in Jesus until after He appeared to them after the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:7; Acts 1:14). But they kept showing up at different places where He was.

Application—Roman Catholic doctrine teaches that Mary was perpetually a virgin, i.e., she never had sex or any other children (which would negate the RC doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary, i.e., that she was born without sin). To explain the several passages on the brothers of Jesus, the RCs say those men were (1) children of Joseph by a previous marriage, or (2) cousins. (The Greek word for “cousin” existed, but it was not used in the Bible for these men.) But the Bible clearly says they are the brothers of Jesus. These are younger children born to Joseph and Mary. James became head of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15; Galatians 1:19) and wrote the book of James, and Jude wrote the book of Jude (Jude 1:1).

—*and His disciples*—As far as it is written in John, that’s Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael.

—*and they stayed there a few days*—

**Verse 13**—*The Passover of the Jews*—Two other Passover feasts are mentioned in John—6:4 and 11:55. The Passover was a yearly feast on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan (March/April). It celebrated God’s deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptians in about 1500 B.C., when the Lord, by His death angel, killed the firstborn of the Egyptians but passed over the houses of the Israelites, who had lamb’s blood on their doorposts (Exodus 12:23-27). On that day, between 3:00 and 6:00 P.M., lambs were slaughtered and the Passover meal was eaten, in obedience to Exodus 23:14-17. This is the foremost of the Jewish feasts, and Jews from all over the world would come to Jerusalem to celebrate it at the Temple.

Application—Today, the Jews have substituted the Seder Meal of rabbinical Judaism for the Passover of Levitical Judaism. They have eliminated the sacrifice and blood of the lamb. Of course, they have done this because there is no temple. However, it removes from their thinking the need for the actual blood to be shed, which Jesus did, as the Passover Lamb of God.

—*was near*—Time for the long walk to Jerusalem.

—*and Jesus went up to Jerusalem*—Although Jerusalem is about 60 miles south of Galilee in Judea, it is in the mountains, so it is always “up.” Luke 2:41-45 tells us that when Jesus was a child, His parents used to go to Passover. They traveled in a caravan, with relatives and acquaintances, down the Jordan River Valley (a flat area). At Jericho, they would climb the “Good Samaritan” road, 3,000 feet up and west to Jerusalem.

Application—A long walk is usually a good time for teaching. Moses wrote to parents, ...*and these words, which I am commanding you today...you shall teach them diligently to your sons...when you walk by the way...* (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Walking usually means abandoning technical devices!! A great opportunity to diligently teach.....

**Verse 14**—The Synoptic gospels only mention one cleansing of the temple by Jesus, during His final week before the crucifixion. As mentioned in the introduction, John has much additional information the Synoptics don’t have. There were actually two cleansings of the temple area. One at the beginning of Christ’s ministry, recorded in John, and one at the end, recorded in the Synoptics (Matthew 21:12-16; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-46).

—*And He found in the temple*—This was most likely the court of the Gentiles. Only priests would be allowed in the actual temple, but the whole area was referred to as “the temple.”

—*those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables*—Because it was impractical for those traveling from distant lands to bring their own animals, this was a convenience for them. They would need animals for sacrifice and temple shekels for their temple tax (Matthew 17:24-27). [Even today, in the Old City, there are moneychangers for tourists needing shekels.]

**Verse 15**—*And He made a scourge [whip] of cords—perhaps the cords used to tie up the animals—and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables—Immediately creating pandemonium. Animal sellers chasing their beasts, now running all over, and money scattered on the ground, no doubt with many trying to get it.*

**Verse 16**—*and to those who were selling the doves He said, “Take these things away; stop making My Father’s house a place of business”*—What started as a service for the worshipers, had degenerated into bazaar atmosphere, not a place of reverence to worship God.

Application—The difference in attitude is huge. The Jewish leaders were all about “authority” and doing business. Jesus was about holiness and worship of God. Many “leaders” in Christianity today are about having authority in your life and about making money. But Jesus and the Bible are about holiness and worshipping God.

**Verse 17**—*His disciples remembered that it was written, “ZEAL (deep concern, to be devoted to) FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME (eat up completely) ME”*—The disciples later remembered this prophecy about the Messiah from Psalm 69:9. Jesus had a passion and absolute commitment to God’s holiness.

Application—Today, in the church age, *Do you not know that you are a temple of God...for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are* (1 Corinthians 6:16-17). Jesus has the same zeal, passion, and absolute commitment to God’s holiness in your life as Jesus had for holiness in the temple in Jerusalem. *He chose us in Him...that we would be holy and blameless before Him* (Ephesians 1:4). *Like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I AM holy”* (1 Peter 1:15-16). I wonder what He would throw out of our lives?

**Verse 18**—*The Jews then said to Him, “What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?”*—It was the temple authorities who allowed (and, no doubt, profited) from these sellers. So they want to know by whose authority (higher than theirs) Jesus did this. What He did WAS a sign of authority. He cared about God’s house, the temple. They didn’t. It’s interesting that they asked, *“What sign do You show us...”* The Jews were always looking for a “sign” (John 12:37), yet they constantly ignored every sign Jesus gave them. “Signs” need to be interpreted. The miracles of Jesus were a “sign” that He was God. But to the Jewish leaders, they were “signs” that *if we let Him go on like this, ...the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation* (John 11:48).

Application—They wanted a sign, but one that would support their positions (John 11:48), rather than a sign of the truth. Wow! We could talk about that for a long time. Exactly what is happening today!!

**Verse 19**—*Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”*—Like the parables Jesus gave, this statement concealed the truth from hostile unbelievers, who rebelled against God. At this point, the disciples didn’t understand what Jesus was talking about either. After His resurrection, they did understand what He meant (v. 21-22).

Application—The “authorities” and even the disciples understood what Jesus **said**, but they did not understand what He **meant**. This is the task of the Bible student—called “interpretation.” But notice it is the author’s intended meaning that is true, NOT the reader’s meaning (as the emergent church says). In this event, the disciples did not understand Christ’s meaning for 3 years, but then they did. And when they did, it gave them overwhelming evidence so *they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken* (v. 22). From the beginning of Christ’s ministry, He prophesied that they (the Jewish leaders) would destroy His body, but in three days, Jesus will raise it from the dead. Destroying and rebuilding the Jewish temple pales in comparison—yet that seems to be what impresses the Jewish leaders. It’s all about the building (need I say more?!?!).

**Verse 20**—*The Jews then said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”*—The physical temple they were at was not Solomon’s temple, which had been destroyed by the Babylonians (Ezra 5:12) in 586 B.C. Rather, this is the second temple, re-built by Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 1–6) after the captivity, in about 500 B.C. Herod the Great (appointed Jewish king by the Romans), around

20 B.C., began an extensive reconstruction, which was not complete until shortly before 70 A.D., when the temple was destroyed by the Romans.

*Verse 21—But He was speaking of the temple of His body—author’s intended meaning!!*

*Verse 22—So when He was raised from the dead—evidence in existence at the writing of this gospel—His disciples remembered that He said this—Later, Jesus would tell the disciples, It is to your advantage that I go away, ...but when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth (John 16:1-15).—and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken—Here the words of Jesus are equated with Scripture.*

Application—I object to the words of Jesus being in red in our Bibles. It gives the impression that the words of Jesus are somehow “more” the words of God and the rest of Scripture is somehow “less” words from God. That is not true. John says of Scripture, *These are true words of God* (Revelation 19:9). Jesus is God (John 1:1). What Jesus said and what is written are equally the words of God. In fact, what we have written are the Holy Spirit’s inspired words, through John, of what Jesus said. Without the written text, we would not know what Jesus said.

*Verse 23—Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name—i.e., that He could do miracles. But the next verses seem to imply that it was a superficial faith, not a saving faith.*

*—observing His signs which He was doing—most likely, healings, but these miracles are not specifically recorded in Scripture (see John 20:30).*

*Verse 24—But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them—believed in v. 23 and entrusting here are from the same Greek word. Though they believed in Jesus and the miracles He was doing, Jesus did not believe in them. He had no faith in their faith. Jesus “regarded all belief in Him as superficial which does not have as its most essential elements the consciousness of the need for forgiveness and the conviction that He alone is the Mediator of that forgiveness” (MacArthur). Even the demons have faith (James 2:19), but not saving faith. This would be the rocky soil who receive the Word with joy, but there is no depth, and they fall away (Matthew 13:20).*

*—for He knew all men—“This does not mean that faith prompted by the miracles of Jesus is spurious [false], rather that such faith is only the first step towards Jesus; it has not yet seen Him in His true significance, and it is therefore not yet fully established” (WBC–NT). In the next three examples, we will see saving faith.*

*Verse 25—and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man—Jesus could read people more accurately than a doctor can read physical symptoms in diagnosing an illness. He saw in Nathanael the heart of a true believer (1:47), but in these people He saw a superficial faith, an outward attraction to His spectacular signs. Many people came to Jesus for what physical things they could receive (healing, food, etc.), not because of who Jesus claimed to be, the Son of God. He was not fooled by their seeming “faith” in Him. (Reminds us, AGAIN, of Matthew 7:21-23!)*

These last three verses are an introduction to the conversations in chapters 3 and 4 with Nicodemus the Pharisee, the Samaritan woman at the well, and the royal official at Cana.



## Chapter 3

**Verse 1**—*Now there was a man of the Pharisees*—These were the conservative lay teachers. They were zealous for the Mosaic Law and their own oral traditions which they added to it (called the Talmud). The Pharisees began during the inter-testament time, as teachers in the synagogues, also started then. These were replacements for the destroyed temple and priesthood, but even after the temple was rebuilt, they continued on. According to Josephus, there were about 6,000 of them at the time of Herod the Great. They came from the middle class, unlike the Sadducees, who were the wealthy priests. With the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., the Sadducees disappeared, but the Pharisees (rabbis) and synagogues continue to this day. Eventually, the traditions of the Pharisees became synonymous with Judaism itself (called Rabbinic Judaism). Jesus called them hypocrites (Matthew 23:2-23). They replaced the Mosaic Law with behavior modification and ritual, but their hearts were far removed from God.

—*named Nicodemus*—Sometime, he became a believer and with Joseph of Arimathea asked for the body of Jesus and buried Him (John 19:39-40).

—*a ruler of the Jews*, i.e., part of the Sanhedrin, the 70 rulers of the Jews (made up of Pharisees, scribes, Sadducees/priests, and former priests, under the authority of the Romans), who put Jesus on trial and crucified Him. Nicodemus rebuked the Pharisees for condemning Jesus without hearing Him (7:50-51).

**Verse 2**—*this man came to Jesus by night*—John doesn't tell us why Nicodemus came by night, but John does point out it was night. Was he hiding from the other Pharisees, or perhaps he wanted some alone time with Jesus. "Yet nighttime has a sinister tone in the Fourth Gospel (cf. 9:4; 11:10; 13:30; 19:39)" (BKC).  
—*and said to Him, "Rabbi*—the word for "teacher," addressing Jesus as his equal, as he was a rabbi, too  
—*we know that You have come from God as a teacher*—not as God, but God was with Jesus, because.....  
—*for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him*"—Nicodemus is an example of the shallow faith talked about in 2:23-25. His faith was only based on the signs he had witnessed. But he concluded Jesus wasn't a "normal" rabbi, like himself, but that Christ's miracles were a sign He was from God. Whereas the faith of others ended there, this was a beginning for Nicodemus. He came to Jesus, wanting to know more about Him.

Application—Many people think if they saw a miracle, they would believe. But experiences, even miracles, need an interpretation (meaning). To even call a healing, for example, a miracle, is to give it a supernatural meaning. A doctor could simply say the medicine made the person better. God certainly answers prayer, and we should give Him thanks. But don't use the word "miracle." Biblically, a miracle is a supernatural event (like one minute there is water in the water pot, the next minute there is wine), happening in the natural world. The birth of a baby, for example, is not a "miracle." Hebrews 2:3-4 says miracles *confirmed* God's Word. God's Word is now written. There is no need for miracles. Also, notice today when you hear "miracle" stories, it's all about the person and what happened to them. In the Bible, miracles were not about the person, they were signs, demonstrating the power of God. We now go to the Word of God, like Nicodemus did. He did not get saved by observing the miracles. He had to come to Jesus, hear His words, to find salvation. Miracles (or experiences) do not create faith. *Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ* (Romans 10:17). [P.S. Jesus said in the tribulation, it is *false prophets...will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect* (Matthew 24:24). As we approach the tribulation, we can expect miracles to increase, but not from God. Satan will use them to mislead believers, to get them away from Jesus and the Word of God. Jesus warned us. He said, "*I have told you in advance...do not believe them*" (24:25-26). Matthew 7:21-23 says, "*Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, did we not...in Your name...perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you.'*" I'm not trying to put God in a box. Of course, He can do whatever He wants to. I'm trying to put people in a box. There's no way to know and say something is a miracle from God.]

**Verse 3**—*Jesus answered and said to him*—Jesus didn't discuss His miracles or His authority. He discussed the need for Nicodemus to have a changed heart.

—*Truly, truly*—John uses a form of "truth" many times in his gospel. Highlight them. He is emphasizing that this gospel is true and that Jesus is the truth (John 14:6).

—*I say to you, unless one is born again*—has both meanings, born "again" and born "from above" (see 3:31; 19:11)—"born" is the way a person enters the world. A baby who is born changes its environment, the way it eats, the way it gets nourishment, the way it breathes, the way it relates to others, etc. To be part of the kingdom of God, the heavenly realm, you must be spiritually born into it.

—*he cannot see* [i.e., be part of] *the kingdom of God*—The realm of God’s authority and blessing, is now spiritual and invisible, but it will one day be visible on the earth (Matthew 6:10).

**Verse 4**—*Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old?”*—implies that Nicodemus himself was an older man—also, to become a member of the Sanhedrin, one had to be an older, mature man. —*He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?”*—Nicodemus cannot, at this point, think beyond the physical world. Of course, it was humanly impossible for a grown man to re-enter his mother’s womb a second time. Even the thought of “born” suggests starting over—after his lifetime of achieving success in the Jewish religious world. And here this rabbi from Galilee tells him he is not yet qualified for that kingdom. It is a shock, to say the least!

Application—Jesus was telling this most religious Jewish man to abandon everything he was trusting in for salvation. Exactly what Paul wrote in Philippians 3:8-9, *that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.* It’s the same message as given by John the Baptist, that the Jews had to repent. Remember, they had 2,000 years of being God’s chosen people. To repent, to realize salvation did not come from being a Jew, i.e., a physical Jewish birth, was huge.

**Verse 5**—*Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you—This is new revelation from God Himself—unless one is born of water—*There are several interpretations of *water*: (1) it refers to natural birth, which is accompanied by watery fluid; (2) it refers to water baptism, but that contradicts Ephesians 2:8-9 and other passages, which make it clear that salvation is by faith alone; (3) it refers to the baptism (message) of John the Baptist, i.e., repentance; (4) it is a symbol and function of the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39), as the wind is in verse 8.

—The Greek text does not have the words “and the.” It reads, *born of water Spirit.*”

“Isaiah 44:3–5 and Ezek 37:9–10 are pertinent examples of *water* and *wind* as life-giving symbols of the Spirit of God in his work among people. Both occur in contexts that deal with the future restoration of Israel as a nation prior to the establishment of the messianic kingdom. It is therefore particularly appropriate that Jesus should introduce them in a conversation about entering the kingdom of God. Note that the Greek word *pneu/matoß* [spirit] is anarthrous (has no article) in v. 5. This does not mean that *spirit* in the verse should be read as a *direct* reference to the Holy Spirit, but that both water and wind are figures (based on passages in the OT, which Nicodemus, *the teacher of Israel* should have known) that represent the regenerating work of the Spirit in the lives of men and women” (NET Bible Notes).

—*and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*—Christ’s point was unmistakable: Without the spiritual washing of the soul, a cleansing accomplished only by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5) through the Word of God (Ephesians 5:26), no one can enter God’s kingdom. The spiritual rebirth happens when someone receives Jesus Christ (John 1:12; 3:36).

Application—We have to interpret the less clear by the more clear. We may not be able to conclude what “water” means by itself, but the point of the passage is clear: the only way to get into the kingdom of God is to be spiritually born again. This gives a context for the meaning of “water Spirit” in verse 5.

**Verse 6**— *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh—*humans have other humans. Even if physical rebirth were possible, it would only produce another human.

—*and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit—*the kingdom of God will one day be physical on the earth (anticipated by the Jews), but it is first, and primarily, a spiritual kingdom. You must be spiritually reborn to be in His kingdom.

**Verse 7**— *“Do not be amazed that I said to you—*His whole life, Nicodemus based his entrance, into the kingdom of God, on his own righteous works. He is shocked that it isn’t true. But Jesus said Nicodemus should have understood that—he was *the teacher of Israel* (v. 10).

—*‘You must [absolutely necessary] be born again’—i.e., born from above* (v. 3)

**Verse 8**— *“The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going—You cannot see the wind. You cannot control the wind, it blows where it wishes. It is unexplainable by ordinary reasoning—why does it blow here and not there? Its outcome is unpredictable—though it is undeniable when you see its effects.*

*—so is everyone who is born of the Spirit”*—The Spirit is invisible. A person being born again spiritually is invisible. But the effects of the transformed lives of those born again are visible. You can physically see the results of what the Holy Spirit is doing in someone’s life.

**Verse 9**—*Nicodemus said to Him, “How can these things be?”*—Nicodemus is having trouble understanding what Jesus is talking about. This is the last appearance and word from Nicodemus in this dialogue. At this point, Nicodemus believes Jesus is *from God*, but not that He **is** God. And Nicodemus is reluctant to admit that his Pharisaical self-righteousness will not save him.

**Verse 10**—*Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things—Nicodemus was a recognized, established teacher in Israel, someone who should know the Old Testament. The Old Testament clearly taught that a relationship with God was not external things, like sacrifices. The Lord said, “...this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote (Isaiah 29:13; see Deuteronomy 6:5; Isaiah 1:11-20; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21-24). Nicodemus was not lacking the divine revelation of God’s Word—he’s not accepting it is true, that God wants their hearts, not works.*

Application—MacArthur makes an excellent point here: “Sadly, Nicodemus serves as a clear example of the numbing effect that external, legalistic religion has on a person’s spiritual perception—even to the point of obscuring the revelation of God.” Think about that!! Paul wrote about the Jews, *their zeal for God was not in accordance with knowledge* (Romans 10:2). Empty zeal gets you nothing!! Also, everyone is responsible for accepting or rejecting the truth that they do have (Romans 1:18-21).

**Verse 11**—*“Truly, truly, I say to you—revelation from God*

*—we—most likely referring to the prophets (OT) and Jesus*

*—speak of what we know—After hearing Jesus teach, the people said, They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Jesus knows things the scribes didn’t know.*

*—and testify of what we have seen—things from heaven (v. 13). Many of the prophets were given glimpses of God and heavenly things. Peter wrote, ...we were eyewitnesses of His majesty...we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven (read 2 Peter 1:16-18).*

*—and you (Gk. plural, i.e., “you people,” the Jews) do not accept our testimony—He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him (1:11).*

**Verse 12**—*“If I told you earthly things and you do not believe—even though being born again is spiritual, it happens on earth, also, Jesus explained it with earthly analogies of birth, water and wind.*

*—how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?—things like the Trinity and the incarnation, for example. Revelation (God telling us), not discovery (something we discover), is the basis for faith. And there is much new heavenly revelation (the whole New Testament) that begins with the birth of Jesus.*

**Verse 13**—*“No one has ascended into heaven—that is, no human. This is a strong statement!!*

*—but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man—throughout this gospel, Jesus says over and over that He has come from heaven to the earth (6:33, 38, 51, 62; 8:42; 13:3; 16:28; 17:5).*

Application—According to Jesus, all the books written today about “dead” people who went to heaven and came back to earth are not true. It’s interesting that even Lazarus, for example, who was dead for three days, had no story about heaven. No human ascended into heaven. Only Jesus descended from heaven. (The prophets and apostles were given glimpses into heaven, or heard voices from heaven, or had visions of heaven, but they did not bodily go to heaven and return to the earth.)

**Verse 14**—“*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness*—After leaving Egypt, while in the wilderness, the Israelites complained about Moses as their leader and said of the manna God provided them to eat, “*We loathe this miserable food.*” So God sent snakes among them. If the people were bit, they would die. They admitted they sinned, and asked Moses to intercede between them and God. They were unable to save themselves. As per God’s instructions, Moses made a bronze serpent and put it high on a pole. They were urged to look up at the serpent on the pole in order to receive life and not die from the snake bite. It was not a cure based on their works. They needed to have faith in the Word of God, in His provision for their salvation (Numbers 21:4-9).

—*even so must* [absolutely necessary] *the Son of Man be lifted up*—Used of the crucifixion (John 8:38; 12:32-34). *The wages of sin is death* (Romans 6:23) and *without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness* (Hebrews 9:22). Jesus must be lifted up (crucified), so we who are “bit” by sin and dying, can look at Him on the cross, as the payment for our sin, and we can have eternal life (v. 15).

Application—There are many books written about types in the Bible. A “type” is when one thing illustrates another thing. For example, some say the feasts of the Mosaic Law are a type of Jesus and what He did. Personally, it seems to me, at best, those are educated conclusions, however, we don’t know for sure. What we do know for sure is when the Bible itself says a thing is a type. That’s what we have here. Moses lifting up the serpent to save the lives of the Israelites during a judgment by God is a type, or illustration, of Jesus being lifted up on the cross to save our lives spiritually from the judgment of God on sin.

**Verse 15**—*so that whoever believes* [i.e., receives—1:12] *will in Him have eternal life*—*In Him was life* (1:3). Jesus said, *I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me* (14:6). *God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life* (1 John 5:11-13).

**Verse 16**—“*For God so loved the world that He gave*—Salvation originates, i.e., initiates, from God. And it’s His love (*agape*—giving—our usual human thought about love is receiving it, not giving it) that motivated Him. And that love was for all humans, not just the Jews (His chosen people) or just for the elect. It’s actualized in the elect who receive Him, but it’s available to all. The Greek here describes both the degree to which God loved the world as well as the manner in which He chose to express that love.

—*His only begotten Son—the one and only Son* [lit. “one of a kind, “unique”] *Son*. He has no equal. There is no parallel elsewhere, nor has it ever been repeated (1:14).

—*that whoever believes in Him*—1:12 defined this as *receive Him*, a free will decision. Jesus already gave the illustration of what that means. He will be lifted up on the cross, and a person needs to look at Him as the giver of life, to get that life. They need to accept that only He is the truth, the way, and the life. There is no other or anything else to add to it (like works).

—*shall not perish*—in eternal hell. *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus* (Romans 8:1). All a person needs to do to perish is nothing. Do not look at the cross. Remember in the illustration with Moses and the serpent, the people were already bit and dying. Do nothing, and they will die. But God is behind both things—He will judge sinners (Revelation 20:15-19), and save those who believe.

—*but have eternal life*—see verse 15. For example, good works or religious traditions are empty. They are of no eternal value. Remember Nicodemus himself, full of legalistic religious traditions, thought that would get him into the kingdom of God. But Jesus said, “Nope—they are of no spiritual value. You must be born again!” Nicodemus was already perishing. And those good works, etc. blinded him to his need of Christ. The better (more religious) person you are, the harder it is to come to Christ because you need to see yourself as a sinner, that you cannot save yourself. That’s a big problem because the very reason you do those good works is because you think they DO have value.

Application—Two questions worth repeating: Why is a person not in heaven? (Because they did not accept Christ.) Why is a person in hell? (Because they are a sinner, and *the wages of sin is death*—Romans 6:23.)

**Verse 17**—“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge [condemn] the world [humanity]—Yet, this is the view most unbelievers have. That being narrow (Jesus is only way), in itself, is a condemnation. The Gospel is broad enough to save the *foremost* of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), yet narrow enough to exclude all who do not accept Jesus (John 3:18).

—*but that the world might be saved through Him*—God desires everyone to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). God was not looking for an excuse to condemn mankind. His motivation was love, and His desire was to save. He even sacrificed His most precious Son, in order to save us. Is there any greater love? NO!

**Verse 18**—“He who believes in Him is not judged—condemned because of their sin. Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and **does not come into judgment...**” (John 5:24). Those who receive Christ will **never** appear before the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). Their names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

—*he who does not believe has been judged already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God—There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved* (Acts 4:12). If a person does not receive Christ, then they have rejected the only way out of judgment. Like a criminal in prison. If they reject a pardon, then they are already condemned because they are a criminal in jail. Offering them a pardon doesn’t condemn them. But it does show they are condemned, otherwise there would be no need for a pardon.

**Verse 19**—“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world—From the beginning, when God walked in the Garden of Eden and He looked for Adam and Eve, He exposed their evil by His very presence (Genesis 3). By His very act of love, and His Son dying, God showed how evil and dark mankind was. They rejected Jesus. They killed Jesus.

Application—An illustration: suppose you told Johnnie to not eat the cookies. But when you weren’t there, Johnnie ate the cookies, and there were crumbs on his face and the floor. You suddenly come into the room. Your presence is light on an evil deed. You’ve exposed Johnnie’s crumbs—the evidence of his disobedience. He was guilty and condemned, by your very presence. Of course, he was guilty even if you never entered the room. But your very presence condemned him.

—*and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil*—Men love darkness, not for its own sake, but because of what it hides. See Romans 1:18-32. We know it’s physically true—most crimes happen at night, in the dark. But it’s spiritually true, too. For example, a person wants to believe in tolerance because they want to practice homosexuality, abortion, and other sins.

**Verse 20**—“For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed—Instead of coming toward the Light, they move away, further into darkness, trying to escape the light, to avoid exposure of what they do and believe, thus sealing their own condemnation. This is their own free-will choice. But they cannot put out the Light. *The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overpower it* (John 1:5). It’s interesting to me that, as much as atheists want to get away from a belief in God, every time they turn around, there’s a statement about God—on a building, on a billboard, on a bumper sticker, on our money, or a student or coach who wants to pray—they cannot escape the light of the knowledge of God.

**Verse 21**—“But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God”—As believers, we confess sin, we respond to God (1 John 1:5-10). We live by the truth, not by hiding (lying about) who we are and what we do. Jesus is like a lighted magnifying mirror. It shows every spot, and they may be ugly or hard to remove, but we want to know where the spots are so they can be dealt with. (Unbelievers want to hide them, cover them up, pretend they don’t exist. Here’s a physical example— I know of a woman who has lifestyle diabetes, but instead of changing her lifestyle and dealing with her illness, she takes a pill to mask or cover up the symptoms. Now she can

pretend it doesn't exist.)

**Verse 22**—*After these things*—the time Jesus spend in Jerusalem (cleansing the temple, doing miracles, and speaking to Nicodemus)

—*Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea*—This is not mentioned in the Synoptics. Jesus left Jerusalem for the countryside.

—*and there He was spending time with them*—His disciples

—*and baptizing*—John later writes, *although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were* (4:2).

**Verse 23**—*John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim*—ancient names. No one knows for sure where it is.

—*because there was much water there*—Finding enough water is a challenge in Israel!!

—*and people were coming and were being baptized* —the Baptist did not stop his ministry when Jesus started His own ministry, and Jews continued to respond to his message of repentance.

**Verse 24**—*for John had not yet been thrown into prison*—The Synoptics begin recording Jesus' public ministry after the Baptist has been thrown into prison (Matthew 4:1-12; Mark 1:14-29; Luke 3:19-20), a fact well-documented in the Synoptics, which were written and widely distributed by the time John wrote. So the events recorded here by John took place between Jesus' temptation and the Baptist's imprisonment. So for a short time, the public ministry of Jesus overlapped that of the Baptist.

**Verse 25**—*Therefore there arose a discussion on the part of John's disciples with a Jew [Judean] about purification*—This would be a religious dispute about ceremonial cleansing. In connecting the last verses with the next verses, perhaps this Jew was baptized by Christ's disciples *in the land of Judea* and brought word to the Baptist's disciples *in Aenon near Salim* that there were more people following Jesus than who were following the Baptist. Maybe. What is clear is that the disciples of the Baptist use this as an opportunity to bring up to him a problem they have with Jesus and His ministry.

**Verse 26**—*And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan*—when the Baptist baptized Jesus, heard the voice from heaven, and declared Jesus to be the Lamb of God.

—*to whom you have testified*—and the Baptist reminds them of what that testimony was in verse 28

—*behold, He is baptizing*—Although John later points out that *Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were* (4:2), the Baptist doesn't refer to the baptizing comment at all.

—*and all are coming to Him*" —The Baptist's disciples saw Jesus as a competitor, who was becoming more popular than the Baptist was. Their exaggerated use of *all* shows they are angry and jealous of that fact—they were more interested in the Baptist's following than they were in believing his message. They longed for the former days when *everyone* went to hear the Baptist (Mark 1:5).

**Verse 27**—*John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven"*—If Christ's following was expanding, it must have been the will of God, who is sovereign over everything. The Baptist showed no anger or jealousy at all. It was God's idea and sovereignty that enabled the Baptist to have a ministry to begin with.

Application—We like to think we earned something or deserve something (as long as it's good—we don't deserve it if it's not good!!!). But the truth is, everything in your life is what is given to you by God. You could work hard and get nothing. Someone else could not work at all and get a lot. James wrote, *Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights* (1:17). Be thankful to God. Don't be angry or jealous of others.

**Verse 28**—*"You yourselves are my witnesses*—Though they were with the Baptist, they completely missed the whole purpose of the Baptist's ministry, which was to point to Christ.

—*that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him'*—From the very beginning of the Baptist's ministry, even when the Jews asked him about it, the Baptist NEVER claimed to be the Messiah

but that he had the ministry of preparing for the Messiah. And the Baptist's disciples heard that message from the Baptist. Were they not listening!?!

**Verse 29**—*“He who has the bride is the bridegroom*—The point of this illustration is Christ is the bridegroom and the Baptist is the friend of the bridegroom. Who the bride is, is not relevant. *—but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice*—The friend of the bridegroom is an assistant but not the main actor in the wedding. But as a friend, of course, he rejoices greatly because of the joy of the bridegroom. *—So this joy of mine has been made full*—When Jesus is glorified, my joy should be made full. Too often are eyes are on everything and everyone other than Jesus and whether He is glorified or not.

**Verse 30**—*“He must increase, but I must decrease*—This was by divine order. Of course, the Baptist had the very specific ministry of preparing for Jesus, and now that Jesus has started His own ministry, the Baptist's ministry was fading. Unbelievers have lives that are only centered in themselves. But as believers, Jesus said, *“If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me”* (Matthew 16:24).

Application—This will not be a reality in your life unless you really believe it is true. Sadly, that's a problem for us all. I'm so often thinking, “I'm not going to deny myself—I must increase!” I want the credit, I want to be thanked, I want... I want... I want... A man we know recently made a great observation: “We must hate our sins more than we hate our enemies, and we must love God more than loving what He's given us.”

The dialogue of Jesus with Nicodemus seemed to end in a monologue. Here, also, the dialogue of the Baptist with his disciples turned into a monologue. Jesus is superior to the Baptist. Here's why:

### **(1) Christ had a heavenly origin**

**Verse 31**—*“He who comes from above*—from the top of *—is above all*—different Greek word, meaning, a superior status and a factor of degree, “far above, considerably superior to,” i.e., sovereign *—he who is of the earth is from the earth and speaks of the earth*—they know nothing about heaven because information about heaven can only come through revelation from heaven. We have human limitations. For example, if you come to my house, and I take you to a room with its doors closed, you won't even know if it's a bedroom or something else, or what's in it, unless I reveal it to you. *—He who comes from heaven is above all*—considerably superior to everything. Here are two hierarchies: heaven is better than earth, and One who comes from heaven is better than one who comes from earth.

### **(2) Christ knew the truth firsthand**

**Verse 32**—*“What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies —God...spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets* (Hebrews 1:1), the latest and greatest being the Baptist. *But in these last days has spoken to us in His Son* (Hebrews 1:2). The prophets received revelation. But Jesus IS the revelation. He says, *“Truly, truly, I say to you...”* In 1:18, John wrote, *...the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

*—and no one receives His testimony—He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him* (John 1:11).

### **(3) Christ's testimony always agreed with God**

**Verse 33**—*“He who has received His testimony*—most do not receive Christ's testimony, that He is God, but to the one who does receive (accept) His testimony *—has set his seal to this*—like a signet ring was a seal, signature, on a document. When you receive Christ's testimony that He is God, it's like you put your signature at the end of a contract, or a marriage license, or a credit card receipt. Your signature says you agree this is true.

—*that God is true*—and others are false, such as idols, evolution, etc.

**(4) Christ experienced the power of the Holy Spirit without limit**

*Verse 34*—“*For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God*—This was also true of the prophets, including the Baptist, but the Spirit was limited by their sinful, human natures  
—*for He gives the Spirit without measure*—But there were no limits to the Spirit’s working through Jesus.

**(5) Christ received all authority from the Father**

*Verse 35*—“*The Father loves the Son*—see also 5:20  
—*and has given all things into His hand*—God has given all judgment to the Son (John 5:22). After His resurrection, Jesus said, *All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth* (Matthew 28:18).

**Therefore,**

*Verse 36*—“*He who believes in the Son has eternal life*—This in contrast to the Baptist who pointed people to Jesus, but Jesus pointed people to Himself. He is the source of eternal life.  
—*but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him*—The people who do not receive the Son, are already condemned. This is the only mention of “wrath of God” in John’s gospel. Notice the word “abides”—for those who do *not obey the Son*, ...*the wrath of God* doesn’t leave.

## Chapter 4

**Verse 1**—*Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John*—To avoid any clash with the religious Pharisees at this time, early in His ministry, Jesus left the more volatile Judean area and went to the less religious Galilee area.

**Verse 2**—*(although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were)*—Paul said a similar thing in 1 Corinthians 1:14-17. Paul’s reason for not baptizing was: (1) people were dividing by who was baptized by who—and there are to be no such divisions in the body of Christ and (2) Paul came to preach the Gospel, not baptize. I suspect Jesus thought a similar thing. Baptism was not His message.

**Verse 3**—*He left Judea and went away again into Galilee*—Jews traveled mostly east of Jerusalem to Jericho and up the Jordan Valley to Galilee.

**Verse 4**—*And He had to [fulfilling a mission given by the Father (3:14; 9:4; 10:16; 12:34; 20:9)] pass through Samaria*—The road through the hills was the most direct route from Jerusalem to Galilee. However, one would need to pass through Samaria. Most Jews would not travel by that road because they regarded any contact with the Samaritans as defiling. When the Northern Kingdom of Israel was captured by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., the Assyrians brought in people from other countries who intermarried with the poorest of Israelites left in the land. These mixed-race people were called Samaritans (named for the area of Samaria), and they worshipped at Mt. Gerizim (even today). [See the “What About the Samaritans.”]



**Verse 5**—*So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar*—The city between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. In the Old Testament, this city was called Shechem. Today, it is the Palestinian city of Nablus, in the West Bank.

—*near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph*—Genesis 48:21-22, which Jacob purchased years earlier in Genesis 33:18-20. When the Jews returned from Egypt to the Land under the leadership of Joshua, they brought Joseph’s mummified body and buried it here.



**Verse 6**—*and Jacob’s well was there*—at the base of Mt. Gerizim. It still exists and is about 100 feet deep. —*So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well*—Jesus, being 100% human, as well as 100% God, experienced thirst, pain, hunger, and being tired. —*It was about the sixth hour*—noon, their day having started at daybreak.

**Verse 7**—*There came a woman of Samaria to draw water*—She evidently had a water bucket, and He did not. You need a bucket to lower on a rope down to the water.

—*Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink”*—Jesus did a surprising thing—He initiated a conversation with this Samaritan woman, whom He had never met.

**Verse 8**—*For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food*—So Jesus was alone. This was also a taboo, for strict Jews would not eat food handled by Samaritans.

**Verse 9**—*Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?”*—She is astonished—a Jew, especially a rabbi, would not talk to her or drink from a Samaritan’s water bucket. It would make them “unclean.”

—*(For Jews have no dealings [lit. “to use the same utensils”] with Samaritans.)*—



This statement is important because it is cultural information. When the cultural information is important, the Bible tells us. If it's not needed for the understanding of the passage, then it's not in the Bible.

Application—Cultural things do not hinder the message of the Gospel, neither do they enhance it. Jesus is the *way, the truth, and the life* (John 14:6), no matter what culture you live in.

**Verse 10**—*Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew—she needed evidence of who Jesus was—the gift of God—Reminding us of John 1:17, grace (God’s gift or favor) and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the gift of God to mankind.*

*—and who it is who says to you—having gotten her attention and even shocked her, she would be even more shocked if she knew who Jesus really was—God Himself.*

*—‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water”*—He said three things to provoke her thinking: (1) Who is He? (2) What is the gift of God, and (3) What is living water? The conversation started with Jesus as the thirsty One and she the one with the water. But Jesus turned it around: He spoke as if she were the thirsty one and He the One with the water!

**Verse 11**—*She said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?”*—At this point, her comprehension was only physical.

Application—Colossians 4:3-6 describes how we are to talk with *outsiders*. Paul says, *Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.* Jesus is here giving us a perfect example of that. He's using thirst, a well, living water—starting where she's at, He creates a thirst (salt) with His questions, so she wants to know more. Jesus didn't talk to Nicodemus about the springs of living water. This is Colossians 4:3-6 in action.

**Verse 12**—*“You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You—*In the Greek, this question expects a negative answer. It's interesting because, of course, the Jews claim Jacob (re-named “Israel”) as their father. The Samaritans were descendants of the tribes of the Northern Kingdom. So the Samaritans AND the Jews have Jacob as their common father, although they both seemed to deny this commonality. The Samaritans were religiously (and politically?) centered on Jacob, Jacob's well, and Mt. Gerizim (see v. 20).

*—who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle?”*—It took Jacob a lot of effort to dig this well. Jesus doesn't even have a bucket to draw up the water. How could He be greater than Jacob?

Application—The woman was twice wrong—The living water Jesus offers does not come from an ordinary well and Jesus is, in fact, far greater than Jacob. People tend to define Jesus in terms they know and understand, and, in fact, Jesus is far beyond that.

**Verse 13**—*Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again”*—It only satisfies bodily thirst for a short time. Soon, you need water again. Also, the well water required hard work to dig down to get the water, and hard work to raise the bucket filled with water.

**Verse 14**—*but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him—*Notice, it is a gift from God, not something a person has to work for. But a person does need to drink it—i.e., receive it (John 1:12). It's a free gift, available to those who want it.

*—shall never thirst—*Jesus gives spiritual water so that a person will **never** thirst for anything else spiritually. This is His promise. [If a person is thirsting for something else, I wonder if they ever did drink from the living water of Jesus.]

*—but the water that I will give him—*again, emphasizing it is a gift from God

*—will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life”*—Gk. lit. “flowing water, continuously bubbling up.” Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:3 that God *has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness...* Everything we need for life and godliness will continuously bubble up from within us, its source, of course, being Jesus Christ. We'll **never** spiritually thirst for anything else.

**Verse 15**—*The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way*

*here to draw*”—She wanted to get out of the work of walking to the well from the village, and pulling the bucket full of water to the top of the well. It almost sounds like she wants “magic water.”

Application—As with any lost sinner, this woman needed to understand two crucial things before she could receive the living water: (1) the reality of her sin and (2) the identity of Jesus as the Savior. She’s not there yet in her understanding. So many unbelievers think God should be satisfied with their physical efforts. They never even comprehend spirituality. Think of a RC, for example, who goes to confession, says the Rosary, etc. Talk about spiritual life, they don’t even know what you are talking about.

**Verse 16**—*He said to her, “Go, call your husband and come here”*—This put the woman in the dilemma of confessing her lifestyle to this stranger. Jesus asked this to expose her sin, to reveal her immoral life.

**Verse 17**—*The woman answered and said, “I have no husband”*—Although she wasn’t lying, she wasn’t exactly telling the truth either. But she could not hide the truth from Jesus.

—*Jesus said to her, “You have correctly said, ‘I have no husband’*—At least she did not falsely claim the man she was living with as her husband.

**Verse 18**—*for you have had five husbands*—In her mind, the conversation has left talk of water to very personal things. However, in the mind of Jesus, He was talking about the same thing: living water for her sin. —*and the one whom you now have is not your husband*—By this statement, Jesus states that living together is not to be regarded as a marriage.

—*this you have said truly*”—Again, Jesus commends her for telling the truth.

**Verse 19**—*The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet”*—Because He had a supernatural accurate knowledge of her, having never met her before.

**Verse 20**— *“Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship”*—Is she changing the subject away from her own immorality?!?! Trying to divert Jesus. “Let’s talk about a theological problem instead of my immorality problem!” OR is she thinking of a place to sacrifice because of her sin?

—Before Moses died, he instructed the Israelites, when they entered the Land, to go to Mts. Ebal and Gerizim and set up an altar and read the Law. Half the Jews were to be on Mt. Ebal, pronouncing the curse of God on sin and half the tribes were on Mt. Gerizim, pronouncing the blessing of God for obedience (Deuteronomy 27:1–28:68), often called the Mosaic Covenant. But the Jews said since Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, the center of worship should be there. But the Samaritans had a rival temple on Mt. Gerizim as their place of worship because they only accepted the Pentateuch as Scripture.

**Verse 21**—*Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father*—Because in the church age, worship will no longer be centered in temples like those on Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Zion. Places would be irrelevant.

Application—The “sanctuary” is not holy ground. Israel is not the holy land. No one physical place is more holy than another. *God seeks to be His worshipers...true worshipers [who] will worship the Father in spirit and truth*—not traditions, not places, not rituals, not laws.

**Verse 22**— *“You worship what you do not know*—The Samaritans lacked the full revelation of God because they rejected most of the Old Testament, written by the prophets, which mostly had to do with the Jews, their captivity, and their restoration.

—*we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews*—He didn’t mean that all Jews were saved or were especially devout. But it was because Jesus was born a Jew, and salvation is through Him, and salvation will come to the Jews first, in Acts 2, and after them, to the world.

**Verse 23**— *“But an hour is coming, and now is*—Jesus is now here (at the well), but the hour that is coming,

I think, is His bringing redemption through His death and resurrection, and the beginning of the church age. —*when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth*—Worship (lit. “to incline the face to the ground,” indicates not only a body position but also an attitude of reverence or honor) must be in the human spirit, internal, not external conformity to ceremonies and rituals. Even though salvation was from the Jews, they were still focused on external things. I don’t think the early believers truly understood this until the Romans destroyed the temple in 70 A.D., when they could no longer practice temple rituals. —*for such people the Father seeks [desires, tries to find] to be His worshipers*—The woman was concerned about **where** people are to worship, but the Father is concerned about **who** people ought to worship. This woman was living in sin. It didn’t matter where she thought she was worshiping, because she was not really worshiping.

Application—There are people who “worship” with externals. That person will neglect spiritual worship because they think the external **was** the worship. And there’s people who decide what God should accept, rather than find the truth of what He will accept. Cain was that way. God should accept his fruit—it was the first fruit, maybe his best fruit. But the truth was, God wanted a blood sacrifice. Cain was angry. He didn’t want to know the truth. Today, it’s the same thing. Don’t tell me homosexuality is an abomination to God—MY God is love, and we all know “love wins”!!! (NOT—Truth wins!!)

**Verse 24**— “*God is spirit, and those who worship Him **must** worship in spirit and truth*”—If God had not revealed Himself in Scripture and in Jesus Christ, He would be unable to be known because He is spirit. We have no way of seeing or comprehending spirit unless spirit reveals Himself to us. But God *became flesh and dwelt among us* (1:14).

Application—There are four *God is...* descriptions in the New Testament: *God is spirit* (John 4:24), *God is light* (1 John 1:5), *God is love* (1 John 4:8, 16), and *God is a consuming fire* (Hebrews 12:29).

**Verse 25**—*The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ [“the one who has been anointed”]); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us*”—Because the Samaritans only believed in the Pentateuch, they expected a Moses-type leader who would *declare all things to us*—Deuteronomy 18:15-18 (such as many Jews define “the Messiah” today). However, the prophets in the rest of the Old Testament predicted an anointed king of the Davidic line. Also, did Jesus not just declare to her things about herself?

**Verse 26**—*Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He*”—Jesus did not openly admit this to the Jews because their expectation of a Messiah was to restore their kingdom and would have caused a Jewish revolt against the ruling Romans (John 6:15). But that was not the expectation of the Samaritans. —This is one of the 23 great “I AM...” statements by Jesus in John’s gospel, 7 times adding metaphors (sheep, shepherd, etc.).

**Verse 27**—*At this point [lit. “at that very moment”] His disciples came*—They returned from their trip to the city of Sychar to buy food (v. 8). —*and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman*—In the Greek, it is not just “surprised” but stronger, like “shocked.” They were slowly “learning that Jesus was not bound by Jewish expectations, traditions, and prejudices, and that He had good reasons for what He did” (MacArthur). —*yet no one said, “What do You seek?”*—We know—Jesus was seeking someone to worship Him. —*or, “Why do You speak with her?”*—Jesus will reach the whole city through this woman. Jesus, throughout His ministry, treated women with much more respect than the Jewish culture did. Also, this is beginning to teach the disciples that Jesus came for the people of the world, not just the Jews, who were unwilling for God to show mercy to non-Jews (Jonah, for example).

**Verse 28**—*So the woman left her waterpot*—Her news was now far greater than the issue of water, wells, and waterpots. This also shows the author John saw that she left the waterpot, a detail only an eye witness would know or even care about.

—*and went into the city and said to the men—Gk anthropoi (not aner, the word for “adult males”). This is the common word for “people” or “humans” or “men.” More recent translations translate it “people.”*

**Verse 29**—*“Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done—*Unlike Nicodemus, she did not see any miracles. But it does remind us of what Nathanael said when Jesus said of him, *“Behold, an Israelite...in whom is no guile!”* And Nathanael said to Him, *“How do You know me?”* (John 1:47-48). So this woman said Jesus *told me all the things that I have done*, when He had never seen her until just a few moments before.

Application—It’s good for us to remember *...there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do* (Hebrews 4:13).

—*this is not the Christ, is it?”*—Because of what Jesus knew about her, she believed He was the Messiah. By making this a question, she got the people interested so that they would investigate further. Most likely, if she would have said, “This is the Christ,” they would not have accepted that theological information from a woman of her reputation. However, you also get the idea that she was excited about Jesus, which also made them curious.

Application—This is one of the best tools you can use with a person. Ask them a question. It arouses their curiosity. And often, as they talk out loud or investigate it themselves, they will come to conclusions, and you don’t have to persuade them.

**Verse 30**—*They went out of the city, and were coming to Him—*In response to her testimony, the people left the city and went out to the well where Jesus was, to see for themselves whether He was the Messiah.

**Verse 31**—*Meanwhile—*while the people from the city were coming to Jesus at the well—*—the disciples were urging Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat”*—i.e., the food they had gone into the city to purchase.

**Verse 32**—*But He said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about”*—Like the woman thought Jesus was talking about the water from the well, the disciples thought Jesus was talking about food to eat.

**Verse 33**—*So the disciples were saying to one another, “No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?”*—Yes, Jesus reached the Samaritans, but He was also teaching the disciples. They were observing what He did.

**Verse 34**—*Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.”*—This doesn’t mean Jesus had no need for physical food, but His passion and desire to do God’s will exceeded the need for physical food. The whole ministry of Jesus in the gospel of John is represented as obedience in action, which will finally lead Jesus to surrender Himself in death on the cross.

Application—The priority of Jesus was spiritual, not physical. Personally, I would not think of leaving my home in the morning without my makeup on or my hair combed—yet I often leave without time in God’s Word and prayer, without preparing myself spiritually for what lies ahead that day, to affirm God’s presence in my life and decisions. If I only have time to eat breakfast or read God’s Word—do I pick physical food or spiritual food? If I don’t eat breakfast, sure, I’ll be hungry. If I don’t read God’s Word, am I spiritually hungry? We need to make the spiritual a priority. It’s reflected in what you think and what you do and what you say and what you feel. John writes a whole chapter on this. Jesus said, *“...if you abide in Me, and My words abide in you...you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples”* (John 15).

**Verse 35**—*“Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest’?”*—Don’t know where that saying came from. But by observation, there is some time between the sowing and the reaping. Now the waiting time is over, the time of the harvest is here. The prophets (and even the Baptist) have sowed. Jesus and the harvest have arrived. *The hour...now is...* (v. 23).

—*Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields—*Jesus is talking spiritually, of course, and He

is seeing the Samaritans approaching Him from the city.

—*that they are white for harvest*—these Samaritans are what the disciples can spiritually reap because, through the woman, Jesus has already sowed.

**Verse 36**—“*Already he who reaps is receiving wages—i.e., eternal rewards  
—and is gathering fruit for life eternal—getting people saved  
—so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together—As Paul told the Corinthians, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:6).*

**Verse 37**—“*For in this case the saying is true, ‘One sows and another reaps’—By the way, it’s harder for the sower because you don’t see the end result. For example, John the Baptist did much sowing to prepare the hearts of the people for their Messiah, yet he died before the reaping on the Day of Pentecost, when the disciples saw thousands come to faith in Jesus.*

**Verse 38**—“*I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored and you have entered into their labor*”—“They could benefit from the preparation He and the prophets had made. The reaping of people for the granary of God is not the task of any one group, nor is it confined to one era. Each reaps the benefit of its forerunners, and succeeding generations in turn gain from the accomplishments of their predecessors” (EBC).

Application—The point here is that we are not in competition. The reaper is not of more value than the sower. We are all part of the process of gathering fruit for eternity. And since it is God who causes the growth (as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:6), we cannot take credit for sowing or reaping, though God will decide the reward for our faithfulness in sharing the Word of God. The disciples were just standing there with Jesus, when the Samaritans arrived, wanting to hear about Jesus. God brought the opportunity to them. Jesus sowed and gave them the opportunity to reap. But God caused the growth/response (John 6:44).

**Verse 39**—*From that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all the things that I have done”*—It was her initial testimony that brought them to Jesus. A true believer will share Jesus with others, especially those they care about—friends, family, ...

**Verse 40**—*So when the Samaritans came to Jesus—Initially, they came because of what the woman said, but they themselves had to personally come to Jesus and hear His word.  
—they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days—How different than the attitude of the Jews in Nazareth, the hometown of Jesus, where the Jews were filled with rage as they heard these things and they tried to throw Jesus off the cliffs (Luke 4:16-30; see John 4:44). But instead of staying with the Samaritans, who were believing His message, His assignment was to go to His own people (Matthew 10:5-6; 15:24).*

Application—This is an instance where Christ’s assignment from the Father to go to the Jews took precedence over people (the Samaritans) getting saved. Jesus had a hierarchy of priorities. We don’t know what He knew, but if there is a conflict, we need to assess situations and people and decide the best course of action, based on the knowledge we do have. That choice must be based on the morality we know from God’s Word.

**Verse 41**—*Many more believed because of His word—He did not do any miracles there. But they heard His word taught. Paul later wrote, Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (Romans 10:17).*

**Verse 42**—*and they were saying to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world”*—They have used reason applied to evidence to conclude that Jesus is the Savior of the world, i.e., even the Samaritans. This was no “blind leap” faith, as other religions promote. This was also the Baptist’s testimony: “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

**Verse 43**—*After the two days He went forth from there into Galilee*—the cities of the Jezreel Valley and around the Sea of Galilee, where He was headed to when He left Jerusalem.

**Verse 44**—*For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country*—This comment is also recorded in Matthew 13:57 and Mark 6:4, referring to His reception in His hometown of Nazareth. It seems like it's recorded here to contrast with the Samaritans, who did honor Jesus. But even though Jesus knew He would not receive honor in His own hometown, going to the Jews was His mission from the Father.

**Verse 45**—*So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things that He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves also went to the feast*—These were Jews who had seen the miracles in Jerusalem, and wanted to see more miracles. They would not believe without the miracles (v. 48). Interesting contrast to the Samaritans, who did not see any miracles, yet believed.

**Verse 46**—*Therefore He came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine*—Cana is on the north side of Nazareth, indicating that verse 44 was about the Jews in Nazareth, which He would most likely pass through on His way from Sychar to Cana. After Jesus left Cana, we don't know how many people were aware of His miracle when He made the water into wine. This miracle was only recorded in John.

—*And there was a royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum*—We don't know if he was a Gentile, Roman official, part of Herod's court, or a Jew. We do know his position and his money could not save his son. So he traveled ~16 miles west to the hills of Cana, hoping the Healer would save his son from death.

**Verse 47**—*When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee*—most likely from the Jews who had seen the miracles Jesus did in Jerusalem, who returned to Galilee, and were talking about Him (v. 45). —*he went to Him and was imploring* [“begged,” “repeated persistent asking”] *Him to come down*—Cana is in the hills above the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum is on the shore of the Sea, so they had to go down to get there.

—*and heal his son; for he was at the point of death*—At this point, he had no desire for spiritual salvation but just desperation to save his son. He made an error in his thinking, though—he assumed Jesus would need to be present to heal his son.

**Verse 48**—*So Jesus said to him, “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe”*—This was an observation of the Jews in general (1 Corinthians 1:22). Miracles can give evidence that Jesus is God, so this man reasoned that and believed in Jesus. But many (maybe most) of the Jews saw, even participated in, miracles Jesus performed but did not believe at all. The Pharisees, for example. Miracles do not create faith.

**Verse 49**—*The royal official said to Him, “Sir, come down before my child dies”*—The official pleads for mercy, that Jesus come to Capernaum and heal the child *before* he dies. The Greek indicates death is imminent. But another error in his thinking: Jesus had to heal before death. There was no hope—or idea—Jesus could raise his son from the dead. He also changed his term to “*my child*,” a more affectionate term.

**Verse 50**—*Jesus said to him, “Go; your son lives”*—“By dismissing the official with the statement that his son was alive, Jesus created a dilemma of faith. If the father refused to return to Capernaum without taking Jesus with him, he would show that he did not believe Jesus' word and would consequently receive no benefit because of his distrust. On the other hand, if he followed Jesus' order, he would be returning to the dying boy with no outward assurance that the lad would recover. He was forced to make the difficult choice between insisting on evidence and thus showing disbelief and of exercising faith without any tangible proof to encourage him” (EBC).

—*The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started off*—The official moved from unbelief which needs miracles to someone who believes Christ’s word, without any tangible proof that his son was healed.

**Verse 51**—*As he was now going down*—totally accurate to the geography, Cana being in the hills and Capernaum being about 700 feet below sea level. You wonder what he was thinking every step of the way. —*his slaves met him, saying that his son was living*—This is the first description of the boy—he was living.

**Verse 52**—*So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better. Then they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him”*—Was it more than a coincidence? What time did he start to live? Yesterday, at 7:00.

**Verse 53**—*So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said to him, “Your son lives”*—It was exactly the moment Jesus said, “Your son lives.” Jesus’ power is able to save from death, even at a great distance. People are simply to believe His Word.

—*and he himself believed and his whole household*—Just as the Samaritan woman brought the people from her city to Christ, so this official brought his whole household to Christ. But how many people in Cana, where Jesus still was, knew what actually happened? Probably none, until Jesus arrived in Capernaum. Then His disciples would learn of the boy being alive.

**Verse 54**—*This is again a second sign that Jesus performed when He had come out of Judea into Galilee*—Yet there’s kind of a hidden aspect to these two miracles. At the wedding, only His disciples and a few servants knew He changed the water into wine. Only the official and his household, who were about 16 miles away, knew of the healing of the boy.

Application—We have to say that the official showed tremendous faith in the Word of Christ. We are, too. Our eternal life is depending on Jesus telling the truth. He said that if we believe He is the way, the truth, and the life, we will *live*—forever.

## Chapter 5

**Verse 1**—*After these things*—lit. “some time later,” indicating a break in the chronological sequence. The Synoptics record many things Jesus did in Galilee that are not recorded here. It could be even a year later. —*there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem*—John does not tell us which feast it was. It seems to be mentioned here only as the explanation of why Jesus went to Jerusalem.

**Verse 2**—*Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda* [“house of mercy”], *having five porticoes* [covered walkways]—Excavations confirm the accuracy of the description given here. The pools were trapezoidal in shape, 165 feet wide at one end and 220 feet wide at the other, and 315 feet long, divided by a central partition.

**Verse 3**—*In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered* [paralyzed]. Many who were suffering gathered at this pool.



[*waiting for the moving of the waters*—**Verse 4**—*for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.*]—These words are not found in the manuscripts before 400 A.D. Later manuscripts do include some variation of it. People evidently believed this. “But the Bible nowhere teaches this kind of superstition, a situation which would be a most cruel contest for many ill people” (BKC). Also, this section has more than six words or phrases foreign to John’s writings, including three not found anywhere else in the New Testament.

**Verse 5**—*A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years*—We don’t know if he had this condition from birth or not. Either he was paralyzed or too weak to move freely on his own because of this illness.

**Verse 6**—*When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition*—No one could say of this man that he was recently ill and got better. There was no way this man would get better. Thirty-eight years proved that he would not be getting better. —*He said to him, “Do you wish to get well?”*—Obviously, the man wanted to get better or he would not be at the pool. But Jesus’ question got his attention focused on Jesus.

**Verse 7**—*The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me”*—Instead of answering Jesus, the man complains that he has no one to help him get into the water or someone gets there before him—therefore, expressing his belief in the healing powers of the pool. Maybe he thought Jesus would help him get into the pool—his expectations of what Jesus could do for him were limited to what he believed was possible. It seems to me that if *another steps down before me*, that person is obviously not as ill or handicapped as the more seriously afflicted people—so it would be more likely that such a person could be “healed.” But Jesus picked someone from the back of the crowd—who was ill for 38 years and could not get to the water because of His condition.

**Verse 8**—*Jesus said to him, “Get up, pick up your pallet and walk”*—The healing was not a response to the man’s request, nor was it an expression of faith, i.e., he was not asked if he believed. This man was healed with or without faith. Jesus asked him to do the impossible.

Application—One of the cruelest lies of modern day “faith healers” is that the people they fail to heal are guilty of unbelief, or lack of faith, etc. In contrast, those whom Jesus healed did not always have faith beforehand. I clearly remember a young mother

coming to me, crying, because she had taken her baby to a healer, but the baby died, and the healer then told the young mother it was her fault because she didn't have enough faith. How cruel!!!

**Verse 9**—*Immediately the man became well*—Just as Jesus spoke and the world was created, He spoke and the man was completely healed. God works in and through His Word.

—*and picked up his pallet and began to walk*—To walk is not simply to have good legs. It involves a lot of brain activity, balance, etc., especially after 38 years. But his healing was completely functional, so he walked and carried his pallet.

—*Now it was the Sabbath on that day*—Trouble!!!

**Verse 10**—*So the Jews [leaders] were saying to the man who was cured*—They didn't even rejoice in his healing.

—*“It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet”*—“The Mosaic Law required that work cease on the seventh day. Additional laws were added by later Jewish religious authorities, which became very complicated and burdensome. These human traditions often obscured the divine intention in God's Law. “The Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27) so that he could have rest and a time for worship and joy. The Jews' rigid tradition (not the Old Testament) taught that if anyone carried anything from a public place to a private place on the Sabbath intentionally, he deserved death by stoning. In this case the man who was healed was in danger of losing his life” (BKC). The Mosaic Law said to not work (ordinary business or occupation) on the Sabbath, but rabbinic Judaism had 39 forbidden categories of work, including carrying anything.

Application—Rabbinic Judaism rules, like all false religions, cannot change a person on the inside so it tries to manipulate life on the outside with its manmade rules. We do it in Christianity, too. For example, Hebrews 10:25, *not forsaking our own assembling together*, becomes the rule: “you must go to church on Sunday morning.” It seems to me that the verse is not saying **to assemble** but **to not forsake** assembling. That is a big difference.

**Verse 11**—*But he answered them, “He who made me well was the one who said to me, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk’”*—Trying to not take responsibility for violating tradition, he said he was just following orders. I guess it was safe to “blame” Jesus because he didn't know who Jesus was and couldn't find Him.

**Verse 12**—*They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk’?”* — obviously, they want to find Him and arrest Him for violation of the rules.

**Verse 13**—*But the man who was healed did not know who it was*—This is amazing!! So little did this man “believe,” he had no idea who Jesus even was.

—*for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place*—He couldn't even pick Jesus out of the crowd of people.

**Verse 14**—*Afterward Jesus found [indicates the result of a search] him in the temple*—he didn't find Jesus, Jesus found him.

—*and said to him, “Behold, you have become well; do not [“continue to”] sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you”*—The most natural way to understand what Jesus said is that this man's sickness was in some way a result of some sin in his life. Remember, under the Mosaic Law, sin resulted in curses (Deuteronomy 28:58-61; Leviticus 26:14-16). Jesus was giving him a spiritual warning. If the man continued to live in unrepentant sin, his 38 years of life as an invalid would be no comparison to something worse (eternity in hell). To Jesus, spiritual healing was way more important than physical healing.

**Verse 15**—*The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well*—It's hard to believe. Not only did he seem to not have any gratitude for being healed, he turned in Jesus to the Jewish leaders! This answered their question in verse 12, in defense of himself breaking their rule. There's no indication of repenting of his sin, praising God, or turning in faith to Jesus. In fact, just the opposite. This is

one of the greatest acts of ingratitude in Scripture. Why would Jesus pick this man who apparently did not even believe in Him? There was no question that a supernatural miracle happened—the man was 38 years in this condition. By his not knowing about Jesus, he was able to turn Him in to the Jewish leaders, thus stirring up their desire to kill Jesus—that’s why Jesus came—to die. Again, we see there was purpose to the miracle.

Application—How many times do we credit something good in our life to other sources and forget to thank God. James 1:17 says, *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights...* Be thankful to Him!!

**Verse 16**—*For this reason the Jews were* [“continually”] *persecuting* [Gk. hostile to] *Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath*—The Jews recognized that God worked on the Sabbath, or else all nature and life would cease to exist. Humans were born and died on the Sabbath, again—a work of God. So the actions of Jesus on the Sabbath were a privilege only God had. Doing this, Jesus was claiming to be God.

### **Jesus Is Equal to God in His Person**

**Verse 17**—*But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working”*—Jesus agrees. The Father works on the Sabbath, and Jesus works on the Sabbath. Therefore, Jesus is God.

**Verse 18**—*For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking* (continuous action) *all the more to kill Him*—*because He not only was breaking the Sabbath*—as an ordinary human they thought Him to be—*but also was calling God His own Father*—Jesus was not claiming to be God as one person, but He was claiming His relationship with God as a Son to a Father. In verses 19-24, He explains what that entails. *—making Himself equal with God*—They understood that by “working” on the Sabbath and calling God His “Father,” Jesus was claiming to be God, which, to them, was blasphemy. In Deuteronomy 6:4, which the Jews even repeat today, it says, *“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”* They think the Trinity means three Gods, contradicting this verse. But this verse means there is only one God (not the idols, etc.). It’s an anti-polytheism statement.

### **Jesus Is Equal to God in His Works**

**Verse 19**—*Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly* [what Jesus says is the truth], *I say* [He is the source of truth—John 14:6] *to you, the Son can do nothing of* [lit. “from”] *Himself*—Jesus said to the Father, *“Not as I will, but as You will”* (Matthew 26:39). In John 4:34, Jesus said, *“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.”* Jesus was not independent of or in opposition to the Father. In fact, it is absolutely impossible for Him to do anything that is not the will of the Father.

*—unless it is something He sees the Father doing*—They are one God. They are the same in life, light, holiness, truth, love, etc. The Son imitates the Father. The Two always work together.

*—for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner*—Later, Jesus said, *“If you knew Me, you would know My Father also”* (John 8:19). They are in perfect harmony.

**Verse 20**—*“For the Father loves* [present tense, “on-going”] *the Son*—This is not *agape* (“giving” kind of love of the will and choice), but *phileo*, the love of deep feelings, the warmth of affection that a father feels for his son. This is the only time it is used in the New Testament to refer to the Father’s love for His Son. *—and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing*—Remember, it is Jesus, *who is in the bosom of the Father* (1:18). Real close up, so He sees everything the Father is doing. *—and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel*—Greater works than physical healings, for example, raising the dead and spiritual life, and His own resurrection.

### **Jesus Is Equal to God in His Power and Sovereignty**

**Verse 21**—*“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life—The Father has life in Himself...*

(John 5:26). God gave us living physical bodies and He will one day give us living eternal bodies. —*even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes—even so He [the Father] gave to the Son also to have life in Himself* (John 5:26). *The Word was God. ...All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life...* (John 1:1-4).

## **Jesus Is Equal to God in His Judgment**

**Verse 22**—“*For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given [“handed over”] all judgment to the Son*—Because their wills are in perfect harmony, all judgment given to Christ will be exactly the same as the Father’s judgment. Although judgment was not Christ’s primary purpose at His first coming (John 3:17), in the future, *the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus* (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; see also Acts 17:31; Matthew 7:23; Revelation 20:11-15).

## **Jesus Is Equal to God in His Honor**

**Verse 23**—*so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father—God highly exalted Him [Jesus] and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father* (Philippians 2:10-11). Willingly or unwillingly, everyone **will** eventually obey the Father’s command to honor Jesus Christ.

—*He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him*—Jesus also said, *He who hates Me, hates My Father also* (John 15:23). “It is not up to a man to decide that he will honor the One or the Other; it is either both or neither. ...Knowledge of One implies knowledge of the Other (John 8:19); hatred of One implies hatred of the Other (15:23); denial of the One implies denial of the Other (1 John 2:23)” (MacArthur).

**Verse 24**—“*Truly, truly [what He says is the truth], I say to you [the source of truth], —he who hears [to accept, to pay attention and respond, to heed] My word—the message, the words of Christ. Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ* (Romans 10:17). A person needs to pay attention to the words of salvation to get saved. The point here is about those who are exposed to the Gospel. (But the judgment of verses 28-29 is of **all** people.)  
—*and believes*—John already defined that *as many as received Him...those who believe in His name* (1:12). It’s the free will decision of a person to accept Christ’s words as truth and make a commitment to that truth.  
—*Him who sent Me*—God the Father and Jesus the Son. He’s just made a case for them being God.  
—*has [to be in a particular state or condition] eternal life*—Because life comes from God. Only He can give it, and He gives it to whom He wishes, according to His sovereignty. *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world* (Ephesians 1:4).  
—*and does not come [Gk. to move toward an event] into judgment*—Jesus will be either your Savior or your judge!! *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus* (Romans 8:2).  
—*but has passed out of death into life*—[Gk. to effect a change of location in space, with the implication that the two locations are significantly different].

## **Two Resurrections**

**Verse 25**—“*Truly, truly [the truth], I say to you [the source of truth] —an hour is coming and now is—Christ’s message to the woman at the well: Whoever drinks of the water I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life* (John 4:13-14). Jesus told Martha, “*I am the resurrection and the life...*” (John 11:25). Christ has arrived, offering eternal life to the spiritually dead.  
—*when the [spiritually] dead will hear the voice of the Son of God*—[to accept, to pay attention and respond, to heed]

—*and those who hear [to accept, to pay attention and respond, to heed] will live—The gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it (Matthew 7:13-14).*

**Verses 26-27**— “*For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself—Jesus not only has life in Himself, but He can give that life to whoever He wishes (v. 21). —and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man—*Jesus returns to His two rights as the Son of God, given to Him by the Father: life and judgment.

**Verses 28-29**— “*Do not marvel [be amazed] at this; for an hour is coming (future prophecy), in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth—*Only the few, who enter by the narrow gate, hear or heed the words of Christ and receive salvation. But at the judgment **all will hear** His voice, calling them to judgment for the lives they’ve lived apart from Christ. They can ignore Christ’s words today, but they cannot ignore His words at the judgment.

—*those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment—*Salvation is the result of believing in Jesus (John 6:29). Judgment, though, is based on works. Those who believe in Jesus will be resurrected to life, where their good deeds will be judged (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Those who do not believe in Jesus will be resurrected to the judgment of the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15).

**Verse 30**— “*I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me—*This section ends where it started in verse 19. Jesus can do nothing apart from the Father. Twenty-five times in the gospel of John, Jesus claims He was sent or commissioned or delegated by the Father.

## **Five Testimonies to the Deity of Christ**

### **(1) Jesus Himself**

**Verse 31**— “*If I alone testify about Myself—*These are verses 16-30.

—*My testimony is not valid [legal]—*He’s not saying His testimony is unreliable. The key word here is *alone*. The Jews claimed His own testimony was not sufficient. Deuteronomy 19:15 says, *On the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed*. He needed more testimonies, more evidence, to prove He is God.

### **(2) John the Baptist**

**Verse 32**— “*There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true—*John said, “*I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God*” (John 1:34).

**Verse 33**— “*You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth—*The Jewish authorities recognized that the Baptist was a prophet, and sent a delegation to question him (John 1:19f), and the Baptist told the truth, although they didn’t believe him.

**Verse 34**— “*But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved—*Christ didn’t mention the Baptist to make up for any lack in Christ’s claim to be God but to confirm by the mouth of a person, who was already recognized as God’s true prophet, the same truth concerning Jesus. So having another witness may lead them to believe the truth and be saved.

**Verse 35**— “*He was the lamp that was burning and was shining—*Here Jesus gives testimony to the Baptist’s ministry. Whereas Jesus is the light (1:4), the Baptist was a lamp. He was not the source of the light but a small oil lamp. He lit the way to Jesus, who was the source of light (like sunshine).

—*and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light*—People flocked to the Baptist at first. But they couldn't accept the Baptist's testimony about Jesus but reject Jesus Himself. In the end, the Baptist's message of personal repentance, his condemnation of the hypocrisy of the nation, and his practice of baptizing Jews alienated many of the Jews. It seems they were mostly superficially drawn to the Baptist and did not truly repent. Finally, they turned away from the truth because they loved their evil deeds (3:19).

### **(3) The works (miracles) of Jesus**

*Verse 36*—“*But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John*— Though the Baptist was a great voice for God, he did not do any miracles.

—*for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish — the very works that I do — testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me*—The works (miracles) were those things that revealed that Jesus was God.

Later, Jesus said, “*The works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me*” (John 10:25).

“*Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves*” (14:11). Who but God can calm the raging sea, feed 5,000, raise the dead..... Jesus did

miracles to give valid proofs of His claim to be God. And thousands of people witnessed those miracles.

John wrote, *Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book* (John 20:30). However, notice Jesus did the works which the Father gave Him to

accomplish. They were supernatural and they were in keeping with God's exact wishes. They had the divine purpose to show that *the Father has sent Me*. Jesus was God, and Jesus was sent from God.

### **(4) God the Father**

*Verse 37*—“*And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form*—They had no vision of God and no communication with Him. In the past, many of the Israelites and the prophets saw manifestations of God or heard God speak to them (even the Baptist did). But the Jews at the time of Christ had none of these things for over 400 years (besides the Baptist).

*Verse 38*—“*You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent*—It's obvious they do not know and believe the Old Testament Scriptures because they did not believe Jesus. What they did know and believe was the rabbinic teachings and traditions.

Application—This is my observation—the Jews at the time of Christ emphasized the Law and not the prophets. I think that is one reason they did not recognize Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy. Today, with CT, the same is true. There is an emphasis on Law keeping, but they completely ignore (even erase) prophecy. That affects their view of the Bible, their view of Israel, their view of the church, their view of what ministry should be like, and their view of the spiritual life. One-fourth of the Bible was prophecy when it was written. Know prophecy!! Interestingly, we recently got an email from a man in the Netherlands, complaining about our work with the Polish believers. First, he was amazed how well their ministries were doing without any institution controlling them. But second, he said, DeWitt's teaching on dispensationalism is different than the CT's. But what difference does it make? (Ha, Ha!!) It makes a HUGE difference!!! The institution vs. the individual. The Bible vs. traditions. Etc.

### **(5) The Scriptures**

*Verse 39*—“*You search [“study”] the Scriptures [“thoroughly”] because you think that in them you have eternal life*—Almost a mystical belief in the actual words themselves (similar to the Emergents today).

—*it is these that testify about Me*—But Scriptures are not an end in themselves. They are a revelation of God. You study them to learn about God—who He is and what He does. If these Jews would have learned about God from the Scriptures, they would have recognized that Jesus was God.

*Verse 40*—*and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life*—Not only do the Scriptures tell of God, Jesus Himself was God in the flesh—and *He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him* (1:12).

Application—Paul wrote in Romans 3:20, *through the Law comes the knowledge of sin*, and therefore, it reveals the need of a Savior. Yet the Jews read the Law and made it a religious legalism, which when obeyed, they thought resulted in righteousness—

the exact opposite of the Law's intention!! That does not make the Law wrong. *The Law is...holy and righteous and good* (Romans 7:12). Without the Law, we have no knowledge of sin (7:7). For example, is the 55 mph speed limit sign good or evil? Well, it's good because it's a guide to keep you safe when driving. Driving over 55 is the result of your own sin nature, not the sign. But we make the law into legalism—it's ok to drive 5 mph over the 55. That way we feel righteous about driving over 55!

**Verse 41**—*“I do not receive glory from men*—The Jews thought that was the intention of Jesus, to receive glory as a leader of the Jews.

**Verse 42**—*but I know you*—they didn't know Jesus, but Jesus knew them. They were all about outward appearances. Jesus said about them, *they practice their righteousness before men to be noticed by them* (Matthew 6:1). *...they love to stand and pray...on the street corners, in order to be seen by men* (6:5). —*that you do not have the love of God in yourselves*—The Greek can be subjective genitive (“God's love”) or objective genitive (“love for God”) or plenary genitive (“love God gives which in turn produces love for Him”). Whichever one it is, the point is, these Jews lack any love from or for God.

**Verse 43**—*“I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me*—Evidence of their lack of love for God, is that they rejected the Father's representative—His only begotten Son, no less! Jesus said, *he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me* (Luke 10:16). —*if another comes in his own name, you will receive him*—Another evidence of their lack of love for God is that they accepted false teachers or false prophets who speak on their own authority (Jeremiah 14:13-16).

Application—I am amazed how many Christians believe Glen Beck, solely on his own authority, that he is accurate in his “facts” and opinions, even when they know those very “facts” and opinions are steeped in Mormonism!!

**Verse 44**—*“How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God? We are guilty of this all the time. We want others to acknowledge us, to compliment us, to thank us.....but are we trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord? (Ephesians 5:10). Do we have as our ambition...to be pleasing to Him? (2 Corinthians 5:9). At the end of our life, can we say with Paul, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing (2 Timothy 4:7)?*

**Verse 45**—*“Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father*—Jesus came as the Savior, not the Judge —*the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope*—This is a shock to them. They believed Moses was their defender, an intercessor between them and God. They must have been so angry at Jesus to even suggest that Moses would accuse them. They were proud of Moses as their leader and teacher.

**Verse 46**—*“For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me*—Real belief in the revelation of the Law through Moses would lead to a belief in Jesus. The writer of Hebrews wrote in 3:3, 5-6, *Christ has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses...Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant...but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house.*

**Verse 47**—*“But if you do not believe his writings*—Abraham also said from Paradise to the rich man in Hades, *“If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead”* (Luke 16:31). —*how will you believe My words? ”*—If they didn't understand and believe what Moses wrote, how would they understand and believe what Jesus said?

Paul wrote, *The Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith* (Gal. 3:24). The Law could never save. *If a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law* (3:21). *And if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly* (2:21).

## Chapter 6

**Verse 1**—*After these things*—From the synoptics, we learn this was about six months later. Herod had killed the Baptist (Matthew 14:12-13; Mark 6:14-29), and Jesus and the disciples had preached throughout Galilee (Mark 6:7-13).

—*Jesus went away to the other side [northeast side] of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias)*—John is the only NT writer to refer to the lake as Tiberias. This is a local name. Herod completed the building of the town of Tiberias, on the western shoreline, in the mid-20s, and after this, the lake itself took that name. Being a Roman city, the city itself is not mentioned in the Bible, and there is no written record of Jesus ever going there. (But even today, Tiberias is the only city on the lake, and it's where we stay when visiting the area.)  
—He went there in a boat, intending to go to a secluded place with His disciples, having heard of the Baptist's death (Matthew 14:1-12).

—This miracle of feeding 5,000 is the only miracle mentioned in all four gospels. This shows its significance.

**Verse 2**—*A large crowd followed Him*—by foot along the shore (Mark 6:33), waiting for them when they landed.

—*because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick*—their motivation was not faith, repentance, or love for Jesus. They didn't conclude He was God. They wanted the benefits of His power in their physical lives, not their spiritual lives.

**Verse 3**—*Then Jesus went up on the mountain [Gk. "hillside"]*—with the lake being the bowl of a volcano, it is surrounded by mountains, quite close and even right up to the shoreline.

—*and there He sat down with His disciples*—

**Verse 4**—*Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near*—Therefore, it was the springtime, and probably one year before His crucifixion on Passover.

**Verse 5**—*Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him*—in the evening (Mark 6:35; Luke 9:12). The disciples came to Jesus and asked Him to *send the crowds away, to the villages and buy food for themselves* (Matthew 14:15). It wasn't "their" problem to feed all those people.  
—*But Jesus said to Philip*—Why ask Philip? Perhaps because Philip was from Bethsaida (1:44), which was the closest town, and he would know the sources of food in the area.

—*"Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?"*—Jesus asked to get them to realize the impossibility of the situation. Asking questions is a great way to get people to think.

**Verse 6**—*This He was saying to test him*—Jesus knew there was no food, and He knew what He was going to do about it. So this question was for the instruction of Philip and the disciples. To teach them more about Himself as God.

—*for He Himself knew what He was intending to do*—Of course, Jesus wasn't looking for ideas.

Application—God tests our faith. James 1:2 says that *the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete [mature]*. Notice two things: (1) the testing does not produce the faith, it tests the faith you already have (faith comes only from *hearing the word of Christ*—Romans 10:10). (2) The purpose of the testing is to bring you to be a mature believer. James 1:13-15 talks about temptation. (1) *God Himself does not tempt anyone*. (2) *Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust*. HOWEVER, those can be the same situation. It's not the situations themselves, but how I respond to those situations that makes them a test or a temptation. As in the Garden, God wants you to live. Satan wants you to die. But God does give you a free will choice because there's no love without choice.

**Verse 7**—*Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, for everyone to receive a little"*—One denarius (17 cents) was the wage for a day's work. This would have been eight months' wages. Even if there was enough bread available, they didn't have that much money. His

reply showed his lack of faith. He's already seen Jesus perform many miracles, including changing the water into wine (2:1-11). He evidently didn't even consider that Jesus could do a miracle about the food OR provide the money. He thought there was no solution.

**Verse 8**—*One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him*—Jesus had told him, “Go look” (Mark 6:38). So he had gone into the crowd to determine its resources.

**Verse 9**—*“There is a lad here who has five barley [info told only by John] loaves and two fish, but what are these for so many people?”* This only reinforced their belief that there was not enough to feed all these people. It was an impossible situation.

**Verse 10**—*Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand [plus women and children, so probably 15,000-20,000 people altogether—Matthew 14:21]. They sat in groups of 50 and 100 (Mark 6:40). [To illustrate this with my grandchildren, I got \$50 (5,000 pennies). We dumped them out on a sheet on the floor. They didn't really have a comprehension of how many 5,000 was until they saw that (and had to count it to give it back to the bank!!!).]*

**Verse 11**—*Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks*—A practice good for us all to do—*He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish*—None of the gospels say exactly how the miracle happened. Mark says, *He kept giving them to the disciples* (6:41). Bread, by definition, is baked, and I assume the fish was already cooked and not raw because they ate it all without cooking it there and then. This is a tremendous miracle. Try planning for, buying for, and preparing for some 15,000-20,000 people. Jesus actually created all that food from nothing. Like the wine was ready to drink, this food was ready to eat.

Application—Jesus could just as easily have distributed the food to the crowd by supernatural means. However, He chose to use the disciples to distribute it. Thank God He chooses to use us humans in His work. He doesn't need us—don't assume He does! We are all replaceable.

—*as much as they wanted*—No limitations or rationing of the food.

**Verse 12**—*When they were filled*—It's interesting that the strictly literal rendering of the Greek is “to fill with food,” implying “to stuff with food” to the point of making someone extremely uncomfortable.” I can imagine that actually happening—all you can eat of free food. But don't miss the point that Jesus provided abundantly beyond what they needed.

Application—Just like the wine, I imagine this was the best bread and fish they had ever tasted. And they could eat all they wanted, and they did—until they were stuffed.

—*He said to His disciples, “Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost”*—He fed them all, but that didn't mean the leftover food could be wasted. Actually, the leftovers far exceeded the original five barley loaves and two fish. Jesus provided abundantly beyond all they thought or needed.....

**Verse 13**—*So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets [Gk kophinos, a large basket to carry bulky objects] with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten—Mark 6:43 says also of the fish.* Possibly there is a simple explanation—there were 12 disciples doing the gathering, and they each filled a basket.

**Verse 14**—*Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world”*—But they didn't acknowledge Him as God or want spiritual food.

*Verse 15—So Jesus, perceiving [knowing] that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone—*This showed that Jesus did not have a political agenda. He was not there to lead a Jewish revolt against Roman control. He refused to be forcibly made king on their selfish and unrepentant terms. He will become king, but by the path the Father has chosen for Him. Before He can reign as King, He must first be the Lamb who bears the sin of the world.

*Verse 16—Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea—* Keeping His disciples from being swept up in the crowd's political intentions of making Him king, Jesus *made the disciples get into the boat, and go ahead of Him to the other side* (Matthew 14:22), to return home to Capernaum.  
—Just a side note: “The Greek word indicates a rather large body of water, but the English word “sea” normally indicates very large bodies of water, so the word “lake” in English is a closer approximation” (NET Notes).

*Verse 17—and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become dark—*According to Mark 6:45-48, Jesus was up in the hills praying, but saw them rowing against the storm. —*and Jesus had not yet come to them—*Maybe they waited for Him, but it became dark so they left. Darkness comes quickly as the sun passes behind the high hills west of the lake.

*Verse 18—The sea began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing—*Men have told me that, even today, without warning, the wind can come from the north, through the Jordan River pass in the hills, and swirl around the lake, like circling in a bowl. And suddenly, there are waves 15 feet high.

*Verse 19—Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles—*Mark 6:47 says they were in the middle of the lake. The lake is the shape of a harp. It's about 7 miles across at its widest, and 12 miles long. The wind evidently blew them away from the shore and into the middle of the lake.

—*they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened—*They thought He was a ghost (Mark 6:49). They left sometime in the evening (between 6:00 and 9:00). It was now the “fourth watch,” between 3:00 and 6:00 in the morning (Matthew 14:25; Mark 6:48). They were exhausted from a long day dealing with the multitude, distributing the food to so many people, and now rowing for hours against the wind and storm. Though it was probably something they had experienced many times before in their lives. **BUT** someone walking on the water, in the midst of all this? That was scary!! And they did not recognize Him at first, which added to their fear.

—The Greek grammar that John uses here is very specific: Literally, *on the sea*.

*Verse 20—But He said to them, “It is I”—*Lit. “I am.” God's memorial name for all generations (Exodus 3:14-15).

—*do not be afraid—* John also wrote, *Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world*” (1 John 4:4). Jesus said, “...lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). *For He Himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,” so that we confidently say, “The Lord is my Helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?”* (Hebrews 13:5-6). This is our promise, too.

*Verse 21—So they were willing to receive Him into the boat—*They recognized Him.



—This was actually four miracles: (1) Jesus walked on the water, (2) Peter walked on the water—at least for a brief time (Matthew 14:28-31), (3) when Jesus got into the boat, the wind stopped (Matthew 14:32; Mark 6:51), and (4) the boat instantly went some 3 miles to shore.

—*and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going*—This is the fifth miraculous sign John recorded (2:11; 4:43; 5:1-17; 6:1-15). This demonstrated Christ’s deity by showing His power over the laws of nature. Matthew 14:34 tells us *they came to land at Gennesaret*, a village on the shore near Capernaum. (Actually, this is the boat dock we use today also.)

—*And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, “You are certainly God’s Son!”* (Matthew 14:33). The disciples responded in worship of Jesus. The crowds wanted more food.

**Verse 22**—*The next day the crowd that stood on the other side [east] of the sea saw that there was no other small boat there, except one, and that Jesus had not entered with His disciples into the boat, but that His disciples had gone away alone*—the crowd supposed Jesus was still in the area where He fed the 5,000 men.

**Verse 23**—*There came other small boats from Tiberias near to the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks*—Tiberias was on the west side of the sea. They crossed over to the northeast side of the sea. Perhaps they knew there were thousands of people gathered there, and they hoped to be a “water taxi” for some of those people (v. 24).

**Verse 24**—*So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples*—where is Jesus? Where are the disciples? Jesus had not gone with the disciples in their boat.

—*they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus*—Many people did get into those boats from Tiberias and went to Capernaum (on the northwest side of the sea). Much easier and quicker than walking along the shore or through the hills.

**Verse 25**—*When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, “Rabbi, when did You get here?”*—Jesus did not answer their irrelevant and superficial question, nor did He tell them about the miracles He just performed on the water. Those were private, for the eyes of the disciples only.

**Verse 26**—*Jesus answered them and said, “Truly, truly [He says the truth], I say to you [He’s the source of truth]*—Jesus spoke these words four times in this chapter (6:26, 32, 47, 53).

—*you seek Me, not because you saw signs but because you ate of the loaves and were filled*—multiplying the bread and fish was a tremendous sign that Jesus was God, the Creator. But the people only thought about eating an easy meal. They did not gain any spiritual insight from what Jesus had done. Like the woman at the well, they could not think beyond the physical to the spiritual.

**Verse 27**—*“Do not work for the food which perishes*—He’s not saying “don’t work.” But be constantly evaluating what you spend your time, energy, and money on. Is it something that will perish? Of course, we have to eat. We need clean clothes, etc. And if you choose, you can work for treasures on earth, but realize, you *“have your reward in full”* (6:2). You cannot take that with you when you die.

—*but for the food which endures to eternal life*—How awesome is that?!?! You can actually do things that will affect you for eternity!! Jesus said, *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys...for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Matthew 6:19-21).

—*which the Son of Man will give to you*—eternal life is a gift for those who believe in Jesus

—*for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal*—The seal of authority, like a king puts on an envelope

Application—How do we work for food which endures for eternity? By being obedient to God’s Word. *Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you* (Colossians 3:16). Be kind and forgiving (Ephesians 4:32). *Agape* (God’s love) *does not take into account a wrong suffered* (1 Corinthians 13). *This is the will of God, ...that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own body in sanctification...not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God* (1 Thessalonians

4:3-5). *Show yourself an example of those who believe* (1 Timothy 4:12). *Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness* (1 Timothy 4:8). *If anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things* (Philippians 4:8). Etc. These things are attitudes you have while doing the wash, cleaning the house, preparing the food, helping the children with homework, etc.

**Verse 28**—*Therefore they said to Him, “What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?”*—They believed, if they wished to do so, that they were capable of pleasing God and obtaining eternal life by doing works (Romans 10:2-4; see also Matthew 19:16; Luke 10:25).

**Verse 29**—*Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God [not a work of you], that you believe in Him whom He has sent”*—Salvation is not about human achievements but about belief in Jesus (1:12), the One sent from God.

Application—Some people say having faith is a work. Paul says in Romans 4:4-5, *to the one who works, his wages is not reckoned as a favor [grace], but as what is due*. Wages are due to the one who works. *But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness*. God has declared that faith is not a work. Righteousness is not **due** to one who works. Righteousness is not **due** to the one who has faith. If you think God **owes you** eternal life because of your faith, that faith is a work, and you won’t receive eternal life. God **owes** you nothing. If there is even one smidgeon of works, grace is null and void. Righteousness is a gift [grace, favor] of God for one who has faith. Therefore, it is not a work. *For by grace are you saved, not of works* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

**Verse 30**—*So they said to Him, “What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?”*—As my grandkids say, “Seriously?!?!?” Unbelief is never satisfied, no matter how much evidence is given (see Luke 16:31), because miracles (or signs) do not create faith. They give evidence, but faith is in the person of Jesus, not what He does. **If** Jesus came and did no miracles, He would be just as much God as He is by doing miracles.

Application—“At the crucifixion the unbelieving Jewish leaders said mockingly, “Let this Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, so that we may see and believe!” (Mark 15:32). Yet when Jesus rose from the dead—a far greater miracle than merely coming down from the cross—they still refused to believe in Him. Rather than admit the truth, they desperately attempted to cover up the reality of His resurrection (Matt. 28:11–15; Acts 4:1–3)” [MacArthur].  
—What do unbelievers, such as these people, mean by “believe”? When Jesus talks about “believe,” He means John 1:12. It’s important we define “believe” the way Jesus does.

**Verse 31**—*“Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread out of heaven to eat’”*—Manna was food for some 2 million people for 40 years. Maybe they were expecting Jesus not to just feed them once but continue to feed them, like the manna. They wanted to make Him king, for social, economic, and political reasons. It was all about what He could do for them: “Feed me!” “Feed me!”

**Verse 32**—*Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you—Christ’s miracles revealed His divine power, but it is Christ’s words that define who He is. Miracles are not enough for salvation. Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ* (Romans 10:17). John’s gospel reflects that. He almost hurries through the miracles, only giving a few details compared to the Synoptics, to get to what Christ said.  
—*it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven—God said, “I will rain bread from heaven for you”* (Exodus 16:4). Moses just gave God’s instructions to the people about gathering the manna (16:15-30). Jesus is attacking their false belief that manna was from Moses, as they believed it was.  
— *but it is My Father who [“now” Gk. present tense] gives you the true bread out of heaven—Manna, the food from God in the past, gave temporary, physical life. But now God has sent them true food from heaven that gives spiritual, eternal life. Physical food for physical life. Spiritual food for spiritual life.*

**Verse 33**— *“For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world”*—Whereas manna was only for the Jews, the true spiritual bread God now gives from heaven is for the whole world.

**Verse 34**—*Then they said to Him, “Lord [i.e., “sir”], always give us this bread”*— It seems like they are still talking about physical bread, not just for forty years, like manna, but always.

**Verse 35**—*Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life*—The bread is not a product, it is a Person. This bread is not temporary, like the manna was. Even though manna was for forty years, still, it ended.  
—*he who comes to Me will not* [“never” emphatic in Greek] *hunger*—eternal spiritual satisfaction comes from a right relationship to Jesus. Religions don’t even talk about spiritual satisfaction. They are about decrees, traditions, laws, customs, etc.  
—*and he who believes in Me will never* [emphatic in Greek] *thirst*—this spiritual satisfaction does not come through a miracle or any physical work. It all depends on coming to Jesus and receiving (embracing) Him.

Application—Hebrews 13:5 says, *He Himself has said, “I will never [double negative for emphasis] desert you, nor will I ever [doubled negative] forsake you.”* It’s the promise of Christ to us—no matter what our situation is in this life.

**Verse 36**—*“But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe*—These people will have a greater judgment because they had more revelation—Jesus lived among them and His message and His miracles were done among them—yet they did not believe He was God. Matthew 11:23 says, *And you, Capernaum... will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.* Even though *He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him* (John 1:12)...

**Verse 37**—*“All that the Father gives Me*—every single one whom the Father gives Jesus—*Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world* (Ephesians 1:4). The Father’s 100% sovereignty.  
— **will come to Me**—i.e., *as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name* (John 1:12). Our 100% free will to believe in His name.  
—*and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out*—Jesus has confidence that those God gives Him will come to Him, but we can have confidence also. If we come to Jesus, He will not cast us out—ever.

Application—“Man does not make his opportunity for salvation; he accepts its free offer. ...if the desire for salvation is not inspired by God, true salvation will not result” (EBC). If God doesn’t bring us to Christ, we are eternally lost, for *there is none who seeks for God* (Romans 3:11).

**Verse 38**—*“For I have come down from heaven*—six times in this chapter Jesus claims His heavenly origin (verses 33, 38, 41, 50, 51, 58).  
—*not to do My own will*—Jesus told His disciples the same thing, *“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself...”* (Matthew 16:24).

Application—Jesus is our example. He *endured the cross, despising the shame* (Hebrews 12:2). Denying yourself is something you need to learn to endure, as Jesus did. It doesn’t feel good!! I remember Prof. Hendricks said he denied himself something every day so he would be reminded of how uncomfortable it feels. Then when it came time to deny himself of something really important, he wouldn’t abandon denial simply because of how it made him feel.

—*but the will of Him who sent Me*—God’s will was to send Jesus to the world. God’s will was to give eternal life to some who receive His Son. God’s will was that Jesus not cast out any one who comes to Him.

**Verse 39**—*“This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing*—Now we also see it is God’s will that Jesus not lose any of those who come to Him. What we call “eternal security.”  
—*but raise it up on the last day*—And it’s God’s will on the last day for Jesus to resurrect us.

**Verse 40**—*“For this is the will of My Father*—also, God’s will...  
—*that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him* (John 1:12) *will have eternal life*—to those who receive Jesus, not only do they become a child of God, they will have eternal life.

—*and I Myself will raise him up on the last day*—and they will be bodily raised on the last day (when Jesus comes again).

Application—This is our eternal security—that Jesus is determined to do the Father’s will. And the Father’s will is that those who come to Jesus will not be cast out, will not be lost, and will be raised on the last day. So the issue is not is there anything we can do to lose our salvation. The issue is—will Jesus do the will of the Father? Answer: Yes, He will!!

**Verses 41-42**—*Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, “I am the bread that came down out of heaven.” They were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, ‘I have come down out of heaven’?”*—These are evidently local Jewish people who knew of the human family of Jesus, so they didn’t understand how Jesus could claim to come from heaven. They were complaining among themselves about Jesus.

Application—What these Jews assumed they knew to be true of Jesus (that He was the son of Joseph) kept them from hearing, i.e., understanding, the truth of what Jesus was saying. This often happens. What we think we know hardens our hearing the truth.

**Verse 43**—*Jesus answered and said to them, “Do not grumble among yourselves”*—complaining, revealing their hardened hearts to the truth of Jesus

**Verse 44**—*“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him*—In verse 37, Jesus said, *“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me.”* But now, He says the opposite is also true. *“No one can come to Me unless the Father...draws him.”* So if you are chosen, you will come to Christ. If you are NOT chosen, there is no way to come to Christ, for *there is none who seeks for God* (Romans 3:11).

—*and I will raise him up on the last day*—Again, the assurance of the future resurrection of those who come to Christ.

**Verse 45**—*“It is written in the prophets*—This teaching by Jesus, that God initiates those who come to Him, is consistent with what the OT prophets wrote. Abraham told the rich man in Hades, who wanted to go back to earth to warn his brothers, *“They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them”* (Luke 16:29).

—*‘And they shall all be taught of God’*—No one will come to Jesus unless it is initiated by God.

—*Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me*—If they really knew and believed the Scriptures and God, they would come to Jesus, as One sent from God.

**Verse 46**—*“Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father*—They learned about God from the Old Testament, yet it was a partial knowledge. They have not actually seen God. But Jesus has seen the Father. He was sent from the Father.

Application—What Jesus said did not contradict the Old Testament. But it was more than what was revealed in the Old Testament. The OT was some words from and about God, giving in different portions and different ways (Hebrews 1:1), but Jesus is from the bosom of the Father (John 1:18), the unique, one of a kind Son of God, who *became flesh and dwelt among us* (1:14).

**Verse 47**—*“Truly, truly, I say to you*—Jesus is telling the truth. Four times in this chapter (verses 26, 32, 47, and 53) Jesus says that He is telling the truth.

—*he who believes has* (present tense) *eternal life*—eternal life starts the moment you receive Jesus.

**Verses 48-49**—*“I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died*—In verse 35, He linked this statement with supplying the needs of spiritual hunger and thirst. But here, He links the bread with spiritual life itself, contrasted to eating the manna and still dying.

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

Application—Everything of the world is physical (like manna), dies, and returns to dust. Eternal life HAS to come from heaven.

**Verse 51**—“*I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever*”—MacArthur makes these observations about eating bread:

- (1) Bread is useless unless it is eaten. Belief in Jesus needs to be internalized, not just agree with Him...
- (2) Eating is prompted by hunger. It's only when one realizes they are a sinner and need Christ do they come to Him.
- (3) When one eats bread, it becomes part of their body. So when one comes to Jesus, we become one with Him.
- (4) Eating involves trust. No one eats spoiled or poisoned food. Eating demonstrates faith that the food is good for you.
- (5) Eating is personal. No one can eat for someone else. Psalm 49:7 says, *No man can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him.*

—*and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh*—Jesus now tells them that the bread is His flesh. Jesus is here predicting His death on the cross, which will provide salvation.

**Verse 52**—*Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?”*—Just like Nicodemus could not understand the new birth, and the Samaritan woman could not understand the living water, these Jews could not understand eating the flesh of Jesus.

**Verse 53**—*So 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 yourselves*—Before they didn't understand what He meant by eating His flesh, but now to drink His blood would be something forbidden in the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 17:10-14). But Jesus did not clarify His words, or soften them. Instead, He made His teaching even harder for them to accept—they had to drink His blood!!

Application—“It should be noted that the Roman Catholic Church appeals to this passage as a proof of the doctrine of transubstantiation—the false teaching that the body and blood of Christ are literally present in the bread and wine of the Mass. Catholic theologian Ludwig Ott writes, “The body and the blood of Christ together with His soul and His divinity and therefore the whole Christ are truly present in the Eucharist” (*Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* [St. Louis: B. Herder, 1954], 382). ...If that was a reference to the Lord's Table, it would mean that eternal life could be gained through taking Communion. That is clearly foreign to Scripture, however, which teaches that Communion is for those who are already believers (1 Cor. 11:27-32) and that salvation is by faith alone (Eph. 2:8-9)” [MacArthur].

**Verses 54-55**—“*He who eats [lit. “chews”] My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink*—that is, the true food and drink that gives eternal life.

**Verse 56**—“*He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides [remains] in Me, and I in him*—This is a theme John will repeat many times in this book. Receiving Jesus means you become a child of God, you receive eternal life, and you remain in Jesus, as a branch remains in the vine (John 15), with the objective of bearing fruit for God.

**Verse 57**—“*As the living Father sent Me*—Jeremiah contrasted the idols, who cannot talk and cannot walk and must be carried, to *the Lord is the true God; He is the living God...* (Jeremiah 10:10f).  
—*and I live because of the Father*—In 5:26, Jesus said, *As the Father has life in Himself, even so he gave to the Son also to have life in Himself.*  
—*so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me*—Because He lives, and when you “eat” Him, i.e., receive, embrace, grasp Him, you will also live. For example, the reason you are alive is because your mother was alive. Life produces life. Something dead or without life cannot produce life. A dead woman cannot become pregnant. Contrary to the teaching of evolution, rocks do not produce life.

**Verse 58**—“*This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever*”—The manna, although it came from God in heaven, was never a promise of eternal life. It was temporary (for 40 years), physical, had to be given each day, and was provided in spite of their rebelliousness in the wilderness. Yet, these Jews held it up as an awesome thing. But it is nothing, compared to life in Jesus, which is eternal, spiritual, continual, and based on the righteousness of Christ.

**Verse 59**—*These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum* (on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee)—The synagogue was where, outside of Jerusalem, Jewish “laymen” (meaning, non-priests) would gather to read the Scriptures and discuss theology. The synagogues developed during the Babylonian Exile, when the Temple had been destroyed, and continued throughout the inter-testament time. Any town or village, away from Jerusalem, which had ten men, could form a synagogue. Jesus used them as a place of opportunity to teach, but He did not sanction them at all. It was the Temple in Jerusalem, which was His Father’s house.

**Verse 60**—*Therefore many* (not all) *of His disciples* (someone who follows a teacher), *when they heard this said, “This is a difficult [harsh] statement; who can listen [appropriate] to it?”*—These disciples were perhaps following Jesus because of His miracles, for what they could physically get from Jesus, but they did not like what Jesus was talking about, it was too difficult or harsh. Or they were unwilling to trust Him, i.e. appropriate what He said for themselves. So they left Him.

Application—People come to Jesus with certain expectations. But when they find out what He really says, many leave. Jesus compared the hearts of people to soils. Some hear the Word, but only superficially. Others respond to the Word with joy, but it’s only temporary. When afflictions come, they abandon Jesus. Others seem to sincerely respond to the Word, yet the *deceitfulness of wealth* chokes the Word so that it does not produce fruit in their lives. The fourth good soil, hears the Word, understands it, grows and matures in the Word, and bears fruit for God (Matthew 13).

**Verse 61**—*But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, “Does this [what He said] cause you to stumble [to take offense, or to quit believing]?”*—

**Verse 62**—“*What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?*—This reference to the Ascension is one of several in the Gospel, though the act itself is not recorded in John (3:13; 8:21; 16:10; 17:11; and 20:17). If they took offense at what He said about coming **from** heaven, what will they think if they see Him ascending **to** heaven.

**Verse 63**—“*It is the Spirit who gives life*—eternal life comes from the Holy Spirit, it’s a spiritual source—*the flesh profits nothing*—eating His flesh and drinking His blood was not a physical act because physical things cannot produce spiritual results—*the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life*—Paul wrote, *Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ* (Romans 10:17).

Application—Physical acts do not produce spiritual life. But the words of Christ give us the revelation of Jesus, and when we believe the words are true, we place our faith, or commitment, in Him, and the Holy Spirit gives us spiritual life.

**Verse 64**—“*But there are some of you who do not believe*”—It wasn’t that they did not understand. They understood and rejected it. They did not embrace it (receive, believe) it as true (John 1:12). Their choice.—*For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him*—From verse 71, we know that Jesus is here referring to Judas.

Application—Just because Judas would not believe and would betray Jesus, doesn’t mean God did not use Him. Judas participated with the disciples in distributing the food Jesus provided for the 5,000 and the 4,000, he went out to preach and cast out demons. It shows that just because God uses you doesn’t mean He approves of you. God used Nebuchadnezzar in the Old Testament to bring about His judgment on Judah. God used Pilot to crucify Jesus. God will use the antichrist in the tribulation.

**Verse 65**—*And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father”*—God’s sovereignty.

**Verse 66**—*As a result of this*—of what Jesus had said, which was difficult or offensive—*many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore*—“What they wanted, He would not give; what He offered, they would not receive” (F. F. Bruce).

**Verse 67**—*So Jesus said to the twelve*—This is the first use of “the twelve” in John. Although the designation was common in the Synoptics, John did not record the calling of the twelve, and besides here and verses 70 and 71, John only used “the twelve” in 20:24.  
—“*You do not want to go away also, do you?*”—The wording expects a negative answer.

**Verses 68-69**—*Simon Peter answered Him*—Peter was often the first of the disciples to respond. His answer here is very similar to his response in Caesarea Philippi prior to the Transfiguration (Matthew 16:16).

- (1) *Lord, to whom shall we go?*—There were no other options
- (2) *You have words of eternal life*—Jesus was the only One with words about eternal life
- (3) *We (Peter assumes it’s all 12 of them) have believed [past action] and have come to know [on-going action] that You are the Holy One of God*—This shows the spiritual discernment the disciples have come to have in spending time with Jesus. *The Holy One of God* is a rare title of Jesus in the New Testament. Peter uses it again Acts 2:27 in his sermon at Pentecost and in Acts 3:14.

**Verse 70**—*Jesus answered them, “Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve*—His choice was conscious and deliberate. He was not talking about their salvation but their being chosen to be the 12.  
—*and yet one of you is a devil?*”—*diabolos* means literally “slanderer.” Used of Satan in Matthew 4:1 and Revelation 20:2

**Verse 71**—*Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot [“man of Kerioth”—a town in south Judah (Joshua 15:25)], for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him*—Jesus would later say, *The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born* (Matthew 26:24).

Application—Something interesting to think about is Judas (*a devil*) among the disciples. And Jesus did nothing to separate him from them. There are several options: (1) In the parable Jesus told about the wheat and the tares, the slaves wanted to pull the tares out of the field, but the landowner (Jesus) said, “*Allow both to grow together until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn’*” (Matthew 13:24-30). (2) John wrote, *they went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they are all not of us* (1 John 1:19). (3) “*Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump...to not associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person—not even to each with such a one*” (1 Corinthians 5:6-13). So the options are: let them stay—they leave on their own accord—throw them out. PRAY FOR WISDOM!!



## John 7

**Verse 1**—*After these things*—chapter 6 (verse 4) took place near Passover in April, and now it is the Feast of Booths in October (7:2), so it's some six months later.

—*Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him*—hostility to Jesus was growing, but it was not in God's timing yet for Jesus to die, so He stayed in the Galilee area for this six months.

**Verse 2**—*Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near*—“The Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) was celebrated in the autumn “on the fifteenth day of the seventh month” (Leviticus 23:34), which would compare roughly to the second week of October in our calendar. It began five days after the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) and lasted eight days (Leviticus 23:33-36; Deuteronomy 16:13-17). Each family constructed its own temporary shelter of branches to live in for the period of the feast. This typified the years of wandering in the desert before the people entered the Promised Land. The feast was joyful in character and was a time of thanksgiving for the harvest that marked the transition from nomadic poverty to stable affluence in their own land. It was one of the three annual feasts at which attendance was required of all Jewish men (Deuteronomy 16:16)” [EBC].

**Verse 3**—*Therefore His brothers* [half-brothers, sons of Joseph and Mary (Matthew 13:55), born after Jesus] *said to Him, “Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing*—The real test for Jesus, according to the brothers, would be in the Jewish religious capital of Jerusalem, not in Galilee.

**Verse 4**—*For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly*— They mistakenly thought that Jesus wanted publicity, and at the feast in Jerusalem, He would find that publicity. Jews gathered there from all over. If you want to be known, then don't just do things in “secret.”

—*If You do these things, show Yourself to the world*—Almost mocking Jesus, challenging Him, **if** He was as He claimed, then show His miracles in Jerusalem and to the “world.”

**Verse 5**—*For not even His brothers were believing in Him*—which explains their attitude toward Jesus. Earlier in His ministry, their unbelief led them to think He had lost His mind (Mark 3:21, 31-34). They did not believe in Jesus until He appeared to them after His resurrection (Acts 1:14; 1 Corinthians 15:7).

**Verse 6**—*So Jesus said to them, “My time is not yet here*—Jesus would not respond to the pressure of His family. He said a similar thing to Mary in Cana (John 2:4). They were looking for opportunities. But Jesus was living according to the timetable of the Father.

—*but your time is always opportune*—“In this respect the brothers joined with the world. Since the world (and the brothers) have cut themselves off from the divinely appointed ‘time,’ all times are alike to them” (Morris). And since they were of the world, they could come and go in Jerusalem and no one would care.

**Verse 7**—*“The world cannot hate you*—because they were of the world, and the world loves its own (John 15:19).

—*but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil*—Jesus called their religious deeds evil, so they hated Him.

**Verse 8**—*“Go up* [in the hills, though south in direction] *to the feast yourselves*—i.e., without Jesus —*I do not go up to this feast* [i.e., publicly] *because My time has not yet fully come*—Some manuscripts add “not yet” to eliminate the tension between this and verse 10. However, the contrast is to go to Jerusalem publicly with His brothers vs. in secret, as He did do.

**Verse 9**—*Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee, i.e., He did not accompany the public caravan of the brothers and other Jews going to the feast (see Luke 2:44).*

**Verse 10**—*But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret*—It seems that Jesus arrived in the middle of the feast (v. 14), so by then, the roads would have been relatively empty. Also, some scholars think His journey through Samaria in Luke 9:51-56 took place at this time, which few Jews were willing to do. So this would also allow Jesus to avoid publicity.

**Verse 11**—*So the Jews [“Jewish authorities”] were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, “Where is He?”*—Jesus was correct that the Jewish authorities hated Him and were looking for Him to kill Him (John 5:18).

**Verse 12**—*There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, “He is a good man”*—This is wrong. A good man would not claim to be God.  
—*others were saying, “No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray”*—This is also wrong. Someone who did the miracles Jesus did would not lead people astray.

**Verse 13**—*Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews [authorities]*—They did not know what the authorities had declared about Jesus, so they were afraid to speak openly of Jesus. The consequences of doing that would be severe, including being cast out of the synagogue (John 9:22; 16:2), which would cut a person off from all of Jewish life and family.

**Verse 14**—*But when it was now the midst [lit. “in the middle of”] of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and began to teach*—He didn’t come publicly, or doing miracles.

**Verse 15**—*The Jews then were astonished, saying, “How has this man become learned, having never been educated?”*—It’s interesting that they did not challenge what Jesus said, but His authority or education. They couldn’t believe His teaching when He had not been to their rabbinical schools, etc.

**Verse 16**—*So Jesus answered them and said, “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me*—The other option—Jesus was teaching was from God who sent Him. In 12:49–50 He added, *“For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”*

**Verse 17**—*“If anyone is willing to do His will—i.e., the one who truly seeks God—he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself*—The teaching of Jesus, being directly from God, was radically different from that of the rabbis, whose teaching authority was from other rabbis. Matthew 7:28-29 says, *the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.*

**Verse 18**—Two signs of a false teacher:

(1) *He who speaks from himself*—The Apostle Paul characterized false teachers as *slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites* (Romans 16:18), *whose god is their appetite* (Philippians 3:19), *who suppose that godliness is a means of gain* (1 Timothy 6:5), and who are guilty of *teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain* (Titus 1:11). Peter warned that they greedily exploit people (2 Peter 2:3; cf. Acts 8:18–19), because they have *a heart trained in greed, ...having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness* (2 Peter 2:14–15; Jude 11). It reminds me of what God said about the false prophets: *“The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds”* (Jeremiah 14:14).

(2) *seeks his own glory*—Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees as those who *do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men* (Matthew 23:5–7), and *for appearance’s sake offer long prayers* (Luke 20:47). False teachers are *those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh* (Galatians 6:12) and *boast according to the flesh* (2 Corinthians 11:18). Like Diotrefes, they love the place of prominence (3 John 9).

—*but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him*—If Jesus was seeking His own glory, He would have arrived with the entourage at the beginning of the feast. It is not surprising that the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus, who sought God’s glory, since they were those who *receive[d] glory from one another and... [did] not seek the glory that is from the one and only God* (John 5:44).

**Verse 19**—“*Did not Moses give you the Law*—Of course, they would say, “YES!”

—*and yet none of you carries out the Law?*—No one could obey the Law, even today. That’s one reason they came up with rabbinical interpretation of the Law. They could keep that, and feel righteous. But the Law of Moses was made to reveal sin, not to save. The Jews had perverted it to be the means of salvation. —*Why do you seek to kill Me?*”—But they were so far from understanding the Law’s purpose that they rejected the only One who could deliver them from the Law’s condemnation and sought to kill Him.

**Verse 20**—*The crowd answered, “You have a demon!*—It’s interesting that the only allusions in John to demonic activity are accusations made against Jesus (8:48-52; 10:20). Miracles of healing demoniacs are not mentioned in this Gospel.

—*Who seeks to kill You?*”—They are perhaps ignorant of the plan of the leaders to kill Jesus (5:18).

**Verse 21**—*Jesus answered them, “I did one deed, and you all marvel*—Jesus was referring to His healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, which He had performed in Jerusalem at His last visit (5:1-18). Instead of responding in belief, they plotted to kill Him (5:18).

**Verse 22**—“*For this reason Moses has given you circumcision*—Moses gave Israel circumcision in the sense of establishing it as part of the Levitical system. Under the Mosaic Law, *On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised*” (Leviticus 12:3).

—*(not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers)*—Circumcision is a religious rite that predated Moses. Abraham circumcised as a sign of the covenant (Genesis 17:9-14).

—*and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man*—If that eighth day fell on a Sabbath, circumcising a boy would seemingly violate the Sabbath Law of rest. Yet the Jews circumcised on the Sabbath.

**Verse 23**—“*If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken*—purifying one part of the body. They themselves were making an exception in this case.

—*are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath?*—making the whole body well was greater than just one part (in circumcision). Jesus was showing good can be done on the Sabbath.

The Rabbis counted 248 parts to a man’s body. In the Talmud (*b. Yoma* 85b) R. Eleazar ben Azariah (ca. a.d. 100) states: “If circumcision, which attaches to one only of the 248 members of the human body, suspends the Sabbath, how much more shall the saving of the whole body suspend the Sabbath?” So absolutely binding did rabbinic Judaism regard the command of Lev 12:3 to circumcise on the eighth day, that in the Mishnah *m. Shabbat* 18.3; 19.1, 2; and *m. Nedarim* 3.11 all hold that the command to circumcise overrides the command to observe the Sabbath (NET).

**Verse 24**—“*Do not judge according to appearance*—a superficial judgment—what “looks” right —*but judge with righteous judgment*”—according to morality and a theological discernment!!!

**Verse 25**—*So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill?”—Yes. The people are confused.*

**Verse 26**—*“Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him—If Jesus is a deceiver, He should be arrested. If He told the truth, He should be followed. But the leaders say nothing. —The rulers do not really know that this is the Christ, do they?—i.e., the Messiah*

**Verse 27**—*“However, we know where this man is from—They thought Jesus was from Nazareth (1:45–46; 6:42; Matthew 21:11) where He had been raised (Luke 4:16). Apparently, they did not know that He had actually been born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1). —but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from”*—This misunderstanding added to their confusion. They evidently were unfamiliar with the Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah’s birth.

**Verse 28**—*Then Jesus cried out in the temple—a loud announcement —teaching and saying, “You both know Me and know where I am from—do you? They thought they knew. —and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true—But they did not really know where He was from. He was sent from the Father. —whom you do not know—“their preoccupation with the minutiae of self-righteous legalism, along with their devotion to the rabbinic traditions, had blinded them to the true knowledge of God” (MacArthur).*

**Verse 29**—*“I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me—However, Jesus does know the Father because He was with the Father and sent from the Father (John 1:1, 14, 18).*

**Verse 30**—*So they were seeking to seize Him—This seemed a spontaneous reaction of some of the crowd to what they considered to be blasphemy. —and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come—The sovereign timing of the death of Jesus would take place exactly at the hour chosen by God. And not a minute sooner.*

**Verse 31**—*But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, “When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?”—This also added to the confusion. Would the Messiah perform more miracles or greater miracles than Jesus performed? They didn’t think so.*

**Verse 32**—*The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests (Saducees) and the Pharisees (laymen rabbis) sent officers (Levites were policed the temple area) to seize Him—These two theological groups of men, normally rivals, joined forces to arrest Jesus.*

**Verse 33**—*Therefore Jesus said, “For a little while longer I am with you—His crucifixion was about 6 months away. Though it would be determined by the plan of God, not the desires of the Sanhedrin. —then I go to Him who sent Me—He will return to heaven, to the Father.*

**Verse 34**—*“You will seek Me, and will not find Me—it will be too late. The opportunity to believe gone. —and where I am, you cannot come”—Unbelievers cannot go to heaven, where Jesus is.*

**Verse 35**—*The Jews then said to one another, “Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him?—They were of the earth and could only think in earthly terms. —He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks [non-Jews], and teach the Greeks, is He?—Of course, John is writing after the ascension and the missionary journeys of Paul, and in fact, the message of Christ was sent out and taught to the non-Jews. Of course, these Jews did not know that would happen, but it was, indeed, the intention of Jesus.*

**Verse 36**—“*What is this statement that He said, ‘You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come?’*”—They were scoffing at Jesus’ statement. Where could He go that they could not find Him? He wasn’t going out of Judah to the non-Jews, was He?

**Verse 37**—*Now on the last day, the great day of the feast*—“The celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles included a daily procession of priests from the temple to the Pool of Siloam, from which they drew water that was poured out as a libation at the altar. This was accompanied by the recital of Isaiah 12:3: “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation” (EBC). This was the ceremonial water they were drinking at the feast, which represented the water from the rock, which God provided the Israelites during their wilderness wandering. This provided the context for His next words.

—*Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty—a person has to recognize his or her spiritual thirst (a strong desire, craving, longing, need)*

—*let him come to Me*—Jesus is the source of the living water, but not all who come to Him are willing to drink (such as the rich young ruler in Mark 10:17).

—*and drink*—Jesus was offering Himself as an eternal living water compared to the ceremonial water they got over and over each day.

Application—It seems to me that suffering and other events come into our life to create in us a thirst for God.

**Verse 38**—“*He who believes in Me—i.e., receives Jesus (John 1:12).*

—*as the Scripture said*—This is not a quote but what is taught in passages like Isaiah 58:11; Psalm 78:15-16.

—*‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water’*”—In John 14:17, Jesus said, “...*the Spirit of truth...abides with you, and will be in you.*” The one who comes to Jesus, as the source of the living water, will be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and God Himself, in your innermost being, will be non-stop, flowing rivers, of life-giving, living spiritual water.

**Verse 39**—*But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified*—Jesus went on to say, “*It is to your advantage that I go away [leave the earth and go to heaven]; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you... He shall glorify Me...*” (John 16:5-15). “...*the Helper, the Holy Spirit, ...will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you*” (John 14:26).

Application—Jesus, in a localized human body, had the Spirit of God. Remember at His baptism, the Holy Spirit came and stayed on Him. It often says He did miracles in the power of the Spirit. When Jesus was with the disciples, the Spirit was **with** the disciples. (I’m not saying that this was the only thing the Spirit did at that time. This was one of the things.) When Jesus ascended into heaven, He sent the Spirit to then live **in** the believers.

—One thing the Holy Spirit did was to *teach you and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you*—this was the writing of the gospels by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (2 Peter 1:21).

—The Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ, not himself. The charismatics today who glorify the Holy Spirit seem to not really be of the Spirit because He is not bringing glory to Himself.

**Verse 40**—*Some of the [“common”] people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, “This certainly is the Prophet”*—probably they thought of Him in reference to the Prophet about which Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 18:15-18.

**Verses 41-42**—*Others were saying, “This is the Christ”*—i.e., the “Messiah”

—*Still others were saying, “Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? [i.e., from the common people, especially the more religiously liberal northern Jews]. Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David [2 Samuel 7:12], and from Bethlehem, the village where David was [Micah 5:2]?”*—It’s interesting they knew the prophecy, yet they didn’t investigate to see if Jesus was born in Bethlehem. “The very passage that convinced His critics that He could not be the Messiah was one of the strongest to prove that He was” (EBC).

Application—Think of how many people today know something about Jesus but don't even attempt to investigate the claims and evidence regarding Jesus.

*Verse 43*—*So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him.* Twice again, later, the Jews were divided over Jesus (9:16; 10:19-21). In Luke 12:51-52, Jesus said, “*Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division...*” [So much for those who say, “Jesus came to bring peace...”]

*Verse 44*—*Some of them* [namely, the religious leaders] *wanted to seize* [“arrest”] *Him, but no one laid hands on Him*—because many in the crowd looked with favor on Jesus, and they often did not arrest Jesus because they didn't want a riot (Mark 14:2). However, we know *they were seeking therefore to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come* (John 7:30). When He was finally arrested, it was because “*...the hour is at hand*” (Matthew 26:45). The crucifixion was according to the Father's timetable—the Passover Lamb had to be sacrificed on Passover.

*Verse 45*—*The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them*—“The two groups were strongly opposed to each other in doctrine (Acts 23:7). In spite of their differences, their common animosity toward Jesus induced them to combine for action against Him” (EBC). —“*Why did you not bring Him?*” Verse 32 told us that the *chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.*

*Verse 46*—*The officers answered, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks”*—Even these guards were impressed with the words of Jesus. Whereas the crowd was divided on Jesus, these guards seem confused. They could have used the “riot” excuse, but instead, “Caught between the power and grace of His message and the hatred of their leaders, they were paralyzed into inactivity” (MacArthur).

*Verse 47*—*The Pharisees then answered them, “You have not **also** been led astray, have you?”*—their view was that the officers were religiously ignorant and easily led astray, like the crowds were.

*Verse 48*—“*No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he?*”—“The religious snobbishness of the rulers was revealed in their contemptuous dismissal of the guards' testimony. They assumed that nobody could be right except themselves. If they did not believe in Jesus, He must be unreliable and His claims must be fraudulent. They regarded the mass of the people as ignorant of the law and consequently incapable of any intelligent faith” (EBC).

*Verse 49*—“*But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed*”—“The Pharisees viewed themselves as the spiritual elite; men who were above the possibility of being wrong about religious matters. In their minds, only those who were gullible, uneducated, and simple-minded could be deceived by Jesus' claims. Such people were **accursed**, according to the Pharisaic perspective, for their ignorance of God's law” (MacArthur).

*Verses 50-51*—*Nicodemus (he who came to Him before [John 3], being one of them [Pharisees]) said to them, “Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?”*—While Nicodemus did not defend Jesus (a useless argument in light of their prejudice), he instead appealed to their law—that Jesus has the right to a fair hearing before them. They should not be hasty.

*Verse 52*—*They answered him, “You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee.”* The Sanhedrin accused Nicodemus of being as ignorant as the Galileans. They claimed a messianic Prophet cannot be a Galilean (see verse 41). So they demonstrated they were going with their prejudiced judgment rather than a fair, reasonable judgment (that would have included the fact that Jesus was born in Bethlehem). But they don't want to know the truth—they were all about their own positions of authority (John 11:48).

## Chapter 8

7:53—[Everyone went to his home

8:1-11—But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court, they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. “Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?” They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court. Straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.”]

The “Bible Knowledge Commentary” poses five questions to answer about 7:53–8:11:

1. Is it Scripture? The consensus of New Testament textual scholars is that this section was **not** part of the original text. The earliest manuscripts we have now do not have these verses in them. Those that do include them, often mark them with asterisks or obeli (a mark in ancient texts to mean the passage is doubtful). The NASB has brackets and a side note to this effect.
2. Was it written by John? Both the textual evidence and stylistic data in the passage indicate that this is non-Johannine material.
3. Is it ancient and true, that is, historical? Most commentators answer yes. **If** this judgment is correct, then this is a rare extrabiblical authentic tradition about Jesus.
4. Is it canonical (inspired by God)? For Protestants, the answer to #1 means it is not part of the canon of Scripture. However, for Roman Catholic scholars, canonicity means that this passage is authoritative because it is in the Vulgate (Catholic Bible). So even though the passage may not have been part of John’s original manuscript, Catholics nevertheless accept the passage as having God’s authority because the Vulgate includes it.
5. If it was not originally part of John’s Gospel, why is the material placed before 8:12 in most English Bible versions? Because the contents of this section relate well to two statements of Jesus in chapter 8 (“I pass judgment on no one” [8:15], and “Can any of you prove Me guilty of sin?” [8:46]). However, various ancient Greek manuscripts that include the passage put it in five different locations (after John 7:36, after 7:44, after 7:52, after 21:25, and after Luke 21:38).

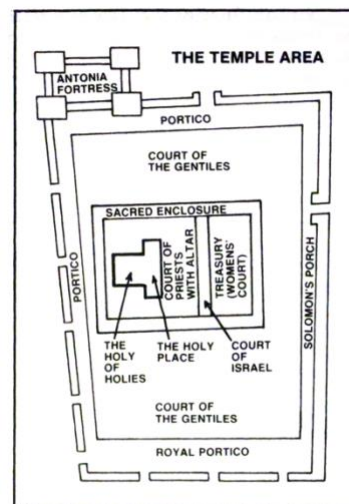
Application—This is one of the most quoted verses, “He who is without sin...let him be the first to throw a stone.” Yet, that is not a biblical idea. There is no biblical evidence that Jesus ever said that. It seems to me to be exactly the opposite of what the Bible says. Sin is sin. What difference does my sin make to someone else’s sin? My sin doesn’t make the other person’s sin more or less sinful or needing or not needing judgment (1 Corinthians 5). If the person is a believer who is living a sinful behavior (say, having an affair), we are to confront them. Of course, I have sin in my life, but that has nothing to do with their sin. It seems like a distortion of Scripture so that we’ll do nothing about someone else’s sinful behavior.

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*Verse 12—Then Jesus again spoke to them—*The last time Jesus spoke in the narrative was in 7:38, where He was speaking to a crowd in the temple area. Now He is resuming that speech.

— “Another major feature of the Feast of Tabernacles [in addition to the water of 7:37] was the lighting of giant lamps in the women’s court in the temple (see the sketch). The wicks were made from the priests’ worn-out garments. The light illuminated the temple area and the people gathered to sing praises and dance. The light reminded the Jewish people of how God was with them in their wanderings in the wilderness in a pillar of cloud which turned to fire at night (Num. 9:15-23)”—BKC

—saying, “I am the [one and only] *Light of the world* [not just the Jews]—



This is the second “I AM” statements of the book. Jesus already said, “*I am the bread of life*” (6:35)—*he who follows Me* (to receive, believe, obey, conform to, abide by):

**(1)** *will not* [lit. *never*—double negative in Greek, for emphasis] *walk in the darkness*—People have to choose which side they are on. If they choose to follow Jesus, they will not walk (live) in darkness, i.e., in ignorance and evil (read Ephesians 2:1-10). If they choose to not follow Jesus, they will walk (live) in the darkness, they *are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart* (Ephesians 4:18).

**(2)** *but will have the Light of life*. Reminding us of John 1:4-5—*In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness did not overcome it.*” “Jesus professed to be not only the inexhaustible source of spiritual nourishment [*I am the bread of life* (John 6:35)], but He also was the genuine light by which truth and falsehood could be distinguished and by which direction could be established” (EBC).

—“This sets up the contrast in chap. 9 between the man born blind, who receives both physical and spiritual sight, and the Pharisees (John 9:13, 15, 16) who have physical sight but remain in spiritual darkness” (NET).

**Verse 13**—*So the Pharisees said to Him, “You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not valid [legal]”*—Obviously, if a person is telling the truth, that testimony IS valid. The Mosaic Law, however, required two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15; John 8:17).

**Verse 14**—*Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true (valid)—for I know where I came from and where I am going—*As people, we don’t know that. But as God, Jesus did know that. He is the only One who could testify that about Himself. He knew His origin and destiny. —*but you do not know where I come from or where I am going—*The Pharisees thought they knew where Jesus came from. He was a Galilean. His parents were Mary and Joseph. They did not know (believe) He was God. But Jesus was not measurable by human standards, i.e., ordinary human categories for measuring personality.

Application—It’s an interesting observation. No person can be sure of their own origin apart from some external testimony. Even then, is it true? And, of course, no one can be sure of their future circumstances. Jesus, however, knew both those things about Himself. And Jesus is the only One who existed BEFORE He was born as a human.

**Verse 15**—*“You judge according to the flesh—*They were not qualified to judge Jesus because they judged by human standards. They were limited by superficial appearances, which are biased. Their judgment, as humans, was to condemn people for “violating” their law.

—*I am not judging anyone—*Either He means that (1) He does not judge according to the flesh, like they do, or (2) Jesus came to save, not judge (John 3:17). He did not come to condemn people to eternal punishment. They were already condemned. He came to save the few who would receive Him.

**Verse 16**—*“But even if I do judge, My judgment is true (valid) for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me—*Jesus judges with Divine authority. No human can do that. That makes Him equal to God.

Application—But one day, Jesus will judge. As we learned in 5:22, *For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son*” (see also Revelation 20:11-15).

**Verse 17**—*“Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true (valid)—*Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15

**Verse 18**—Jesus’ two witnesses: (1) *I am He who testifies about Myself, and (2) the Father who sent Me testifies about Me*—by His authenticating miracles.

**Verse 19**—*So they were saying to Him, “Where is Your Father?”—*perhaps they wanted to question him

—Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also”—Their rejection of Jesus showed their ignorance of God.

Application—Jesus and God are inseparable. What a person thinks of Jesus is what they actually believe about God.

**Verse 20**—*These words He spoke in the treasury as He taught in the temple*—the *treasury* probably refers to the receptacles for the contributions going to the treasury. They were in the forecourt by the Court of Women, used to collect freewill offerings (Mark 12:41; Luke 21:1) [NET Notes]

—*and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come*—As John repeatedly pointed out, Jesus acted according to God’s timetable (2:4; 7:6, 30; 12:23, 27; 31:1). In that sense, He was protected. But that John here says *no one seized Him* shows that they wanted to do so. The night of His arrest, Jesus said, “*the hour has come*” (17:1).

**Verse 21**—*Then He said again to them, “I go away, and you will seek Me*—Jesus told the crowd the same thing. “*For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him sent Me. You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come*” (7:33-34). Of course, He was referring to His own death, resurrection, and ascension back to heaven and His Father.

—*and will die in your sin [of unbelief]*—In 3:36, Jesus had said, “*...he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*” Eternal death is a consequence of their sin. Physical death is just the beginning of their eternal spiritual death and separation from God.

—*where I am going [heaven, in the presence of the Father], you cannot come*”—Jesus is the only way to God and heaven (v. 24; 14:6). If they don’t believe Jesus is God, they cannot get to heaven.

**Verse 22**—*So the Jews were saying, “Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?* The first-century Jewish historian Josephus wrote, “The souls of those whose hands have acted madly against themselves are received by the darkest place in Hades” (*The Wars of the Jews*, iii. viii. 5). The Jewish leaders assumed they were going to heaven, so Jesus, if He kills Himself, would go to the darkest hell. Therefore, they would not be going where they think He’s going.

**Verse 23**—*And He was saying to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.* But Jesus contradicts them. Actually, He is going above, to His Father in heaven, and the Jewish leaders are the ones going to hell because of their unbelief.

Application—This world is actually *from below*, i.e., alienated from God and subject to the *ruler of this world* (12:31; 16:11).

**Verse 24**—“*Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.*” An insurmountable barrier separated them—unbelief (v. 23). The attitude of unbelief is not simply unwillingness to accept a statement of fact, it is resistance to the revelation of God in Christ. Not only did they deny His claims, they completely rejected His person, who He claimed to be—the Messiah, God’s Son. There are only two options: belief in Jesus or die in your sins.

—Some translate the words as *unless you believe that I AM*—referring to God’s eternal name from Ex. 3:14.

**Verse 25**—*So they were saying to Him, “Who are You?” Jesus said to them, “What have I been saying to you from the beginning?”*—Jesus has not tried to hide anything. He has had a consistent message from the beginning of His ministry. It was their hardened hearts, not the lack of revelation, which was the problem.

Application—Romans 1:19-23 says, *...that which is known about God is evident within them, for since the creation of the world His invisible attributes...have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse...they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image... No one can say they did not have revelation from God. It’s their unbelief and hardened hearts that make them not believe that revelation. ...they are without excuse...*

**Verse 26**—“*I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you—Jesus could have said many things in judgment of these Jews — but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world*”—But He spoke only what the Father wanted Him to speak.

**Verse 27**—*They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father*—how could Jesus say it any clearer? But it was their unbelief and hardened heart that kept them from understanding.

**Verse 28**—*So Jesus said, “When you [He is crucified by these Jews] lift up the Son of Man—The cross was compared to when Moses lifted up the serpent so the Israelites would not die (John 3:14).*

*—then you will know—possibly referring to the Gospel as spread by the church after the crucifixion.*

*—that I AM [He]—same words used in verses 24, 28, 58—God’s memorial name (from Exodus 3:14). The self-existent eternal being.*

*— and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me—Although Jesus is God, He was taught things by the Father, and, for example, speaking of the Second Coming, Jesus said, “of that day and hour no one knows, ...not the Son, but the Father alone” (Matthew 24:36). Hebrews 5:8 says, Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered (such as His prayer in Gethsemane the night He was betrayed).*

**Verse 29**—“*And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him*”—Christ’s life of holiness and complete obedience to the Father is contrasted in the next paragraph, where Jesus speaks of the devil as the father of these Jews.

**Verse 30**—*As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him*—In light of the next verses, it seems that this was a superficial belief. In verse 31, Jesus said, “*If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine*” and in verse 37 we learn “*...My word has no place in you.*”

**Verse 31**—*So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him*—this superficial belief

*—“If you continue in My word—a determination to live in the Word of Christ—i.e. listening to it, reflecting on it, holding fast to it, and obeying it. In the parable of the soils, Jesus said, “the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the Word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance” (Luke 8:15). Peter wrote, long for the pure milk of the Word, that by it you may grow (1 Peter 2:2; see also Hebrews 4:12).*

*—then you are truly disciples of Mine—Jesus also said, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you...you prove to be My disciples” (John 15:7-8). Agreeing with something Jesus said is different than following Jesus (being a disciple).*

Application—A person can **say** they believe in Christ, like these Jews did, but the litmus test is: what are they doing with the Word of God? Do they read it? Do they cling to it? Do they love it? Do they obey it? That’s what **proves** you are a true follower of Christ.

**Verse 32**—*and you will know the truth*—Jesus later said, *Thy Word is truth* (John 17:17). But today, many people do not believe in absolute truth. Also, Emergents say God’s Word becomes true to you as you read it. Jesus Himself said He was the truth (John 14:6). Whether people believe it or not—both Jesus and God’s Word are the truth.

*—and the truth will make you free*—In the context of people as *the slave of sin* in verse 34, here Jesus must be talking about the Bible making you spiritually free from the slavery to sin and its effects, not a racial or religious or political freedom.

**Verse 33**—*They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone*—that’s an amazing statement—what about the Egyptian bondage? What about the times of the

judges when they were enslaved to various people? What about the Babylonian Captivity? What about their current situation under the control of the Romans?

—*how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?*—If you don't see yourself as a slave to sin, you will not desire to become free.

**Verse 34**—*Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. —commits* in Greek is a repeated, continuous action, one whose lifestyle is characterized by repeated, continuous sin (NET).

—Here, the sin is the continuing refusal of the Jewish leaders to acknowledge that Jesus is God, in spite of the mounting evidence of miracle after miracle.

Application—Individual sins can possibly be overcome. But the attitude and habit of sin enslaves because every act of disobedience to God creates an atmosphere of alienation and a trend to further disobedience that inevitably makes escape impossible. Take food, as an example. If I occasionally eat a cookie, that can be overcome. But if I have a trend of eating cookies, the more I do it, the more impossible it becomes to escape it. [Of course, ultimately food can be overcome. Sin is what your sin nature does. It enslaves you. You can only be freed through belief in Jesus.]

**Verse 35**—*"The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever—*Slavery is external. A slave can be sold at any time. But the son is an inward condition. A son ever remains a son with inheritance rights. As such, the son can make the slave free.

**Verse 36**—*"So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed—*As the Son of God the Father, Jesus offers the slaves a new relation to God. Slaves redeemed into that relationship really know freedom. Real freedom is not in the ancestry of Abraham but in belief in Christ.

**Verse 37**—*"I know that you are Abraham's descendants—*The second-century Christian apologist Justin Martyr said to his Jewish opponent: "They [the Jewish teachers] beguile themselves and you, supposing that the everlasting kingdom will be assuredly given to those of the dispersion who are of Abraham after the flesh, although they be sinners, and faithless, and disobedient towards God" (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 140). —*yet you seek to kill Me—*Abraham's true Son (Romans 2:28-29; 9:6, 8; Galatians 3:29). —*because My word has no place* [lit. "to advance" or "to make progress" or "to go forward"] *in you.*

Application—*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart* (Hebrews 4:12).

**Verse 38**—*"I speak the things which I have seen with My Father—*Jesus had been in the bosom of God the Father (1:18). What Jesus said and did proved God was His Father.

—*therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father—*At this point, they think Abraham is their father (v. 39), but Jesus will soon tell them that it is the devil who is their father (v. 44). What these Jews said and did proved that the devil is their father.

**Verse 39**—*They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father"—*In verse 37, they said they were descendants of Abraham, but here they say that Abraham is their father, i.e., that they believe and do what their father did.

—*Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham"—*Jesus denies this. They are not doing the deeds of Abraham. Abraham was a man of faith (Genesis 15:6). Romans 4 shows that Abraham was saved by faith, and not by works of circumcision or the Law. See Galatians 3:6-14, too. But in contrast to Abraham, these Jews were trying to earn favor with God by their own good works. Because they have different *deeds*, they must have different fathers.

**Verse 30**—*"But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God—*They are murderers, seeking to kill someone who is telling them the truth—God's truth.

—*this Abraham did not do*—This is emphatic in Greek. He murdered no one!! He never tried to kill God’s messenger!!

**Verse 41**—“*You are doing the deeds of your father*”—They are wrong about **who** their father was. He was neither Abraham or God, but Satan (v. 44).

—*They said to Him, “We were not born of fornication*—They insist they are not illegitimate children. They insist that their relationship with God is secure because of their descent from Abraham, the man with whom God made His covenant. “From Origen on it has been thought that “*we are not born of fornication*” is a counterattack on Jesus, whose birth was suspicious, and so assumed to be “of fornication” (so the opponent of Christianity, Celsus, in Origen’s *Contra Celsum*, 1.28)” [WBC]. It is also a widely held view today.

—*we have one Father: God*”—It’s true that God was the Father of all Israel in a national sense, but spiritually speaking, He was the Father only of those who had truly come to saving faith.

**Verse 42**—*Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father [implying He is not], you would love Me*—see 5:23; 15:23. Love is a family thing. If they really did love God, they would have loved God’s precious Son. —*for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me—He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him (5:23)*. Later Jesus said, *He who hates Me hates My Father also (15:23)*. You cannot separate God the Father from God the Son. You either believe/love both or you hate both.

Application—If someone does claim to love God but not Jesus, then they are defining God differently than the Bible does. For example, many say that Muslims’ god Allah is the same as our God. NO!! Allah is nothing like God as described in the Bible (and Jesus of the Koran is nothing like Jesus described in the Bible). Which is true? You can’t have both. There is no “Chrislam!!”

**Verse 43**—“*Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word*—because of their unbelief, because they are like their father, the devil. They cannot hear and understand God’s Word. It’s like Jesus is talking to someone who is deaf. Paul wrote, *...the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4)*. The unbelieving are both deaf and blind to the truth of God.

**Verse 44**—“*You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father*—Just as Jesus wants to do the desires of God His Father, so these Jews want to do the desires of their father—the devil. —*He was a murderer from the beginning*—He told Eve she would not die if she ate the fruit, knowing very well that she would die. He murdered her and the human race. —*and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies*—he deceives people (2 Corinthians 4:4) by cleverly *disguising himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14)*. He rejects the truth and gets people to turn aside to myths (2 Timothy 4:3-4). He is scheming (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:11). He prowls *around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8)*.

Application—Satan’s goal is to spiritually kill people, and he uses lies to do that. And the most damaging lies are those closest to the truth, that distort the truth, because that is the most deceptive.

**Verse 45**—“*But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me*—“Jesus told the Jews that because they were children of their father, they didn’t know what truth was. They lived in a world of lies, distortion, and falseness. In a sense, truth was a foreign language to them; their native language was lies” (EBC).

**Verse 46**—“*Which one of you convicts [more than an accusation, it is a conviction on the basis of evidence] Me of sin?*—Jesus *knew no sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22)*. Even at His trial, Pilate said, “*I find no guilt in Him*” (John 18:38). If Jesus had not been sinless, then someone in the hostile crowd would eagerly have charged him with at least one sin.

—*If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?*—If He was not guilty of sin, He must be speaking the truth. So what grounds did they have for rejecting Him?

**Verse 47**—*“He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God”*—It’s logical. They claimed to be of God, but they didn’t hear the words of God that Jesus spoke, therefore, they actually were not of God.

**Verse 48**—*The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan*—The Samaritans were a mixed race—part Jew and held many beliefs of the Jews, such as the Pentateuch. They also claimed Abraham as their father. But the Jews did not accept that. They were the “true” descendants of Abraham. The hatred of the Samaritans grew during the inter-testament time, so that by the time of Jesus, the Jews avoided any dealing with the Samaritans (John 4:9), and the Samaritans denied any hospitality to the Jews if they did travel through their region (Luke 9:51-53). To accuse Jesus of being a Samaritan was to label Him as a false teacher and a traitor to Israel—an enemy of God.

—*and have a demon?*”—John wrote that three times Jesus was accused of having a demon (7:20; 8:52; 10:20). Essentially, this meant they thought Jesus was crazy and controlled by evil.

Application—It’s interesting that the Jews could not refute Jesus’ arguments, so they resorted to calling Him names!!

**Verse 49**—*Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon—Jesus while being reviled, He did not revile in return (1 Peter 2:23).*

—*but I honor My Father*—Obviously, no demon-possessed person could honor God

—*and you dishonor Me*—and, therefore, they also dishonor the very God they claimed as their Father

**Verse 50**—*“But I do not seek My glory*—Unlike the Jewish leaders, who were constantly seeking their own glory (Matthew 6:2, 5; 23:5), the purpose of Jesus was to bring glory to the Father, not Himself.

—*there is One who seeks*—honor for His Son—the Father (v. 54; Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Philippians 2:9-11).

—*and judges*—The Father is the final judge of both the Son and these Jewish leaders.

**Verse 51**—*“Truly, truly, I say to you*—again, Jesus affirming that He was telling the truth, as God Himself —*if anyone keeps My word*—i.e., hold to His teaching (5:24; 8:31)

—*he will never [Gk. emphatic!!] see death*”—i.e., he will not be eternally separated from God (3:16; 11:25) because they have already passed from death to life (5:24). Even with their rejection and insults, Jesus still gives them the opportunity to believe and have eternal life.

**Verse 52**—*“The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon*—i.e. that He is crazy

—*Abraham died, and the prophets also*—they think Jesus is speaking only of physical death. And it’s obvious that Abraham and the prophets physically died. But their first premise was wrong—therefore, their conclusion was wrong. Jesus was not speaking of physical death.

—*and [Yet] You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never [Gk. emphatic!!] taste [lit. come to know] of death’*—Jesus was an obscure Galilean. How could He possibly have the power over life and death. The great Abraham and the prophets didn’t.

**Verse 53**—*“Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too*—This assumes a negative answer. But of course, Jesus was greater than both Abraham and the prophets.

—*whom do You make Yourself out to be?*”—They were sure only a demon-possessed person could make such an outlandish claim.

**Verse 54**—*Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’*—The claims of Jesus were not demonic or crazy or evil but divine. It’s His eternal relation to His Father—the very One of whom the Jewish leaders said, “He is our God.” The Father

glorified the Son, both in His statements at Christ's baptism and at His Transfiguration. And He glorifies the Son in the miracles of supernatural power that Christ performed. None of the Jewish leaders had any of that. Their relation to God was formal, as defined by their (mostly) man-made laws. The relation of Jesus to God was that of a Son to a Father.

**Verse 55**—*and you have not come to know Him*— Reminding us of Christ's statement in Matthew 7:22-23—*"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me...'"*

Application—All religions (including these Jews) define their relationship to "God" as what they do. Christianity in the Bible is the only one that describes our "religion" as a relationship—knowing God and Jesus Christ, whom He sent.

—*but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you*—Jesus is speaking the truth about His relationship to God the Father. If He would say anything else, He would be a liar.

—*but I do know Him and keep His word*—These Jews were liars because they claimed to know God when they actually did not. Jesus would have been a liar if He had denied knowing God whom He knew so intimately—from the bosom of the Father (1:18), as the same nature as the Father (1:1).

**Verse 56**—*"Your father [physically] Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad"*—While the interpretation of this is not found in any specific statement of Scripture, there are some possible ideas:

- (1) When God called Abraham, He said, *"All peoples on earth will be blessed through you"* (Genesis 12:3).
- (2) Abraham's personal experience at the sacrifice of Isaac could have been an object lesson to him of the coming death and resurrection of the promised Seed (Genesis 22:1-18; Hebrews 11:17-19).
- (3) *All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance* (Hebrews 11:13).
- (4) Abraham, being in Paradise, rejoiced at Christ's day, when he would then be redeemed and taken to heaven (Luke 16:19f; Ephesians 4:8).

As I said, it's not clear what Abraham saw and knew or what God revealed to him. One thing we do know for sure, Abraham, as a true believer in Jesus Christ, rejoiced at the coming of Jesus to the earth—we don't even know if it was because of the redemption of the cross or because of His future reign as king.

**Verse 57**—*So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"*—Luke wrote that Jesus *was about thirty years old when He began His ministry* (Luke 3:23). Abraham lived about 2,000 years before Christ.

**Verse 58**—*Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born [lit. came into being], I am [continuous existence]"*—And "I AM" is the memorial name for God which He told to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). Notice Jesus did not say, "I WAS," which would only give the idea of existence prior to Abraham. "I AM" however, is the timelessness of God Himself. Jesus already said He couldn't lie (v. 55).

**Verse 59**—*Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him*—Basically, Jesus called Himself God when He said His name was "I AM." The Jews considered that blasphemy and tried to stone Him for it. The Jewish leaders, so passionate for God's honor that they were ready to cast stones at a blasphemer, were, in fact, accusing God Himself of blaspheming God!!

—*but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple*—Because, as He explained before, *His time had not yet come* (John 7:30). This is similar to what happened in Capernaum (Luke 4:30).

## Chapter 9

*Verse 1—As He passed by*—A vague description of the time and place. Seeing Jesus told the man to wash in the pool of Siloam (v. 7), it seems they were probably in Jerusalem.

—*He saw a man blind from birth*—This is the only instance in the gospels of Jesus healing someone who is said to have had a congenital condition. We're not told how the disciples knew that. Perhaps because he was a familiar person who begged for alms in the temple area (v. 8).

### **The Reason for the Miracle — Verses 2-5**

*Verse 2—And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?”*—Exodus 34:7 says, *God does not leave the guilty unpunished; He punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.* They concluded, then, that if a person had any kind of ailment, it must be because his parents or grandparents sinned against God. (The rabbinical writings even added that a person could sin before birth—whether as an embryo or in a preexistent state [a belief influenced by Greek philosophy]. The Bible, of course, rejects such a view.)

—Probably one of the best examples of this is the children of Israel, who wandered in the wilderness for forty years because of the sinful decision of their parents at Kadesh-Barnea. We see throughout Israel's history that the children suffered from the parents' disobedience. But God was dealing with a nation, though there were individual consequences of national disobedience (also made up of individuals).

—However, passages such as Deuteronomy 24:16; 2 Chronicles 25:4; Jeremiah 31:29-30; Ezekiel 18:20 say *The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity...the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.* Spiritually (or eternally), each person is held accountable for their own sin or righteousness.

*Verse 3—Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents—that is, a specific sin (of course, everyone is a sinner). There is not always a direct link between suffering and personal sin. In this man's case there wasn't a specific sin because Jesus said so. This man being born blind was part of the curse put on the world because of Adam's sin.*

Application—Even today, there are consequences of sins that can be passed on to children. A mother having an abortion, kills her child. A sexually promiscuous lifestyle can result in gonorrhea in a mother, which can cause blindness in her infant and even life-threatening blood infection in the baby.

—*but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him*—This doesn't mean that God deliberately caused this man to be born blind in order that years later He could heal him. The blindness was due to a cursed world, and Jesus chose to overrule that curse with His mercy and healing. The disciples were looking backward at who caused the blindness. Jesus was looking forward to healing the blindness.

Application—We were spiritually blind because of sin and the curse (*...god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God* (1 Corinthians 4:4). For us, who in faith accept Jesus as our Savior, that blindness is overruled so that the works of God might be displayed in us. (*He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory* (Romans 9:23).

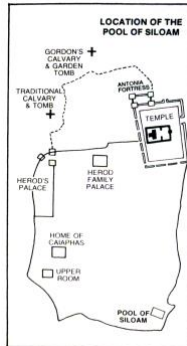
*Verses 4-5—“We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world”*—Jesus' time is short. It's getting close to the time of the cross, when He will no longer be in the world. So while He is here, Jesus *must work the works of Him who sent Me*—i.e., be *the Light of the world*. The healing of the blind man is illustrating this truth.

Application—We should have the same sense of urgency that Jesus had. He knew when His death would be. We don't know the day of our death or our earthly condition prior to that death. That lack of knowledge should give us even a greater urgency today to study God's Word, to be obedient, to tell others about salvation—how much time do we have? An hour? A week? A year? Five years? The Rapture could even happen at any moment.

## The Requirement for the Miracles — Veress 6-7

**Verse 6**—When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes—At this point in the story, we don't know why Jesus used clay and didn't just heal the man.

**Verse 7**—and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent)—Located in the southeast corner of the city wall, water flowed into it from the Gihon Spring, located in the Kidron Valley. Fearing a siege by the Assyrians (2 Chronicles 32:4), Jewish King Hezekiah had constructed a tunnel from the Gihon to the Siloam (2 Kings 20:20) to ensure a continual supply of water.



—So he went away and washed, and came back seeing—Notice that Jesus did not mention anything to the man about getting healed or seeing. He probably overheard the conversation between Jesus and the disciples, who were talking about him and whether his parents' sin caused his blindness. He's sitting there blind, and now he's got mud over his eyes. Jesus gave him only one command: Go wash the mud off your eyes—not just anywhere, at the Pool of Siloam. Getting to the pool would not have been easy for a blind man. But he went and came back seeing—and with a terrific testimony!!

## The Reaction of the Neighbors — Verses 8-12

**Verse 8**—Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, “Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?”—These people knew him well, for many years. He was the blind beggar.

**Verse 9**—Others were saying, “This is he,” still others were saying, “No, but he is like him”—Unable to believe that a miracle had taken place, they thought it was easier to believe it was mistaken identity. So the first issue was to make sure this seeing man was the same as the blind man. He was.

—He kept saying, “I am the one”—But the blind man kept on saying, “I am the one!!!”

Application—“...a latent tension is observable in the text: ‘It is not the healed man who stands in the centre of the discussion; he is only the occasion and the stone of offence; in the centre stands Jesus; He is in the entire narrative, although outwardly He is absent, yet as present as He alone can be’” (WBC-NT).

**Verse 10**—So they were saying to him, “How then were your eyes opened?”—But if he was the same man, how was it possible he can now see? They want an explanation. Now they want to know how it happened.

**Verse 11**—He answered, “The man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash’; so I went away and washed, and I received sight”—He gives a simple, factual account. Notice he said “...the man who is called Jesus...”—He had not seen Jesus yet, just knew it was the man called Jesus.

**Verse 12**—They said to him, “Where is He?” He said, “I do not know”—when he came back from the pool, he did not see Jesus, who had evidently left and went somewhere.

## The Reaction of the Pharisees — Verses 13-17

**Verse 13**—*They brought to the Pharisees the man who was formerly blind*—they came to the religious leaders (on a different day, not the Sabbath) either to tell them of this extraordinary event that the religious leaders would understand how it happened OR some may have wanted to cause trouble in telling these religious authorities that Jesus did something on the Sabbath.

**Verse 14**—*Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes*—This statement controls much of the following discussions and events. At that time, there was the belief that spit could be applied to eyes for healing—but certainly not to give sight to a blind man. And now we find out why Jesus used the clay. It was the Sabbath. “...it is expressly stated in J. AbodZar 14d that fasting spittle [holy spit?] must not be put on eyes on the sabbath. And S<sup>h</sup>abb 7.2 prohibits kneading on the sabbath; Jesus’ mixing a paste out of saliva and earth would fall in this category” (WBC-NT). According to their laws, you could intervene to save someone’s life, but this was not the case here.

**Verse 15**—*Then the Pharisees also were asking him again how he received his sight*—Notice they do not care **that** he received his sight, but **how** he received his sight.  
—*And he said to them, “He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see”*—Aha!! Just as we thought!! This man seems to be totally oblivious to the trouble he will be in and Jesus will be in. He naively thought everyone would be happy that he was no longer blind and could now see.

**Verse 16**—*Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, “This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath”*—Their prejudice could only lead to one conclusion—Jesus broke their laws about the Sabbath, therefore, *He is not from God*. Because they put the man out of the synagogue (v. 34), it suggests that they were meeting in some official capacity here, investigating what happened.

Application—Just want to make the point again that Jesus was not breaking the Mosaic Law but He was breaking their rabbinical laws about the Mosaic Law. Why did Jesus so often provoke the Pharisees by violating their Sabbath regulations? By doing so, He showed that such extra-biblical standards were unnecessary and an oppressive burden on the people (Matthew 23:4). God gave the Sabbath as a weekly day of rest to give thanks to God (Mark 2:27). But the Pharisees turned it into a means of legalistic self-glorification. They took pride in obeying the very laws **they made up!!** If you make up a law, and then you keep that law, it’s **impossible** for you to not feel pride that you keep that law and others don’t.

—*But others were saying, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?”*—They obviously knew other miracles that Jesus had performed. This sounds like Nicodemus’ opening words to Jesus: “*No one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him*” (John 3:2).  
—*And there was a division among them*—Just as earlier there was division among the crowd (7:40-43).

**Verse 17**—*So they said to the blind man again, “What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?”* And he said, “*He is a prophet*”—Jesus must be a prophet. Sometimes the Old Testament prophets did miracles (2 Kings 2:19-22; 4:18-44; 5:1-14). If Jesus was a prophet, He certainly was from God, and God can do whatever He wants to do on the Sabbath!! “His words reflect a growing understanding on his part as to the true identity of ‘the man who is called Jesus’ (v. 11). As one commentator notes, ‘The man’s eyes are opening wider: he is beginning to see still more clearly, while the eyes of his judges are becoming clouded over with blinding, theological mist’” (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*).

## The Reaction of the Parents — Verses 18-23

**Verse 18**—*The Jews then did not believe it of him, that he had been blind and had received sight*—The Jews could not deny the fact that the man standing in front of them could see. Therefore, they attacked something they could deny (or so they thought)—they didn’t believe he was blind in the first place.

Application—There are different tests for truth. For example, pragmatic (does it work?), but the best test for truth—undeniability. Acts 4:17 says, *For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all...and we cannot deny it.*

That the grave of Jesus was empty, no one could deny. So what the Jewish leaders did do was lie about **why** it was empty. No one ever said the body was still there!!

—*until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight*—The neighbors thought they might be mistaken about this man’s identity (v. 8-9), but, for sure, his parents would know if this was their son.

**Verses 19-20**—*and questioned them, saying, “(1) Is this your son, who (2) you say was born blind? V. 20—His parents answered them and said, “We **know** that this is our son, and that he was **born blind**”*—Then (3) how does he now see?” V. 21—but how **he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know**—They have no firsthand knowledge of how he now sees or who opened his eyes, so they can’t give a testimony about that.

**Verse 21**—*Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself*—The parents evaded their question.

**Verses 22-23**—*His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; ask him”*—So evidently the parents did know that Jesus healed their son, else they would not have been afraid of the Jews putting them out of the synagogue because of Jesus. To be put out of the synagogue meant being cut off from the religious and social life of Israel. It all revolved around the synagogues (not the temple). The synagogues were neighborhood places and events.

Application—First, to stand up for Jesus Christ is will go against any man-made religion. Second, standing up for Jesus Christ will result in persecution. Jesus said, *“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own...”* (John 15:18-19). Are you willing to stand firm in your faith? No matter the cost?

### **The Reaction of the Man — Verses 14-38**

**Verse 24**—*So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner”*—They were the Jewish religious leaders. They **know**, right?! The words were good—“Give glory to God”—but the context gives a different meaning to those words. In this context, giving glory to God would mean saying Jesus is a sinner.

**Verse 25**—*He then answered, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know*—That’s a determination for the theological “experts,” so he wasn’t about to answer that —*one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see*—but he does absolutely know this one thing and there’s nothing or no one who can shake his certainty

**Verse 26**—*So they said to him, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?”*—They badger him with the same questions—hoping to trip him up in what he said? To confuse him? To see if he contradicted his first statement? Anything to discredit his evidence.

**Verse 27**—*He answered them, “I told you already and you did not listen*—Their prejudices kept them from hearing the truth. Prejudices do that. They are like colored eye glasses that color all you hear and see. —*why do you want to hear it again?*—They didn’t believe him the first time, what good would it do to say it again? —*You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?*” Dangerous sarcasm here. Adding fuel to the fire.

**Verse 28**—*They reviled him*—they exploded in rage, angrily insulting him, an illiterate beggar. For him to even suggest they were interested in Jesus was more than their pride could take. —*and said, “You are His disciple*—a follower of Jesus—this man is definitely moving in that direction —*but we are disciples of Moses*—a follower of Moses—but in truth, Moses was not an opponent of Jesus

but a witness to Him. Jesus said, “*If you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me*” (John 5:46).

**Verse 29**—“*We know that God has spoken to Moses*—Here they actually speak the truth. It was God who spoke to Moses. But they live and act like it was from Moses—not from God. If they really believed in the God of Moses, they would have believed in the God of Jesus—they were the same God.  
—*but as for this man* [they couldn’t even say the name of Jesus], *we do not know where He is from*”—They said Jesus was deranged (8:48), untrained (7:15), a blasphemer (19:7), from an insignificant family in the despised village of Nazareth of Galilee (1:46).

**Verse 30**—*The man answered and said to them, “Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from,*—The amazing thing is not their faith but their unbelief!  
—*and yet He opened my eyes*—undeniable miracle, something only God could do

**Verse 31**—“*We know that God does not hear sinners*—everyone knows that. Even this humble beggar knows that, surely the religious leaders also know that.  
—*but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him*—Even James wrote, *the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much* (James 5:16).

**Verse 32**—“*Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind*—Sometimes damaged sight can be restored—but to give sight to one who never had it is unheard of. The human eye has been called the most complex organ in our body. Light is focused by the cornea, the iris adjusts the pupil to control the amount of light, the lens auto focuses on near and approaching objects, the retina in the back of the eye converts the optical images into electronic signals, the optic nerve transmits these signals to the part of the brain that controls our sense of light. And then there’s the fluids (such as tears and blood) to lubricate and nourish the eye, muscles that allow the eye to move, the lids and other parts that protect the eyes from injury, and pain-sensing nerves and other nerves that send messages to the brain. And these are just the fringes of all the eyes do. So when Jesus opened the eyes of a person born blind, NONE of these were working! You beginning to see how this man would say *since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind!!*

**Verse 33**—“*If this man were not from God, He could do nothing*”—like this—opening the eyes of someone born blind. Only God, the Creator, could do this. This is so far beyond anything a man could do—even today.

**Verse 34**—*They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins*—May be a reference to the fact that it was a common belief that his blindness was due to his parents’ sin (v. 2).  
—*and are you teaching us?*”—Unable to reply to the man’s logic and outraged that he would presume to lecture them, they attacked his character and made him feel unworthy.  
—*So they put him out*—“The Pharisees in this passage were presented with living proof of Jesus’ divine power. And yet, shrouded in unbelief, they attempted both to deny the undeniable and to refute the irrefutable” (MacArthur). They then excommunicated him, isolating him from his family and friends and from employment.

**Verse 35**—*Jesus heard that they had put him out and finding him*—The former blind man was questioned by his astonished neighbors (vv. 8-12), then by the hostile Pharisees (vv. 13-34), abandoned by his parents (vv. 21-22), and finally excommunicated from the synagogue (v. 34). He must have thought life was so good when he could now see—but life just got harder!! The religious establishment *put him out* but Jesus initiated finding him.

—*He said, “Do you* [Gk. *su*, used with the verb makes the inquiry doubly emphatic—it demanded a personal decision in the face of opposition or rejection] *believe in the Son of Man* [i.e., the Messiah—Daniel

7:13]?”—Just as Jesus did in granting him his physical sight, Jesus took the initiative in opening his spiritual eyes. Rejected by the religious leaders, he was sought by the Redeemer. If God did not take the initiative in salvation, no one would be saved. Jesus said, “*No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him*” (John 6:44).

**Verse 36**—*He answered, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”*—He was willing to believe but he was ignorant. So Jesus then gave the beggar the necessary knowledge for faith.

**Verse 37**—*Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him [because Jesus opened his eyes—both physically and spiritually], and He is the one who is talking with you”*—The beggar already believed that the One who healed him was from God. So when Jesus identified Himself to the beggar, he responded with belief in Jesus.

**Verse 38**—*And he said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped Him*—his worship of Jesus replaced his worship in the synagogue. The Jews had cast him out of the synagogue, but Jesus said, “*the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out* (John 6:37).

Application—The progress of his spiritual understanding went from *the man they called Jesus* (v. 11), to *he is a prophet* (v. 17), *from God* (v. 33), *the Son of Man [Messiah]* (v. 35), and lastly *Lord* (v. 38). *And he worshiped Him*. One goal of salvation is to worship the One who saves (4:23).

### **The Reaction of the Lord — Verses 39-41**

**Verse 39**—*And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see—symbolized by the blind man. Jesus brought the light to him, and he saw, both physically and spiritually. —and that those who see may become blind”*—Those whose self-trust and pride blinds them to the light of Jesus. He does not condemn them by making them blind. They blind themselves by rejecting Jesus. —At first, it sounds like a contradiction of John 3:17, that *God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him*. But since faith and obedience are involved in salvation, judgment on those who reject Christ is an unavoidable. “This is the paradox of the revelation, that in order to bring grace it must also give offence, and so can turn to judgment. In order to be grace it must uncover sin; he who resists this binds himself to his sin...” (WBC-NT).

**Verse 40**—*Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?”*—They assumed that they, of all men, possessed spiritual perception. Sin constantly deceives people so they live in falsehood. Calvin explains it: “If you would acknowledge your disease, it would not be altogether incurable; but now because you think that you are in perfect health, you continue in a desperate state” (MacArthur).

**Verse 41**—*Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin—Because the blind, like this man, acknowledge their blindness and come to the light, and therefore have no sin. —but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains—Because the Jewish leaders won’t acknowledge their blindness, they won’t come to the light, so their sin remains. They are not acting in ignorance. They are claiming to spiritually understand it and still reject it, so they remain in their sin. They have rejected the only cure that exists. Jesus said in Matthew 15:14, “Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”* God may abandon them in their unbelief. They condemn themselves to their self-chosen darkness.

Remember what Jesus said in John 3:36,

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



## Chapter 10

*Verse 1—“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber.*

*Verse 2—“But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep.*

*Verse 3—“To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*

*Verse 4—“When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.*

*Verse 5—“A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.”*

*Verse 6—This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them.*

*Verse 7—So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.*

*Verse 8—“All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.*

*Verse 9—“I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.*

*Verse 10—“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*

*Verse 11—“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.*

*Verse 12—“He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.*

*Verse 13—“He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.*

*Verse 14—“I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me,*

*Verse 15—even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.*

*Verse 16—“I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.*

*Verse 17—“For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.*

*Verse 18—“No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”*

*Verse 19—A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words.*

*Verse 20—Many of them were saying, “He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?”*

*Verse 21—Others were saying, “These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?”*

*Verse 22—At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem;*

*John 10:23 it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon.*

*John 10:24 The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, “How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.”*

*John 10:25 Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father’s name, these testify of Me.*

*John 10:26 “But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep.*

*John 10:27 “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;*

*John 10:28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.*

*John 10:29 “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.*

*John 10:30 “I and the Father are one.”*

*John 10:31 ¶ The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.*

*John 10:32 Jesus answered them, “I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?”*

*John 10:33 The Jews answered Him, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.”*

*John 10:34 Jesus answered them, “Has it not been written in your Law, ‘I said, You are gods’?*

*John 10:35 “If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken),*

*John 10:36 do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?*

*John 10:37 “If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me;*

*John 10:38 but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”*

*John 10:39 Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.*

*John 10:40 ¶ And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there.*

*John 10:41 Many came to Him and were saying, “While John performed no sign, yet everything John said about this man was true.”*

*John 10:42 Many believed in Him there.*